



Dorset Council

Date: Thursday, 5 December 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

All members of Dorset Council are requested to attend this meeting of the Full Council.

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

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services
Meeting Contact susan.dallison@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

Page No

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

5 - 26

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2024.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their decision 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. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTIONS

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

- (a) Questions and statements from Town and Parish Councils;
- (b) Questions and statements from those living or working in the Dorset Council area;

A person or organisation can submit either 1 question or 1 statement at each meeting.

You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for Full Council this will be circulated to all members of the council in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes of the meeting for the formal record but it will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received by Democratic Services will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline below:

The full text of the question or statement must be received by 8.30am on Monday 2nd December 2024. All submissions must be emailed to susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

Sub-divided questions will not be accepted;

Each question can consist of up to 450 words, including a pre-amble to set the context of the question;

When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for, i.e., the name of the Portfolio Holder;

You will need to include your full name, address and contact details;

All questions and statements will be published in full with the minutes of the meeting as a matter of public record.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

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

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

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

[Council Procedure Rules](#)

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

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

8. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors. The deadline for receipt of questions is 8.30am on Monday 2nd December 2024.

9. COUNCIL PLAN 2024-2029

27 - 82

To consider a recommendation from Cabinet.

10. STREET TRADING CONTROLS ADOPTION OF SCHEDULE 4 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1982

83 - 90

To consider a recommendation from the General Licensing Committee.

11. PURBECK PLEASURE BOAT BYELAW AMENDMENT

91 - 108

To consider a report by the Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager.

12. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE PEOPLE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To elect a new Vice-chair of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee.

(The Vice-chair shall not be a member of the same political group as the Leader).

13. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chair 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.

14. 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 scheduled for this meeting.



DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Stella Jones (Chair), Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Jindy Atwal, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Bridget Bolwell, Dave Bolwell, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Barry Goringe, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Robin Legg, Rory Major, Craig Monks, David Morgan, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Jon Orrell, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Val Potheary, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Julie Robinson, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Jane Somper, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Clare Sutton, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, David Tooke, Bill Trite, James Vitali, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

Present remotely: Cllrs Emma Parker and Kate Wheller

Apologies: Cllrs Jon Andrews, Derek Beer, Beryl Ezzard, Jill Haynes, Cathy Lugg, Gary Suttle, Roland Tarr and Claudia Webb

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Jan Britton (Executive Lead for the Place Directorate), Hayley Caves (Councillor Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer) and Matt Prosser (Chief Executive)

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

Jonathan Price (Executive Director of People - Adults and Housing) and Mark Tyson (Corporate Director for Adult Commissioning & Improvement)

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36. Declarations of Interest

The Director for Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer advised Council that all councillors had been granted a dispensation in relation to item 10

on the agenda “Notice of Motion relating to the Winter Fuel Allowance”. There was no need for any individual councillor to make any disclosures in respect of the item or leave the meeting whilst the item was considered.

There were no other declarations of interest made.

37. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported the recent death of David Durley, former member of East Dorset District Council. The Chair invited Cllr A Skeats to say a few words in tribute.

38. Public Participation - questions

There were 3 questions from the public and a copy of the Q&A's was set out at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

39. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions and deputations received.

40. Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

- That the responsibility for Leisure Services would now sit with the Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement.
- An all-member webinar would be held shortly on the “Dorset Council Plan”.
- The budget setting process had begun, and the Leader invited all members to attend.
- Updated members on the Council's preference for a devolution deal with Somerset and Wiltshire Councils on a new “Heart of Wessex” region. The aim of the deal would be to unlock access to additional funding streams from Central Government and that the Council could work collaboratively with Somerset and Wiltshire on new initiatives.
- Reported on an offer to visit town councils to listen to their concerns and issues.
- Reported the retirement of Elaine Tibble, Senior Democratic Services Officer and thanked her for her service.

In response to a question regarding the devolution deal, the Leader of the Council confirmed that any final decision will be made by Full Council. In response to an invite to attend the meetings of Parish Councils, the Leader of the Council responded that he would take councillor suggestions under advisement.

41. Questions from Councillors

There were 9 questions from councillors and a copy of these can be found at Appendix 2.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr S Flower, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning agreed that viability was a significant issue for the Council and indeed nationally. The Council had written to Central Government separately in relation to the NPPF consultation around the matter of viability and that this needed to change in statutory planning law. He assured members that this lobbying would continue.

Responding to a supplementary question from Cllr J Vitali, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning indicated that it was intended that a new CIL schedule would be developed to cover the whole of the Dorset Council area as part of the Local Plan work.

In response to a question from Cllr B Quayle, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills advised that in terms of this academic year, the data was not yet available, however it would be shared as soon as possible once received. She also agreed to meet with Cllr Quayle outside of the meeting to discuss this matter further. Responding to a further question from Cllr Quayle regarding projects identified for educational purposes, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills confirmed that she would seek that information and advise the councillor accordingly.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr S Gibson, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the need for a suitable household recycling centre in the east of the County and the Waste Strategy aimed to address some of those issues of concern.

42. Dorset Community Safety Plan 2023-26, Pan Dorset Reducing Offending Strategy 2024-27 and Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Housing presented the recommendation to adopt the Community Safety Plan and the Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy. The Cabinet Member advised Council that Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) were required to produce three-year community safety plans, which were refreshed annually, and strategies to reduce reoffending. These needed to be adopted by Full Council.

In response to a question regarding levels of hate crime, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the level of hate crime in the Dorset Council area was low, and members of the public could be assured that Dorset was relatively safe. However, this matter would continue to be monitored by the CSP. In response to further questions, the Cabinet Member advised that the strategy would be considered by Scrutiny Committee on a date in the future as part of annual reporting.

It was proposed by Cllr G Taylor and seconded by Cllr S Robinson

Decision

That the Community Safety Plan 2023-2026 (2024-25 refresh), pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024-2027 and Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25 be adopted.

Reason for the Decision

To ensure that Dorset Council meets its duties as set out in relevant legislation.

43. **Notice of Motion - Winter Fuel Allowance**

Full Council received the following Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr C Jones seconded by Cllr S Flower and supported by Cllrs A Parry, L O'Leary, J Somper, P Dickenson, J Robinson, B Trite, V Potheary, C Lugg, C Monks, B Quayle, B Goringe, S Murcer and A Skeats.

Motion Narrative and Action Required

The recent Government's decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Allowance to those pensioners receiving Pension Credit, despite having a fully costed plan, would mean at least 2 million pensioners across the UK, who were fractionally over the £218.15 weekly limit, would have to make difficult choices this winter, often choosing between heating and eating. Analysis showed that energy bills this winter would be the highest on record for elderly people, particularly with a near 10% increase in the cap expected in the autumn.

The demographics in Dorset with 30% over the age of 65, compared with the national average of 19%, would mean that the loss of the Winter Fuel Allowance would have a disproportionate impact on thousands of elderly and vulnerable pensioners across Dorset, in turn placing a huge additional burden on the already overstretched NHS and Adult Social Care budgets. Those who are just above the cut-off for pension credit would suffer the most and it's not fair.

To move that:

1. Dorset Council encourages those not on Pension Credit, who could be eligible to apply, to do so, offering help to complete of necessary forms, which for many could be a barrier. through a pro-active publicity campaign
2. Dorset Council sign up to the '*Save Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners*', petition being run nationally by Age UK.
3. Dorset Council work with those local charities, which support the most vulnerable in our communities, offering guidance to gain access to the resources they need, particularly in support of those who qualify to benefit from the Cost-of-Living Support Fund, to help cope effectively with their heating needs during the cold Winter months.
4. Dorset Council again writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim pension credit, are protected from fuel poverty with an assurance that energy companies will treat the vulnerable with a degree of leniency in respect to energy debt. Additionally, ask

Government to provide data of those who are eligible in the Dorset Council Area.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 14.3 (a) the Notice of Motion, upon being proposed and seconded, was debated by Full Council. Cllr P Kimber proposed an amendment and additional wording to the motion; however, this was not seconded. Members were generally supportive of the original motion and upon being put to the vote the motion was approved.

Decision

- (a) That Dorset Council encourages those not on Pension Credit, who could be eligible to apply, to do so, offering help to complete of necessary forms, which for many could be a barrier. through a pro-active publicity campaign
- (b) That Dorset Council sign up to the ‘*Save Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners*’, petition being run nationally by Age UK.
- (c) That Dorset Council works with those local charities, which support the most vulnerable in our communities, offering guidance to gain access to the resources they need, particularly in support of those who qualify to benefit from the Cost-of-Living Support Fund, to help cope effectively with their heating needs during the cold Winter months.
- (d) That Dorset Council again writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim pension credit, are protected from fuel poverty with an assurance that energy companies will treat the vulnerable with a degree of leniency in respect to energy debt. Additionally, ask Government to provide data of those who are eligible in the Dorset Council Area.

44. **Notice of Motion - Pets as Prizes**

Full Council received the following Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr T Coombs seconded by Cllr R Bryan and supported by Cllrs S Bartlett, P Brown, S Christopher, N Lacey-Clarke, S Florek. S Gibson, J Haynes, S Jespersen, D Morgan, E Parker, D Shortell, D Sowry-House, G Suttle and K Wheller.

Motion Narrative and Action Required

The number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media, and other channels is a matter of concern. It is unethical for animals to be given as prizes.

Local authorities implementing local bans can help eliminate the giving of pets as prizes on council owned land.

This council has considered a similar motion in the past but did not implement a formal ban and press government for appropriate legislation, therefore we ask you to support the following motion:

1. That Dorset Council recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year and supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form.
2. That this Council agrees to:
 - a. Ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Dorset Council land.
 - b. Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

The majority of Council Members were supportive of this motion and upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Decision

- (a) That Dorset Council recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year and supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form.
- (b) That this Council agrees to:
 - (i) Ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Dorset Council land.
 - (c) Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.

45. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items to report.

46. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business to report.

Appendix 1 - Questions and statements from members of the public Appendix 2 - Councillor Questions and Responses

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.31 pm

Chairman

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Full Council – 10 October 2024

Public Participation

Question 1 – submitted by Richard Thomas Chair, Sustainable Shaftesbury Advisory Committee

It's a truism that in present-day Britain it's not just the NHS that needs reform or it will die; government and local government, and even our system of democracy itself, is in that same perilous state. It was therefore heartening to see the attempt made recently by this Council to engage better with the people of Dorset through the 'A Big Conversation' roadshow process. But it was much less heartening when the actual process involved what I would define as the 'motherhood and apple pie' approach; choices being put to the public that no one in their right mind could possibly disagree with and hence produce a pre-determined result. Also at fault was the almost complete focus on the coastal strip communities as if nothing much mattered in Dorset north of Blandford and the absence of any cabinet members at the drop-ins. We now learn that town and parish councils are to be consulted on the Council's 5-year Plan priorities from 16 October with responses needed by 8 November. This is again too little too late. So while it's heartening to see the new administration start to improve on public engagement with the residents of Dorset over the Council's Plan for the next five years, it would be even more encouraging if the wider public could be told more precisely what is being proposed and when and to what eventual end so that they, too, can feel consulted and feed into their local councils. So my question is: Can the leader of the Council please tell us what the precise purpose of the 'Big Conversation' travelling show was if it is not now, as it appears, to involve the wider voting and taxpaying community of Dorset and when will they have their chance to comment on whatever it is Cabinet finally presents to Council on 5 December, and how? Given climate change and the degradation of nature is becoming ever more urgent with the catastrophic collapse of many ecosystems already taking place - so that we no longer have the luxury of 'business as usual' - will he now assure the people of Dorset that his leadership will ensure that climate and the nature crisis is at the top of this Council's agenda - and will he visit north Dorset shortly, including Shaftesbury, to say this to us in person?

Response from Cllr Ryan Hope

The purpose of the Big Conversation public engagement was to share our proposed strategic priorities for Dorset Council to deliver over the next 5 years and seek feedback on these.

To be clear, this was public engagement, and not a statutory consultation.

The Big Conversation ran from 24 July to 15 September and involved 12 in-person events, 2 of which were held in North Dorset (Shaftesbury and Blandford), plus we ran engagement activity in all our libraries, online engagement and made arrangements for residents who are digitally excluded to take part.

We received a really positive and constructive response from residents across Dorset, and from many town and parish councils. There is a very high level of public support for our 4 proposed strategic priorities of Housing, Climate and Nature, Economic growth, and Communities for all. Residents' feedback is enabling us to shape the detail of our new Council Plan, and we will share more details of this publicly over coming weeks.

In addition to the main Big Conversation activity, and in response to requests from town and parish councils for further detail, we are sharing a draft of the new Council Plan with councils for 3 and a half weeks, prior to approval through Cabinet and Full Council. This means town and parish councils will have had two extensive opportunities to have their say on our plan.

I absolutely refute your claim that our focus is only on coastal communities. The issues of housing, economic growth, climate and nature, and communities affect all residents in all areas of Dorset, and we were able to engage with a broad cross-section of residents about this.

Question 2 – submitted by Rebecca Saville

Oil has been produced at Wytch Farm since 1979, originally by the government owned British Gas Corporation before BP took over in 1984 and subsequently sold to Perenco in 2011. Perenco is a company that specialises in operating ageing facilities, operating as cheaply as possible to ensure such sites are still profitable. It is not subject to the same amount of scrutiny and oversight as larger fossil fuel companies because Perenco is a family-owned business that is not subject to the reporting requirements of a public company.

In 2010 there was an oil leak from the Wytch Farm oil production unit which closed the plant down for several months. On the 26th of March 2023 a 'major incident' was declared when a large quantity of reservoir fluid was released into Poole Harbour. This was caused by a defective pipe at Ower Bay. This time there was sustained national media coverage about pollution in the protected area, thanks in part to campaigning by local environmental groups.

This area of Dorset is particularly reliant on income from tourism; a more serious pollution incident could have a significant detrimental effect on the local economy. According to an impact assessment commissioned by Dorset Council*, the March 2023 incident cost local businesses £570k. Perenco are planning to continue operating in Poole Harbour until their licence expires in 2037 and have provided reassurances that safety improvements have been implemented following the March 2023 incident.

What legal powers, responsibilities and influence does Dorset Council have regarding Wytch Farm and any associated works and what measures are Dorset Council taking to safeguard local residents and businesses to ensure that there is not another, potentially more serious, oil spill in Poole Harbour?

* [Wytch Farm Impact Assessment \(phc.co.uk\)](http://phc.co.uk)

Response from Cllr Shane Bartlett

There are a number of regulators who have different responsibilities and powers for regulating Wytch Farm and these include the Council, the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and the North Sea Transition Authority (formerly the Oil and Gas Authority).

As the Minerals Planning Authority, the Council has granted planning permission for Wytch Farm which have conditions and obligations governing the operation and decommissioning of the oilfield. The Council also undertakes monitoring visits to check compliance with these conditions and obligations.

The conditions require any significant uncontrolled hydrocarbon or fluid release to be reported to the Council and for Perenco to take immediate steps to prevent further releases, minimise risks to the environment, clean up the pollution and take steps to prevent a further polluting release.

Legislation also requires the Council to develop and test offsite emergency response plans in respect of incidents relating to the Gathering Station site and the main pipeline that transports crude oil from the Gathering Station to Hampshire. These Regulations are however about preventing and mitigating the effects of incidents on people and the environment, rather than preventing the incidents themselves.

The Poole Harbour oil spill incident in March 2023 fell outside of these regulations, but Dorset Council responded alongside other partner organisations as a Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies legislation, and costs incurred were successfully recovered from Perenco.

As the operator, Perenco is required to maintain a number of plans and policies, ensuring that it has taken all measures necessary to prevent major accidents from happening. These are subject to examination and compliance by external regulators.

Question 3 – submitted by Maxine Fox

Increasingly mainstream media is reporting on the unsustainably high environmental footprint of technologies such as 5G and AI.

The hypocrisy of the government who, while demanding carbon reduction are also ruthlessly rolling out these energy and water hungry technologies is becoming ever clearer.

Today every sector of society - state, business and residential is busy generating trillions of pieces of data, all of which has to be stored electronically and in

perpetuity. There will never be enough windfarms, solar parks and freshwater to meet this massively increasing need.

The industry tells us their technology will solve any problems. These platitudes echo what the chemical industry told farmers and what the plastic industry told consumers.

In truth, this harvesting and selling of this data is just another global industry, backed by government, both obsessed with short term profits and determined to ignore the increasing evidence of harm.

Companies investing in AI have seen their carbon footprints increase by as much as 50%. A web search using AI uses 4-5 times the energy of a conventional search.

More urgent is this technology's consumption of fresh water. By 2027 scientists predict that the equivalent of half the UK's total freshwater supply will be needed simply to cool data centres.

Lithium for batteries requires 500 000 gallons of freshwater to produce each cubic tonne. Globally the mining of rare metals is accelerating the process of desertification as well as soil and water pollution.

5G is 1000 times more powerful than 4G. It drains batteries very quickly, meaning more energy used to re-charge, shorter life spans and more resources to replace. Figures from Australia show less than 2% of lithium batteries are recycled, left instead to leach toxins into soil and water and causing fires where stored.

Data generation is an unsustainable madness and an environmental catastrophe. It is neither clean nor green. We must think about data creation the same way we think of carbon emissions and drastically reduce our use of wireless technologies and A.I.

Given this council's pledge, and duty, to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate climate change and protect nature, will this council be challenging the government on the incompatibility of data generating technologies and carbon reduction and instead advocate for the implementation of alternative, energy efficient, safe, future proofed technologies that protect life and our planet?

Response from Cllr Nick Ireland

Balancing the benefits of technology with the undoubted environmental impacts is a global challenge.

Technology is a critical component of our world today. From communication and time management to manufacturing, shopping and healthcare, digital tools have an enormous impact on our lives. Adopting advanced technology will be key to modernising Dorset's economy, attracting high-value jobs and retaining skills within our economy

Let's look at the benefits of technology in one small aspect of society . . . education. Through technology, educators can better meet the learning needs of students, making education more accessible, inclusive and engaging. According to a local university, the benefits include:

- Flexibility in the way we study
- Personalised learning
- Choice in how we learn
- Instant access to resources and expertise
- Collaborative learning opportunities
- A global perspective

Dorset Council embraces and promotes the huge part technology and digital data plays in running essential services and providing economic and social opportunities to all. We are at the forefront of showing how tech can improve lives in environmentally responsible ways while driving the move away from the dirty and inefficient processes of the past.

Here are a few examples:

- Great digital connectivity is the foundation to digitising and modernising our public services.
- Our recent agri-tech trials showed how connected robots could weed wheat without polluting diesel tractors or harmful herbicides.
- Small, connected devices are helping keep vulnerable people safe in their own homes and helping them feel less isolated.
- We are leading a national project to radically reduce power consumption by the telecoms sector.

Data Centres are not going away but we do need to run them sustainably, by using green energy and cooling them in innovative ways, such as putting them in leisure centres where they can be used to heat the swimming pool. The Green Economy has the potential to transform the economy of Dorset over the next twenty years. Just one example is the proposed Celtic Sea offshore floating wind farms that will generate 4.5GW by 2035, rising to 16.5GW by 2045, and providing up to 26,000 well-paid jobs in the process across the South West.

A final observation. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, it was technology and digital data that allowed councils and other public services across the UK to continue running the essential public services that we all depend on. It was technology that allowed people to maintain contact with their families and loved ones.

As a Council we have also benefitted from digital technological advancement

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Full Council – 10 October 2024

Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Hannah Hobbs-Chell

I am grateful to the new cabinet for the commitment to Ferndown and to Ferndown Town Council to assist with a regeneration plan, and resolving the ongoing Barrington Centre lease situation, and appreciate that you are currently working from the previous administration's budgetary constraints and directions until the next financial year, especially for any capital works. I would however like to ask where the new leisure strategy is in progress? Along with a town centre that has been neglected over the past decade, Ferndown Leisure centre is also at the end of its life, and requires considerable consideration not just for Ferndown residents but for residents in the east of the county especially given changes in the leisure facilities in East Dorset. The land surrounding the leisure centre is under charitable ownership via the Town Council, and leased to Dorset Council, and I would like to ask if the cabinet could commit to investing in leisure in the east to support the huge health and wellbeing benefits of leisure. There is a very exciting collaborative opportunity to significantly enhance and invest in the health and wellbeing of the east of Dorset.

Response from Cllr Ryan Hope

The Council is excited to be developing a new leisure strategy aimed at enhancing the operation of leisure facilities across all of Dorset. This strategy will ensure that these facilities are accessible, affordable, and sustainable, with a strong focus on equity and addressing health inequalities. In September, the Cabinet approved the acceleration of this initiative, and consultants are being appointed to advance the project. This comprehensive approach will strengthen and support healthier communities throughout the region

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Matt Bell

Prior to becoming one of the Dorset Council Members for Radipole I began a campaign to highlight issues at Radipole Lake. This was in the form of a petition which remains open but already has roughly 2500 signatures including those online and on paper. The issue has also been highlighted on several occasions in the local media since the petition began. I thank the members of the public who took the time to sign the petition and shared their concerns and knowledge about the lake. The petition calls for all stakeholders to prioritise silt removal from the lake and river to increase flood water capacity and to reduce flooding in surrounding areas such as Radipole Park and Gardens where outfalls are believed to be hampered by the high silt level. The petition also calls for the creation of a consistent and effective management programme to be followed moving forward.

The lake is a prominent feature of both Radipole and Weymouth as a whole. Unfortunately, Radipole Lake has been neglected for many years and is no longer the prized asset it once was. The petition and media coverage prompted the involvement of key stakeholders including Dorset Council and initial discussions

added significantly to the list of concerns I originally highlighted. There are concerns regarding potential risks to the SSSI status held by the nature reserve, flooding of the adjacent road, park, gardens and businesses, algae growth as well as the loss of a high-quality and treasured angling venue. The recently rejuvenated amenities at Radipole Park and Gardens spent much of the last autumn and winter flooded.

I was delighted when meetings were arranged involving all key stakeholders and some early progress was made, including improvements at Westham Bridge. However, things have not progressed in a timely fashion on other aspects. Previous meeting notes about the lake from May stated that Wessex Water would clear outfalls along Radipole Park Drive, which are crucial to drain the park and gardens, by the end of August 2024 but this has not happened. This is due to issues accessing and inspecting some of the outfalls due to vegetation growth. There are also investigations ongoing into potential grants for silt removal and habitat restoration and I hope these can be expedited working closely with our colleagues at Natural England and RSPB. Every element of decision making and action at the lake seems to involve multiple organisations, it is crucial that Dorset Council drives this forward effectively. However, the planned September meeting regarding the lake was cancelled due to other officer commitments. What assurances can the Cabinet Member for Place Services give me that Radipole Park and Gardens will not spend another winter submerged and that the maintenance of a prized Weymouth asset will be prioritised in the future?

Response from Cllr Nick Ireland

The issues surrounding the management of the Radipole lake water levels spans many years. The Water Level Management Plan was completed by consultants in December 2009 on behalf of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. Around the same period, an application by the RSPB under an EU initiative to protect Bittern habitat was being considered. The proposal was to remove 54,000 cubic metres of silt and reposition at higher levels forming a bund (noise barrier) at higher, more critical (floodplain) levels in the floodplain. The works, involving extensive relocation of dredged silts within the lake were submitted to the Environment Agency who objected to this specific proposal. The relocation of dredged silts off site were also considered at the time but discounted on cost / practicality grounds.

A Water Level Management Plan working group was established in February 2024 to review the issues and develop a sustainable approach going forward. Several key partners are involved, including Natural England, RSPB, Dorset Council and the Environment Agency. Partner organisations are of the view that local interventions on their own are not sustainable or cost effective. A more strategic approach is required considering impacts from the wider river catchment, and management of reed growth. Actions developed to date include:

The Environment Agency is proposing to look at the main River Wey catchment upstream to determine if farming practises can be modified to reduce siltation and chemical loading within the catchment (including Radipole Lake) into the future.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) condition assessment is currently ongoing for the lake to meet HM Government target of 31st Jan 2028. In tandem, Natural England and the RSPB via the Water Level Management Group are progressing a habitat restoration bid for Countryside Stewardship funding. The current stage of the bid is a feasibility study that will inform the grant required for capital works.

As an interim measure, Wessex Water have been requested to arrange inspection of the public surface water outfalls into the lake to ensure they are blockage free. This has been delayed due to access issues, but they are looking to meet in early October to review their programme of works. They were chased on this earlier this week and have yet to respond. We

The Water Level Management Plan working group will continue to meet regularly to take this agenda forward.

Unfortunately, the risk of flooding to the low-lying areas adjacent to the lake (including Radipole Lake Drive and Gardens) are likely to increase because of climate change impacts. The area is already at risk of main River Wey flooding (1 in 100 year return period floodplain envelope) as identified by the EA and this will increase in future years. However, we will do what we can to manage flood risk proportionately by adopting sustainable interventions which offset the effects of climate change, and the partnership approach we are taking will be beneficial in this regard.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Spencer Flower

Unrealistic housing targets set by the new Government

The Government has announced intentions to build 1.5m new dwellings during the next five years. This will require a near doubling of the build rate threatening our green belt, AONB and other undeveloped land. This will hit Dorset particularly hard as we have little in the way of so-called brown field sites.

Legacy Local Plans and the emerging Dorset Local Plan includes policy which seeks a proportion of affordable housing when development schemes reach a certain size.

The new Liberal Democrat administration has indicated that it wishes to build more affordable housing for local people, which is a commendable ambition given the local demand, but this will be a serious challenge to achieve. The biggest barrier to achieving this aim will be the retention of viability as a material planning consideration.

There are several examples where permission has been granted and the developer has subsequently come back to the Council, claiming for whatever reason, that the

schemes are no longer viable. This has resulted in a loss of the affordable housing allocations.

Can members be reassured that every effort is being made by the administration to lobby Government for the removal of viability as a material planning consideration or seek a reform of the current guidance, such that a fair proportion of new housing development in the Dorset Council area is affordable housing for rent or shared equity.

So my question is, what action is being taken by the Liberal Democrat administration to safeguard the provision of vitally important affordable housing in the Dorset Council area in the context of the emerging Dorset Local Plan and the anticipated amended standard methodology?

Response from Cllr Shane Bartlett

The Council's response to the Government consultation was agreed by Cabinet on 10 September and submitted in time for the 24 September deadline.

In that response, we have objected to the proposed housing numbers on the grounds that they are unrealistic and unachievable.

We have supported the changes that allow local councils to give greater priority to social rented housing in their planning policies, but have said in our response that this would require additional funding because of the greater cost.

We have also, separately, written to Government to stress a number of points including the need for action to ensure that developers build out their sites, and the need for a stronger stance on viability negotiations in order to enable affordable housing to be provided.

In preparing the local plan, we will be ensuring that we have robust evidence to support our affordable housing policies, and taking the costs of development into account. While we are objecting to the scale of increased numbers suggested in the consultation, if we can deliver a greater level of housing in total, this will enable greater provision of affordable housing.

Question 4 – submitted by Cllr James Vitali

Since 2011, some 2771 new homes have been delivered in the North Dorset area. According to the latest Annual Position Statement published this month, there will be additional housing demand for over 2500 households in the North up to the year 2034.

We know there is a national shortage of homes, and North Dorset is more than playing its part to address that shortage. But for development to be legitimate in the eyes of local residents, they must believe that it will add to their communities, not take away from them or tarnish them. An important part of this is ensuring that

developers contribute meaningfully to investment in local services and community facilities.

For some time, however, the North has been an outlier in Dorset, because it hasn't operated the Community Infrastructure Levy, and has relied solely on Section 106 contributions. Speaking to my parish and town councils, they worry that they are not seeing their fair share of Section 106 monies, and believe that CIL would help ensure our communities meaningfully gain from new housing.

I understand that CIL was going to be introduced in the North as part of the new Local Plan, but delays to its drafting and adoption have set that process back, and I am concerned that our residents are losing out as a result.

To this end, how does the Council intend to ensure that local residents in the North receive the investment they need in infrastructure and services to support new housing supply? Could I receive in writing a report on the status of Section 106 funding in the North? And would the Council now consider bringing the North into line with the rest of Dorset by introducing CIL in our area?

Response from Cllr Shane Bartlett

The approach to securing developer contributions in North Dorset is through the use of section 106 legal agreements for major development, i.e. development involving 10 or more dwellings. Evidence supporting the North Dorset Adopted Local Plan is used in a case-by-case basis to secure infrastructure necessary to help make development acceptable in planning terms. Officers work with town and parish councils to establish their needs and apply this evidence when planning applications are being considered. This process has resulted in monies being secured for a wide range of community infrastructure.

Dorset Council report on the performance of developer contributions through an Annual Monitoring Statement which is published online.

Government regulations around the use of developer contributions does allow section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy to be secured together in situations where CIL applies, though ultimately, there will be a limit to what development can viably contribute toward these mechanisms. While the introduction of CIL in North Dorset would generate a neighbourhood contribution which would be passed automatically to town and parish councils where development takes place, it should be noted that this in turn would most likely reduce the extent of s106 obligations secured, which in the absence of CIL is currently the main mechanism for supporting local measures such as community halls, playing pitches and play areas.

Dorset Council will continue to review the position with Community Infrastructure Levy and the Local Plan.

Question 5 submitted by Cllr Byron Quayle

At the most recent Schools Forum meeting, senior education leaders from Dorset suggested that BCP Council are actively seeking families to request their child's needs are met in a Dorset Council area educational setting.

Can the portfolio holder confirm how many children with an Education Health and Care Plan from other areas including BCP, have been enrolled at Educational settings in Dorset this academic year and how has this impacted on children in the Dorset Council area accessing these educational settings?

Response from Cllr Clare Sutton

As we know there is pressure on appropriate educational provision for children with an EHCP nationally, and therefore some movement of children across borders. Our team has a comprehensive plan, working with partners and schools, and our overarching strategy is that, wherever possible, children's needs are met locally so they can attend along with their neighbours and friends.

Our Corporate Director for Education chairs the regional Education and Inclusion group and Dorset hosts the regional lead for SEND, Dr Vikki Jervis. This enables us to ensure that regional education leaders proactively discuss pupil intake across borders and work towards equity.

There is also an element of parental choice when a child has special educational needs.

The most reliable data source is school census data, collated in May each year.

According to census data, between May 21 and May 24 we saw a 5% drop in BCP children being educated in Dorset but, consistent with the local and national picture, the proportion of those that are EHCP has risen slightly, from 4.1% to 4.4%.

In May 24 a total of 225 children from other local authorities with an EHCP were being educated in Dorset, of which 120 were from BCP. Pupil Census data will be collated again in May and will give us the most accurate picture of numbers of pupils this academic year, but we do not anticipate a significant increase in this number.

We currently fund 675 Dorset children with an EHCP in other LAs, including 339 in BCP settings.

As there is movement of children in both directions, we do not feel there is a particularly adverse impact on Dorset children, but as per our strategy we continue to work towards keeping more of our children close to home.

Question 6 submitted by Cllr Byron Quayle

Following a Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated October 16, 2023, Dorset Council confirmed that approximately £22.8 million had been paid by developers for educational purposes since 2019, but had not yet been allocated to specific projects.

Could the portfolio holder provide an update on how much of the £22.8 million has been allocated to educational projects since the FOI request in October 2023? Additionally, has a Dorset-wide policy been implemented to ensure that projects are identified promptly and funds are allocated efficiently, preventing developer contributions from remaining unused in Dorset Council accounts instead of being spent on educational needs?

Response from Cllr Clare Sutton

In respect of s.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act secured funding we must bear in mind issues which include:

- Many of the contributions are linked to specific schemes and cannot be transferred
- The contributions are linked to the timing of the delivery of houses, which is out of our control, and
- Some contributions cannot be spent until the need is there, for example, in terms of admissions to local schools.

I don't think the previous administration managed this well, but S.106 is not a 'magic bullet' to improving the education landscape, and we have to ensure we invest in relation to likely developments in the longer term. Neither is the allocation "unused" - it is responsibly held to ensure that longer term projects to support our sufficiency duties in education can be realised.

We can report on education spend that has been committed or is profiled. £29k has been allocated to Pimperne school to support an increase in admissions, £47k is in the pipeline for Hazelbury Bryan for the same reason, and £540k for the Leigh Road School site project to secure the land.

As things stand the £22m is held against 57 specific developments across the county with the terms and conditions being applied.

In relation to the second part of the question, from a Children's Services point of view we've made significant progress. Our Corporate Director for Education brought the Best Education For All Board into the cross-Council programme delivered by Assets and Regeneration in July 2024, to ensure robust oversight, and we have initiated a mainstream school estate review through BEFA . This enables responsible and timely spend within the terms and the conditions applied to this funding stream.

Question 7 submitted by Cllr Bill Trite

I'm pleased to be able to point to:

1. Much co-operative, joint working between Dorset Council and Swanage Town Council in recent years, all to the public good and particularly in respect of cliff stability, beach recharge, flood defence and options for seafront traffic management. Another example of this constructive relationship is the Town Council's routine cutting of a large area of Dorset Council grassland at one entrance to the town, without charge to Dorset Council, as well as supplementing weed clearance work.
2. Long-time acknowledgment by the former Purbeck District Council and Dorset Council (as emergency planning authority, highway authority and coastal defence authority) that certain roads and drains near Swanage seafront are prone to widespread coverage by shingle and other debris as a result of wave overtopping during stormy conditions, and that the resultant hazard will be cleared by the authority in a timely manner with public rights of way reopened. (Where it could, the Town Council has always assisted this process in terms of supplying manual labour and co-ordinating clear-up operations - and is happy to continue to do so.)
3. Assurances by the new administration at County Hall that Dorset people are not about to experience any deterioration in service standards.

Why, therefore, with the present overspill of debris from the sea into the Lower High Street, has the Town Council now been informed that the Unitary authority has unilaterally decided no longer to accept any obligation to undertake this vital clearance and reopening work, unless Dorset Council is paid to do so by Swanage Town Council?

Response from Cllr Nick Ireland

Dorset Council manages more than 2,400 miles of roads and 2,800 miles of countryside rights of way, along with all associated infrastructure, including bridges, cycleways, footways, drainage, street lighting, road signs and markings, traffic signals, car parks, trees, and verges.

As the local highway authority, the Council has a statutory obligation to maintain the safety and accessibility of highways. To fulfil this duty, it may require adjacent landowners to undertake necessary measures to prevent soil and debris from encroaching onto the roadway. This includes areas of land owned and managed by Town and Parish Councils.

Historically, Dorset Council (and DCC before it) has collaborated closely and successfully with Swanage Town Council across various service areas and projects. This partnership will be further enhanced by a forthcoming transformative programme, Hedge to Hedge. This initiative aims to facilitate integrated service delivery between Dorset Council and Town and Parish Councils, enabling them to work together as service delivery partners. Through this collaboration, it is intended that Town and Parish Councils will be able to benefit from increased levels of service

over and above those provided just by Dorset Council. You have my assurance that Officers will be in touch with the clerk of Swanage to discuss this specific issue.

Question 8 submitted by Cllr Simon Gibson

There is widespread concern following recent proposals from Hampshire County Council to close a number of Household Recycling Centres, including Somerley, which serves many Dorset residents including residents in Verwood, Alderholt, St Leonards & St Ives & West Moors. It has been long understood that Dorset Council does not have adequate provision in the East of our County and the partnership working with Hampshire County Council has enabled our residents to maintain good and fair access. The Universal Services Select Committee of HCC has asked Cabinet to reconsider these proposals at their Cabinet meeting next week.

Q: Will the Portfolio Holder and officers seek an urgent meeting with Hampshire County Council ahead of their Cabinet meeting to encourage them to keep Somerley HRC open and to restate Dorset Council's commitment to working together to ensure that residents in the East have fair access to a suitable HRC?

Response from Cllr Nick Ireland

Yes, we will seek a meeting with Hampshire County Council to discuss their position regarding the Somerley household waste and recycling centre. As we pay a substantial sum for our residents to be able to access the site (we make up 45% of the usage), you can be assured that HCC understand the impact of a closure on Dorset Council, but naturally they also have other considerations in reaching their final decision. If we are notified that the site will close (our contract requires six months' notice), then we will of course consider all available options.

Question 9 – submitted by Cllr Craig Monks

Madam Chairman,

Could the Council please provide some clarity in the recent position concerning funding for clearing the Councils ditches and Gullys that provide drainage?

I was made aware that funding had been removed for this vital service so asked the question of my local community highways officers. The reply I received was "At present we have no budget allocated to this function as it has been removed. The Service Manager Neil Turner and the newly appointed Asset Manager Ian Newport are currently in discussion on this issue"

So my question is, Can the Council please confirm that the funding been cut in relation to clearing ditches and gully's.

Response from Nick Ireland

The highways drainage budget has not been cut. During the summer, the Highway Service reassessed the upcoming ditching and drainage work to ensure it could be delivered within the available budget. The work can be delivered within the existing budget and will be carried out during this financial year. As mentioned earlier tonight, we are looking at a transformative programme, Hedge to Hedge, which will have a positive impact on how we carry out such work in the future.

Full Council

5 December 2024

Council Plan 2024-2029

For Recommendation to Council

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader of the Council, Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Executive Director:

M Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Jen Lewis

Job Title: Head of Strategic Communication and Engagement

Tel:

Email: Jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary:

It is important that Dorset Council is clear in its articulation of its priorities, so that the residents of Dorset, our partners and colleagues who work throughout the organisation have a clear understanding of what this authority is aiming to deliver. The Council Plan is the key strategic business plan for the council. It sets out the council's vision, values and strategic priorities for the period of the current administration. The Council Plan is the document that will provide visible accountability for performance, risk management and will shape how the council adapts to a changing world during the next five years. It sets the 'golden thread' for the work of colleagues to ensure that we are delivering against the priorities of the administration.

Please find the Council Plan 2024-2029 at Appendix 1.

The Council Plan has been developed based on the current administration's manifesto, as well as feedback from residents and partner organisations. The plan is underpinned by a 'PESTLE' analysis (looking at Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental data and trends) which examined the changing environment in which the council operates now and in future.

The proposed priorities were tested with residents and other stakeholders through the Big Conversation engagement activity over the summer. Feedback from this engagement has been used to help shape the Council Plan and ensure it meets residents' expectations. Additionally, the council undertakes a residents survey every two years, and key findings from the most recent survey (winter 2023) have also been incorporated into the current draft of the Council Plan.

The draft Council Plan was reviewed by members of the Joint Overview Committee on 29 October. Members made a number of recommendations for changes to the draft which Cabinet considered on 19 November: many of these recommendations have been incorporated into the final draft of the Council Plan (Appendix 1).

Recommendation:

Full Council to approve the adoption of the Council Plan 2024-29.

Reason for Recommendation:

Incorporation of some of the recommendations of Joint Overview Committee ensures cross-party input into the Council Plan. The Council Plan sets out what the council aims to deliver between 2024-29. It informs the resources required for delivery, the outputs and outcomes that are anticipated and other contributory factors (such as actions by partner organisations, risks, resource assumptions etc). The Council Plan sets out the headline target measures by which performance will be monitored and reported on.

a) **Report**

- 1.1 The Council Plan 2024-2029 sets out the future Dorset we want to see, and the council's role within that. It outlines the vision and strategic priorities, setting the council's direction for the next 5 years.
- 1.2 Dorset is rich in natural beauty, history, and community spirit, with a stunning and diverse natural environment. 85% of residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to the national average of 75%. However, Dorset faces some significant and complex challenges such as the climate and nature emergency, scarcity of affordable housing, poor economic growth, health inequalities, and a lack of social mobility.
- 1.3 These are challenges affecting the whole country and require significant investment and support from central government. Dorset Council and its partners have an equally important role to play in addressing them and

improving the lives and wellbeing of residents. Dorset Council has a vital role in shaping the future for the people and place of Dorset over the next 10, 20 and 50 years. The Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next 5 years, but with an eye to the longer-term horizon.

- 1.4 Following discussions with Cabinet members, the council's proposed new vision statement is: "Working together to create a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations".
- 1.5 Guiding this vision are the underlying principles of 'Partnership' and 'Prevention' which will run through everything the council does. The council can achieve more working with others and, through prevention, can avoid crisis.
- 1.6 The four strategic priorities in the Council Plan address the key issues facing Dorset. The four priorities are:
 - a) Provide affordable and high-quality housing
 - b) Grow our economy
 - c) Communities for all
 - d) Respond to the climate and nature crisis

Each priority is cross-cutting and will involve collaborative cross-council and partnership working.

- 1.7 The Council Plan (Appendix 1) sets out the strategic approach to delivering each of these priorities, the key activity that this will involve, and headline target measures for how performance will be monitored. Some activity can be delivered directly by the council and with partners, and some activity involves influencing others to act, including central government.
- 1.8 Dorset Council provides around 450 services to over 380,000 residents. As a unitary council, the council has a wide range of statutory duties which are legal obligations set out in various Acts of Parliament. These duties ensure that we provide essential services and support to our communities. It is taken as given in the Council Plan that these duties will continue to be delivered.
- 1.9 Dorset Council also has partnership arrangements and commitments with important strategic implications such as our role within the Integrated Care

System. These strategic partnership obligations have been factored into the development of the new Council Plan.

1.10 The Council Plan is the council's highest-level strategic document. There will be a 'golden thread' running from the Council Plan through all planning across the council to ensure that effort and resource is aligned to achieving the vision and strategic priorities.

- a) The next level of detail on planning and delivery is held in the principal strategies (such the Climate Strategy, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Housing Strategy, the forthcoming Economic Growth strategy, the developing Local Plan, etc.) and in the enabling strategies (such as the Medium Term Financial Plan, the Strategic Asset Management Plan, the Customer strategy, the People and Culture strategy, and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy.)
- b) Beneath this, the golden thread runs through the operational service plans, which should be reviewed and updated annually.
- c) Finally, each individual employee's objectives should reflect their contribution to the achievement of the vision and priorities.

2.1 The council's transformation programme has a critical role to play in ensuring the council can deliver its vision and priorities. This includes establishing and embedding a different operating model, using new technologies to streamline operations, introducing more efficient and effective business processes, and cultural change so that employees embrace new ways of working and thinking.

3. Financial Implications

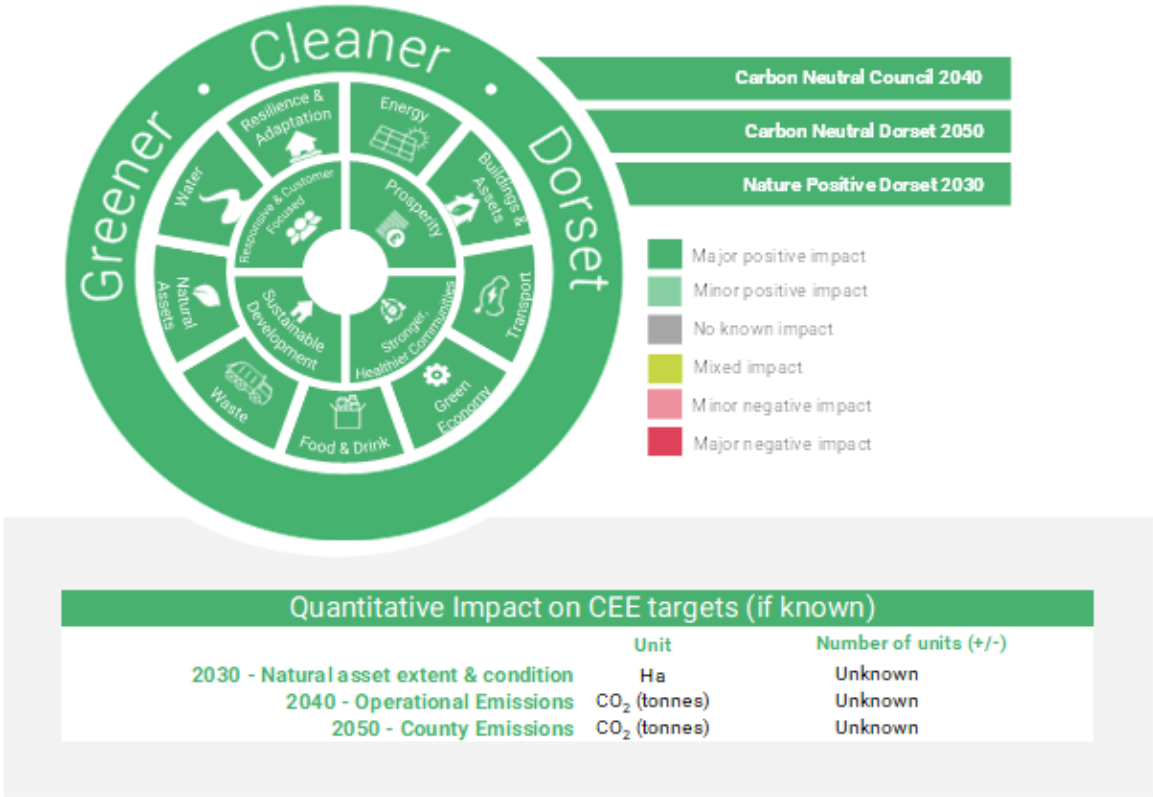
The resources required to deliver the four strategic priorities form part of the 2025-6 budget setting process, as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The Council Plan entails significant positive environmental benefits, owing to its incorporating 'Responding to the climate and nature crisis' as one of the council's four key priorities; as well as its broader recognition of sustainable development and housing quality, green economy within the

other priorities. Recognition of the climate and nature crises are therefore at the heart of the plan, and it fully incorporates the three pillars of decarbonisation, nature recovery and adaptation.

It not only expedites our net zero targets, but also determines a set of more domain-specific targets (across energy, transport, waste and nature) which represent a significant advance on our current climate and nature strategy – as well as committing to a set of actions relevant to each domain of the climate wheel. In setting a golden thread that will inform other principal and enabling plans and strategies, this plan will be significant in strengthening our leadership and operational alignment with climate and nature imperatives.



5. Well-being and Health Implications

Another of the four strategic priorities in the new Council Plan is ‘Communities for all’ which sets out the role of the council in improving population health and wellbeing, aligned to the council’s role within the Integrated Care Partnership and other partnerships.

6. Other Implications

N/A

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

Please find the EQIA for the Council Plan attached as Appendix 2.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Council Plan

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

10. Report Sign Off

- 9.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

Council Plan 2024-2029

Contents:

Introduction from the Leader

Our vision

Our strategic priorities

Dorset at a glance

What we do

How this Council Plan will be delivered:

- Strategic planning: related strategies
- Our values
- Transformation and our future operating model
- Our budget priorities and financial strategy
- Strategic risk management

Welcome from the Leader

This Council Plan 2024-2029 sets out our vision for the future Dorset we want to see. It outlines our vision and strategic priorities, setting the council's direction for the next 5 years.

Dorset is rich in natural beauty, history, and community spirit, with a stunning and diverse natural environment. 85% of our residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to the national average of 75%.

However, we face some significant and complex challenges. The climate and nature emergency, scarcity of affordable housing, poor economic growth, health inequalities, and lack of social mobility.

These are challenges affecting the whole country and require significant investment and support from central government. Dorset Council and its partners have an equally important role to play in addressing them and improving the lives and wellbeing of residents.

Our strategic priorities are designed to address the key issues facing Dorset, while continuing to provide the essential everyday services we know people rely on.

Dorset Council provides around 450 services to over 380,000 residents. As a unitary council, the council has a wide range of statutory duties which are legal obligations set out in various Acts of Parliament. These duties ensure that we provide essential services and support to our communities. While the council will continue to deliver these essential services, the Council Plan is an articulation of our ambitions for the future of Dorset over the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

This Council Plan sets out what we want to achieve in the next 5 years, with an eye to the horizon; ensuring we work together to create a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations.

Cllr Nick Ireland
Leader of Dorset Council

Our vision

“Working together to create a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable Dorset for current and future generations”

‘Working together’ reflects how partnership and working together is vital to achieve the best outcomes for Dorset. ‘Together’ refers to Dorset Council, voluntary, private and public sector partners, residents, communities and businesses.

‘Fairer’ is about addressing the inequities and challenges some of our residents’ face. We need to improve social mobility, reduce health inequalities, support vulnerable people, improve access to homes for local people, and support inclusive communities.

‘More prosperous’ is about economic growth and creating opportunities for residents to enjoy a better quality of life with better outcomes.

‘More sustainable’ is about tackling climate change and helping nature to recover. It’s enabling communities to strengthen and become more self-reliant while adopting a preventative approach that helps people avoid crises. We want a more sustainable model for public services and a better quality of life for residents.

‘For current and future generations’ reflects the focus on where we want Dorset to be in 5, 10, 20 years’ time.

Guiding this vision are the underlying principles of **‘Partnership’** and **‘Prevention’**: we can achieve more working with others and through prevention we can avoid crisis.

Our strategic priorities

Our four strategic priorities set out where we want to make a significant and positive difference. They are:

- Provide affordable and high-quality housing
- Grow our economy
- Communities for all
- Respond to the climate and nature crisis

We will work hard to achieve each priority so we can deliver the best outcomes for Dorset. Our ambition is to work in new and more efficient ways, joining forces with partners when appropriate.

We will stand up for Dorset to try and secure more investment and help us achieve the outcomes our residents have told us are most important to them.

In 2024 we held a Big Conversation with our residents to ensure their voices were not only heard but their priorities were reflected in this Council Plan. The findings of our biennial residents' survey have also been used to inform this plan.

Provide affordable and high-quality housing

Access to affordable, high quality and safe housing is essential for our residents to be able to live and thrive and is a cornerstone of the future success of Dorset.

The challenge

Rising costs and the growing gap between average house price and average salary makes it difficult for local people, especially working-age residents, to afford to live in Dorset.

There is a chronic lack of genuinely affordable housing. Vulnerable residents, including those in crisis or with special needs, often struggle to find suitable homes. The standard of some rented accommodation is not acceptable.

Addressing this requires working with partners and strategic planning through the new Local Plan. We need innovative solutions that help residents access affordable, suitable, and secure homes.

Our approach

We recognise that increasing the availability of affordable homes to meet the needs of local people, improving existing housing stock, and ensuring sustainable development is vital to improve personal health, economic and environmental sustainability.

Working in partnership with the private, social and community sectors and developing our role will support growth and progress to meet these key housing objectives.

Supporting registered providers (also known as housing associations) is important and we value the new affordable housing they provide, and the good housing management and tenant support they offer.

In addition to this, we aim to broaden our role and the range of support we offer on housing. We will look to use our own land and assets to increase the amount of good housing supplied to residents, including specialist, temporary, supported and affordable housing.

An effective prevention approach is vital and makes sure that residents with priority housing needs such as homelessness can be supported earlier and are able find solutions which work well for them. This reduces the need for emergency housing or support services at critical times and provides better outcomes for people and families.

Target measures

- 30% reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation over the next 5 years
- eradicate use of bed and breakfasts for family households over the next 5 years
- maintain annual homelessness prevention levels consistently higher than the national average
- achieve the desired balanced position of a smaller but sustainable temporary accommodation stock over the next 5 years
- deliver 450 new affordable homes every year through the housing association development programme
- bring forward new housing supply of 100 new accessible homes and 90 larger family homes at affordable rents per year
- implement approved new models of delivery to increase affordable housing supply making best use of council assets
- deliver 100 new supported accommodation homes over the next 5 years secured through grant funding and support from providers

Key actions to deliver this priority

- improve the quality and standard of homes, either rented or owned, working directly with landlords. Support good landlords to meet and exceed minimum standards and use all enforcement options available where we find poor standards of housing. Any financial penalties imposed will be invested in supporting better quality housing
- prevent homelessness and move homeless people into settled homes quickly
- develop an Empty Homes strategy for Dorset
- implement new models of housing delivery that broaden the council's role and support to increase the amount of new affordable housing that meets the needs of Dorset residents
- develop broader opportunities to meet wider housing needs, including housing for people working in essential roles such as teachers, NHS staff and care workers, and local households on the housing register

Leadership and partnership

- the Home in on Housing programme, delivering the Dorset Council Housing strategy, outlines our leadership in housing. It sets the direction on how to deliver the right homes, in the right place and at the right price and is supported by senior council leaders, members and key stakeholders

- our strategic and operational partnerships continue to mature. Key partnerships with housing associations who own and manage almost 25,000 rented or shared ownership homes and build over 400 new homes per year are regularly supported by key leaders, members and operational experts
- there is regular and effective contract management with specialist providers of accommodation and support. This shares insight and opportunities to achieve good value. It ensures services which enable tenants with support and care needs to live well
- cross-council support and effective forward planning around key strategic plans (such as the Local Plan) and policies enables the most appropriate influence and support for developers and builders to provide the right new homes in the right place for sale or rent, including affordable housing
- strong working relationships with government provide us with grant funding, advice and support to deliver new homes and provide housing advice
- town and parish councils and community groups support understanding of local housing need, and the provision of new homes through Community Land Trusts, led by local people working alongside the council and housing associations

Standing up for Dorset

- ask Homes England and government to provide funding to build a greater proportion of 'social rented' homes, at reduced rents
- influence government, Homes England and housing associations for more support to meet Dorset's housing needs, and to understand that this is broad – including rental and low-cost home ownership options across a range of circumstances
- call on the government to review local housing allowance rates for temporary accommodation. With rates frozen at 2011 levels, this puts a disproportionate financial burden on local authorities and residents, as rents and costs rise

Grow our economy

A strong economy underpins everything we want to achieve. It will increase wealth, create more opportunities for people, improve living standards, and boost funds for public services. We will encourage growth, foster innovation, support businesses and help create new jobs.

The challenge

The Dorset Council area has a significant economy incorporating 20,000 businesses, generating over £8.45 billion of Gross Value Added (GVA - a measure of the value that producers add to goods and services they buy, and is a key indicator of a country's economic performance) and supporting 145,000 jobs.

Dorset's economy is based on fairly traditional industries such as agriculture, retail, coastal and marine, hospitality and leisure, and care services. There are also strengths in advanced manufacturing, maritime, defence, and emerging expertise in renewable energy.

Productivity has stalled over the last 25 years. Our economy grew by only 6% during that period, compared to 31% in the BCP Council area, 35% in the southwest and 43% nationally.

Large numbers of Dorset's young people leave the county to find employment elsewhere. Meanwhile, employers tell us they often struggle to recruit and retain people with the right skills. This challenge is compounded by high house prices and poor transport connectivity in some areas. Digital and mobile phone connectivity is unreliable, especially in rural areas.

For the past decade strategic economic planning, whether in the form of industrial strategies, strategic economic plans, or growth deals, has been undertaken on a pan-Dorset geography. These Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership-led initiatives were reflective of the shared economic challenges and sectors Dorset held with the BCP (Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole) Council geography.

In the Dorset Council area, we will develop and implement a strategy which is representative of its unique economic geography and specific business sectors. A strategy that considers an approach to growth regardless of location but also plays on localised strengths and opportunities.

Our approach

We recognise a change is needed to break the cycle of slow economic growth.

We need to support and diversify the economy by embedding digital technology across all sectors, investing in our advanced and often bespoke manufacturing sector, and making more of our natural advantages in clean energy, maritime and defence. There is a need to introduce scale into these sectors.

Bringing productivity up to the UK average would generate an additional £1.6 billion for Dorset, leading to higher paid jobs and greater disposable income.

We will step into the space vacated by the Dorset LEP and move forward into a new direct relationship with both businesses and government, set out in an economic strategy that is specific to Dorset. We will build a new set of strategic relationships with the business community that enables them to feed into the democratic decision-making process.

Target measures

- narrow the Dorset to UK productivity gap by 5% by 2029
- generate over 2000 jobs and over £500m of private sector investment in renewable energy projects by 2029
- increase total visitor-related spend in Dorset by 5% by 2029
- by 2029, create 1000 business start-up courses for 16 to 34 year-olds to encourage young people into entrepreneurship
- support community-led masterplans in at least 70% of the coastal and market towns by 2029
- a new delivery company for the Dorset Innovation Park will be launched in 2025, creating 300 jobs by 2029

Key actions to deliver this priority

- establish a new business representation group made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies and develop a tailored economic growth strategy for the Dorset Council area
- develop a strategic relationship with the Dorset Chamber of Commerce and support the development of local chambers and Business Improvement Districts to generate business engagement and intelligence
- focus our efforts on delivering a small number of exciting, large-scale opportunities which will make a significant difference to the county's economic performance:
 - work with the private sector to secure investment in low carbon and renewable energy projects in Dorset: including green hydrogen storage and production; offshore wind generation and manufacturing. This will support the emerging clean energy super cluster around Portland and South Dorset that can have national significance
 - kickstart the regeneration of Weymouth by developing underused sites to improve the offer and vibrancy of the town. Create a "growth corridor" with Portland and Dorchester, bringing economic benefits to the wider area
- encourage increased levels of sustainable tourism and continue to explore ways to extend the visitor season throughout the year
- continue to implement our digital Infrastructure and Inclusion strategy, working with government and industry to improve connectivity across the county, tackling those hard-to-reach areas where digital connectivity inhibits economic growth
- review transport provision, including public, post-16, community and SEND transport, looking at options to enhance future provision
- pursue a Devolution Deal with neighbouring authorities to secure devolved powers and funding from government which can support green energy projects, and digital and transport infrastructure
- develop a coastal and market towns strategy framework to support growth and regeneration, working in partnership with town and parish councils, and seeking funding from government
- enable private sector investment into the build out of Dorset Innovation Park, creating an additional 300 new jobs on the site by 2029
- address young people's perception of opportunities and their social mobility by encouraging entrepreneurship and building relationships with local businesses

Leadership and partnership

- reset our relationship with national government: develop a direct relationship with national government identifying and promoting the strategic projects and sectors that can contribute to the national economic position
- develop a strong inward investment proposition to attract national and international investment into the county
- build relationships with skills providers, colleges and universities to increase the higher education and skills footprint across Dorset and connect businesses with academic-led research and development
- play a leading role in regional politics and lobbying of government, coordinating policy positions that benefit the Dorset economy and key sectors with regional partners such as the Great South West, South West Region Defence and Security Cluster, Maritime UK SW and through a Devolution Deal

Standing up for Dorset

- advocating for Dorset's contribution nationally to economic growth – especially in the green (environment) and blue (marine) economy
- negotiate with the government and bid for funding for essential digital and transport infrastructure

Communities for all

We want to improve the lives of our residents, from the youngest to the oldest. We want to create communities where everyone can thrive, where essential services are accessible, where people can enjoy life at any age and where people look out for each other.

Strong communities foster social support, enhance well-being, and create a sense of belonging, which collectively contribute to a more resilient and cohesive society.

We want public sector resources to be used as effectively as possible to meet local needs, and we need to redesign how the council works with communities.

This Council Plan priority will be shaped through co-design with partners and communities themselves. It will align with Dorset's Integrated Care Partnership strategy. This section sets out our direction of travel. The Council Plan will be updated once the co-design work has been completed.

The challenge

Dorset has many strong communities, with an active voluntary and community sector and over 160 town and parish councils. However, the population and world are changing rapidly, and our communities need support to adapt to the challenges ahead.

Dorset has the oldest demographic of any county in the UK. 29.5% of our population are aged over 60, compared to an average of 19% nationally. As people age, we often need more health and care support, which, unless addressed at an early stage, can put more pressure on already-stretched services. Meanwhile, younger people often move away due to lack of opportunities, low wages and high housing costs, reducing our working age population.

There are also widespread disparities across our area. Our 2023 residents' survey shows significant differences in how residents from different areas view the quality of council services. Some communities are calling for us to work differently to better understand and meet the needs of towns and villages. Some of our town and parish councils are also calling for better partnership working.

South Dorset is the least socially mobile constituency in the country. Social mobility is the link between a person's occupation or income with that of their parents. Many of our communities face deep poverty having experienced hardships for decades, repeatedly appearing in the bottom national measurement for deprivation. There are also areas of poverty in wealthier rural areas, with data averages masking large income inequalities.

Health inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in people's health across social groups and between different populations. In Dorset people are generally healthier and live for longer than England overall; 1.8 years longer for both men and women. However, the length of time people in Dorset live is closely related to the extent of disadvantage and deprivation they experience. Males living in the least deprived areas live on average 5.5 years longer and females 4.9 years longer, than those living in the most deprived areas.

Healthy life expectancy is a measure of how long people can expect to live a healthy life before decline and frailty sets in and is also affected by deprivation and disadvantage. The amount of time spent living in good health before long-term health conditions appear varies greatly across Dorset. People experiencing long-term health conditions affects economic growth and productivity in working-age adults.

Finally, our residents' survey highlighted issues of community cohesion – also evidenced through local protests in August 2024. While three quarters of Dorset's residents feel that they belong in their community, fewer than half (49%) of ethnic minority residents feel the same. In Weymouth and Portland, only 44% of residents feel that people from different backgrounds get on in their local area.

Our approach

The 'communities for all' priority is where our themes of 'prevention' and 'partnership' come most strongly into play.

We believe strong communities have a vital role in preventing crises from happening, both personal and community crises. They are essential responders during crises of all kinds. When people in communities are well-connected and supportive, they can better mobilise resources, provide mutual support, and recover more quickly. This helps ensure our most vulnerable residents receive help from people they know and trust. When residents are connected and look out for one another, communities thrive.

We need to reduce the various inequalities between different groups, giving more equal access to opportunities, and supporting more cohesive communities. We want our services and infrastructure to be age and disability friendly, where people of all abilities and ages can stay in the homes and communities they prefer for as long as they want, reducing the need for major life change or expensive care.

This requires a different way of working with partners and in localities across our area. It requires a comprehensive and joined-up response across public sector, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), with local businesses, and other partners to address social, economic, and infrastructure challenges. We want to build on, accelerate and enhance our approach to place-based working, which is about 'working with' and 'not 'doing to' people and our communities.

Improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty not only benefit individuals and families but also support the wellbeing, resilience and prosperity of a whole community. In turn, this can also achieve a more sustainable model for statutory health and care services.

Target measures

- a joined-up model of locality working, delivering through prevention and partnership: measures to be agreed with local partners and linked back to our priorities and the work of the NHS, the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Integrated Care Partnership
- improve educational attainment by working through leadership in the education community: increase Dorset's Key Stage 2 results (55% in 2024) to be as good or better than the national average levels by 2029 (60% in 2024)
- transfer up to £500k a year of Dorset Council's apprenticeship levy to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by local businesses and organisations
- be the best Corporate Parent that we can for our children in care and care leavers. Improve levels of engagement in employment, education, and training among our care leavers to 65% through provision of good, stable, and consistent care and accommodation, good multi-agency wraparound support, and a sufficient number and range of opportunities
- seek internationally recognised accreditation as an 'age-friendly' county
- work specifically with those groups at higher risk, including supporting unpaid carers, those ageing without children and those ageing alone
- increase the number of age and disability friendly environments to enable people to stay in the homes they want for longer, reducing the proportion of people in traditional care settings, as well as creating all-age friendly environments, equally accessible by young parents with pushchairs as they are to older people with walkers or disabled people

Key actions to deliver this priority

- prevention and early help: listen to and involve residents in decisions about their health and wellbeing, and care and support needs. Use data to better understand current needs and identify potential issues before they become problems. We will make changes when needed to improve people's outcomes, access or experience, to improve equity and reduce inequalities in health
- thriving communities: work more closely with town and parish councils and with voluntary and community sector organisations to support residents, investing in the infrastructure
- work better together: put people's and communities' needs at the heart of how we plan care and support. Work with Integrated Care System partner organisations to provide care as close as possible to those who need it. We value the strength of voluntary and community organisations in this partnership
- commissioning and procurement: co-design and deliver with communities and partners on a locality basis, devolving funding to neighbourhoods where appropriate
- change the culture: focus on people first and act on feedback about quality of services and experience
- simplify our approach to communities so it is consistent: a more joined-up and coherent model of place-based working, building on existing arrangements, developing strong relationships locally, and using existing assets in communities, such as libraries and family hubs. This will be built into our new target operating model (this sets out how we will introduce new ways of working with residents and communities)
- strengthen and simplify the connection between Dorset Council and the voluntary and community sector through an active assembly, including simplifying access to funding

- engage with people closer to home, with dignity and respect: be honest about options and involve people in decisions
- support people of working age who are economically inactive to address barriers to employment
- devolve or transfer more assets to communities to enable creation of local hubs where people can access support and care
- through the collective efforts to deliver on the Council Plan priorities of ‘provide high-quality housing’, ‘grow our economy’, and ‘communities for all, we aim to improve social mobility and reduce poverty in the Dorset Council area

Leadership and partnership

- we have been a trailblazer working on the government’s Families First for Children Pathfinder. We will continue to work very closely with our partners in health, the police, education and the voluntary sector to put families at the centre of changes to the delivery of support they receive from us and our partners
- recognising our unique demographic, we aim to lead the UK in how we support people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, within an ageing population
- we will combat stigmatising attitudes and behaviours, and encourage intergenerational activities
- play a clear role in building new health and care teams in neighbourhoods, working with the NHS, residents and communities
- continue to work in partnership with Dorset Police on community safety

Standing up for Dorset

- call on the government for fairer funding for Dorset schools and for children with special educational needs
- influence government on issues of healthy ageing and disability
- work with NHS, business, community partners and others to maximise income to support the health needs of our population and develop new and innovative models of preventative work
- promote Dorset as a great place to live and work, recognising the “grey economy”, identifying age-appropriate employment opportunities and recruiting a younger workforce through developing training opportunities within the county.

Responding to the climate and nature crisis

Addressing the climate and nature emergencies is vital for current and future generations: to protect lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Whilst this is a huge global and national challenge, many solutions are local. Dorset has a role to play in helping tackle climate change and support nature recovery. In doing so, we can strengthen community resilience and stimulate economic growth.

The challenge

Climate change

Climate change is one of the most urgent challenges facing the world today, demanding immediate and decisive action. Rising global temperatures are increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like heatwaves, floods, and wildfires. And sea levels are rising at a rate three times faster than a century ago.

As a rural, coastal county we are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, which will include more frequent heatwaves, fewer frost days, heavier rainfall, increased flooding, and more intense storms. Our seaside communities are particularly exposed to rising sea levels which can lead to coastal erosion, flooding, and damage to infrastructure. Our rural communities risk being impacted by unpredictable weather patterns which can harm crops and livestock, disrupt planting and harvesting schedules, and reduce overall agricultural productivity.

But, by taking the right actions now, we can help address climate change and ensure a safer, more resilient Dorset for future generations.

Nature crisis

The UK is facing a nature crisis, now ranking as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with nearly 1 in 6 species threatened with extinction. Unfortunately, here in Dorset we're no exception. Over the years, many areas for nature in our county have been split up or lost, leading to a decline in local wildlife. More than 3,000 species of plants and animals in Dorset are now of conservation concern, meaning they are rare, threatened, protected, declining or extinct.

But this loss of natural spaces doesn't just affect wildlife - it impacts us too. Our green spaces, which are essential for our health and wellbeing, also provide critical nature-based solutions to pressing challenges like flood protection, climate change, and water quality.

By taking action today to restore and expand spaces for nature, we can help build and protect homes for wildlife and ensure a healthier, more resilient future for both nature and our communities.

Our approach

Our vision is to create a climate friendly, nature rich county that is able to adapt and thrive in the face of environmental change.

Our strategic approach to bring this vision to life is as follows:

- **Cutting greenhouse gas emissions:** We will speed up our efforts to become a carbon neutral county and council, bringing forward our net zero targets by 5 years. As a council we aim to reach net zero by 2035, and the entire county by 2045. By tackling climate change at its source, we can help pave the way for a more sustainable future.
- **Halt nature's decline:** In collaboration with others, we will take immediate action to help protect and enhance our land, rivers, and seas for wildlife. Through Dorset's Local Nature Recovery strategy, we will set clear goals and build a strong foundation to help make sure spaces for nature are bigger, better and more connected in our county by 2030.

- **Prepare for a changing climate:** We are committed to helping our communities, ecosystems, and economies adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, ensuring Dorset is resilient and well-prepared for the future.

Target measures

- deliver a revised carbon reduction target of 80% from 2019 baseline by 2030 to include:
 - Dorset Council fleet: transition all small vehicles to electric by 2030 and all large vehicles to use alternative low emission fuels by 2026 to reduce our fleet emissions by 70% by 2026
 - generate more of our own energy by installing an additional 5MW of solar PV on our estate by 2030
 - switch all our oil-fired heating systems to non-fossil fuel alternatives by 2028
 - reduce our emissions from staff travelling for business by at least 25% by 2029
 - ensure our services are resilient to climate change by having climate adaptation plans for each service by March 2026
- achieve a 65% recycling and composting rate by 2035 and ensure the optimum use of the recycling and composting services provided
- nature recovery target is for 30% of our land to be in positive management for nature by 2030. Other targets include:
 - 80% of our urban verges will be managed to enhance their value for nature by 2030 (currently 50%)
 - improve 300 miles of the Rights of Way network, making it more accessible to connect people's access to nature by 2030 (30 miles in last 10 years)
 - 70% of our county farms land will be managed using sustainable farming practices that balance food production and nature by 2030 (currently 5%)
 - 15,000 hectares of Dorset are covered by Landscape Recovery management agreements by 2030 (currently 0 hectares)

Key actions to deliver this priority

- reduce Dorset's impact on climate change by:
 - significantly reducing emissions from our fleet vehicles by transitioning all small vehicles to electric by 2030 and all large vehicles to alternative low emission fuels by 2025
 - generating more of our own energy by installing an additional 5MW of solar PV on our estate by 2030
 - working with others to create a roadmap to help Dorset meet its net-zero goals, identifying the most cost-effective and practical pathways to reduce emissions
 - helping residents and organisations to improve energy efficiency and use renewable energy in their homes and buildings through advice, grants and guidance
- develop and implement the Local Nature Recovery strategy, working across organisational systems to deliver change at scale

- renew the rights of way improvement plan (ROWIP) which explains the aspirations and improvements proposed for Dorset’s public rights of way network to benefit the community, nature and climate and support the local economy
- help communities adapt for climate change impacts and recover nature, working with town and parish councils and other partners
- ensure our services are resilient to climate change by having climate adaptation plans for each service by March 2026

Leadership and partnership

- work with partners across Dorset to help reduce its carbon footprint by 50% by 2030 (relative to our 2017 baseline)
- support all Dorset public sector organisations to develop climate resilience plans by 2026
- produce a strategy setting out how Dorset will adapt and become more resilient to climate change by 2026
- work with the farming community to support sustainable farming which will reduce emissions, improve water quality and make more space for nature
- work with water companies to improve water quality and reduce pollution of rivers and the sea
- lead on the development and implementation of the Dorset Local Nature Recovery strategy
- support landowners, town and parish councils, businesses, schools and communities to take action to recover nature locally
- support the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscape Partnerships in their nature recovery as set out in their apportionment of the Protected Landscapes Targets & Outcomes Framework
- continued support of the Dorset Coast Forum and Litter Free Dorset to deliver sustainable practices and nature recovery through their wide partnerships and to the communities of Dorset
- ensure over time that the businesses and organisations we have contracts with provide nature recovery and sustainability credentials as a matter of course
- work with partners to develop a Local Area Energy plan

Standing up for Dorset

- influence government for increased focus on retrofitting homes
- make the case for increased investment into our electricity grid system
- call on pharmaceutical companies to take more responsibility for waste
- make representations to government to invest in Dorset Local Nature Recovery strategy (LNRS) implementation
- ask for new nature funds to deliver the LNRS with Farming in Protected Landscapes an effective delivery model to copy
- work with farmers to support their asks to government around supporting sustainable farming in Dorset
- ask government for more investment in sustainable transport infrastructure.

Dorset at a glance

Changing population

- Dorset has the largest proportion of people aged 65 and over (29.5%) of any unitary authority in England. The median age in Dorset is 51.6, up by 4 years since 2011, compared to 40.6 for England & Wales. An older age population means fewer people of working age and more people potentially requiring care
- an ageing population provides a wealth of skills, experience, knowledge and a population that are often willing to give back to their communities through volunteering

Economy

- Dorset's weekly earnings for residents is 90% of the national figure
- Dorset's local productivity is falling behind the rest of the UK, producing 15% less per hour than the national average
- Dorset's working age population has fallen over the past ten years and this trend is projected to continue – in particular, we lose residents aged between 18 and 39
- Dorset businesses lead nationally on aquaculture, maritime automation and agri-tech
- our unique landscape offers huge potential for renewable energy. We produce far more renewable electricity than many authorities (328,383 MWH)

Housing

- in the last ten years, median house prices have risen by £122,000 in Dorset and are higher than both the national and regional prices
- average house prices are 12 times higher than average salaries
- private rental costs are on par with national rents but the gap between local housing allowance and rents has widened

Rurality

- Dorset has poor connectivity – no motorways, 58% gigabit broadband compared to 84% nationally and 90% in BCP Council area, and among the worst mobile phone connectivity in the UK
- 46% of Dorset's residents live in areas that are difficult to access to services, compared to 18% across England
- the council faces additional costs providing services to rural areas
- Dorset contains all six of Britain's native reptile species, 93% of all mammal species and 90% of British Butterfly species
- Dorset is home to the England's only natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast and has two National Landscape areas, covering 54% of the council area
- our unique landscape provides opportunities to expand the blue and green economy and exploit the higher educational potential of studying the environment

Health and deprivation

- the gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and least deprived areas of Dorset is 6.3 years for men and 5.3 years for women
- there are 11 areas in Dorset within the top 20% most deprived nationally for multiple deprivation, up from 10 in 2015. 10 of these are in Weymouth and Portland

Climate

- Dorset's greenhouse gas emissions fell by over 4% from 2019-2021, and by a third since 2005
- Dorset's renewable energy capacity continues to increase. It now stands at 347 MW (2022), an increase of 16% in a year
- Dorset's* environmental economy is worth between £0.9bn and £2.5bn per annum. It also supports between 17,000 and 61,000 jobs in the economy. *inc. BCP Council area

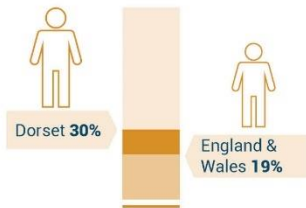
Crime

- Dorset has the fourth lowest total crime per 1,000 population of any unitary authority in England

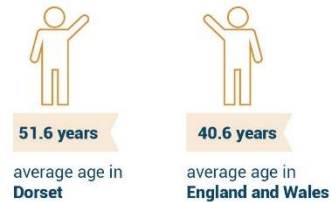
Dorset at a glance

Ageing population

65+ year olds in Dorset



Average age in Dorset



Experience and knowledge



An ageing population brings valuable skills, experience, and knowledge, and often contributes to their communities through volunteering

Economy

Working age population



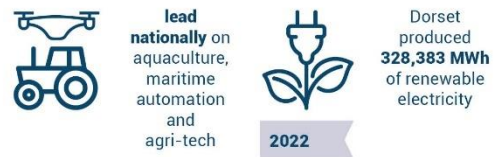
Average weekly earnings



Value produced for every hour worked

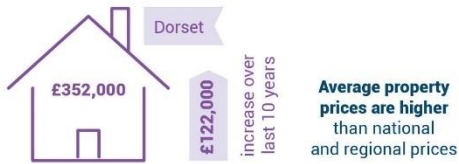


Dorset businesses

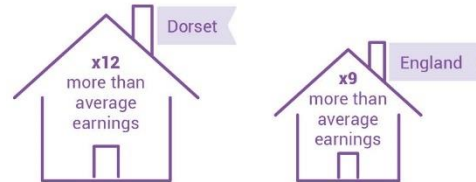


Housing

Average property prices



Average property prices are...



Private rental prices



Rurality

Connectivity



Access to services



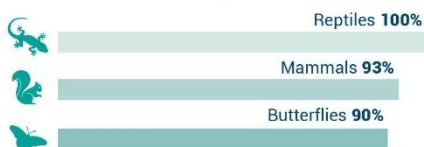
Limited public transport



Services to rural areas



Native species living in Dorset



Natural status



Health and deprivation

Deprived areas



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

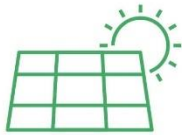
Life expectancy gap



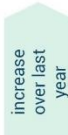
age gap between most deprived and least areas of Dorset

Climate

Renewable energy production in Dorset



2022
16%



increase over last year

Greenhouse gas emissions



2019-2021

4% reduction

greenhouse gas emissions fell by over **4%** from **2019-2021** and by a **third** since **2005**

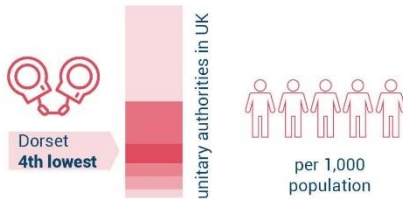
Dorset environmental economy



...is valued at up to **£2.5bn per year** of the local economy and supports up to **61,000** jobs

Crime

total crime per 1,000 population



Dorset
4th lowest

unitary authorities in UK

per 1,000 population

What we do

We provide around 450 different services to over 380,000 residents. Waste collection, road maintenance, planning, housing, libraries, and adults and children's social care are just some of the vital services which support the smooth running of our local communities.

The residents' survey, conducted every 2 years with a weighted sample which is representative of the population of the Dorset Council area, shows that waste collection, street cleaning and highways maintenance are perceived to be the council services which matter most to residents and their families. We recognise how highly these services are valued by residents, and we are committed to the continued delivery of these important services.

We work closely with many partners and deliver some services through strategic partnerships, such as the Integrated Care System.

The council is led by 82 Dorset councillors, elected by our residents.

- we carry out 23,692,500 household waste collections a year
- 2% of waste goes to landfill, with a recycling and composting rate at 58.9 per cent, putting us in the top three unitary councils in England
- we maintain 2,400 miles of road, fix around 20,000 potholes, apply 100 miles of surface treatment and resurface around 5.5 miles of footways/cycleways every year
- we process over 4,000 planning applications a year
- we supported thousands of residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, including administering funding of £20 million for free school meals, supermarket vouchers and help for food projects, utility costs and housing
- we support 1,804 children in need, including looking after 300 children with a Child Protection Plan
- our adult social services give direct support to 4,048 people and delivered 13,831 hours of home care
- we care for 1,010 people with a learning disability and 363 people with mental health related conditions
- our libraries cater to local needs in information, learning, literacy, employment, digital skills, health and wellbeing
- in a year, our libraries issue over 1 million books and 500,000 e-resources and host 87,000 attendees at events like author talks, rhyme time sessions and code clubs
- in a year, our libraries provide over 59,000 sessions on our free computers
- we support housing associations to deliver new affordable homes. There are 22,000 housing association homes in the Dorset Council area
- in 2023/24 we helped deliver 508 new affordable homes.
- in one year, more than 4,000 households approached us as homeless or at risk of homelessness
- there are 5,700 households on the housing register
- 4,192 Dorset Council residents were supported to make positive healthy lifestyle changes through LiveWell Dorset – quitting smoking, cutting down on alcohol, managing weight or becoming more active

What we do



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We maintain **2,400 miles** of road, fix around **20,000 potholes**, apply **100 miles** of surface treatment and resurface around **5.5 miles** of footways/cycleways every year.



2% of waste goes to landfill, with a recycling and composting rate at **58.9%**, putting us in the top 3 unitary councils in England.



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We support **1,804 children** in need, including looking after **300 children** with a Child Protection Plan.



Supported thousands of residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, including administering funding of **£20 million** for free school meals, supermarket vouchers and help for food projects, utility costs and housing.



Adult social services give direct support to **4,048** people and delivered **13,831** hours of home care.



In 2023/24 the council helped deliver **508** new affordable homes.



In one year, more than **4,000** households approached the council as homeless or at risk of homelessness.



There are **5,700** households are on the housing register.



We support housing associations to deliver new affordable homes. There are **22,000** housing association homes in the Dorset Council area.



The council cares for **1,010** people with a learning disability and **363** people with mental health related conditions.



4,192 Dorset Council residents were supported to make positive healthy lifestyle changes through LiveWell Dorset, quitting smoking, cutting down on alcohol, managing weight or becoming more active.



In the last year our libraries issued over **1 million books** and **500,000** e-resources and hosted **87,000** attendees at events like author talks, rhyme time sessions and code club

How this Council Plan will be delivered

Strategic planning: related strategies

This Council Plan sets out the strategic priorities that we want to deliver over the next 5 years. This work is underpinned by a number of 'principal strategies', listed below, which set out greater detail on the delivery of these priorities.

We also have a number of 'enabling strategies', also listed below, which support the way in which we will be able to deliver our priorities.

There is a golden thread running from the Council Plan, through the principal and enabling strategies, through service plans, which are updated annually and set out the operational requirements for delivery, and through to individual employee objectives. This ensures that all our planning is aligned with our vision and priorities.

Principal strategies

- [Housing strategy](#)
- [Climate strategy](#)
- [Local Nature Recovery strategy](#)
- Economic growth strategy [to be developed]
- Communities strategy [to be developed]
- [Children, Young People and Families Plan](#)
- Adults '[A better life](#)' strategy
- Local Plan [in development]
- Local Transport Plan [in development]

Enabling strategies

- Medium Term Financial Plan
- [Strategic Asset Management Plan](#)
- People and Culture strategy [in development]
- [Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#)
- Customer strategy [in development]
- Transformation plan [in development]
- Risk management strategy
- [Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion strategy](#)

Our values

Our values as an organisation frame how we will deliver Council Plan priorities. We believe values are key to creating a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable place for all communities. They inform the way we work and underpin relationships with partners, customers and communities.

Our values

Identifying our values as an organisation will play an important part in supporting the success of the Council Plan.

In the summer of 2024, we carried out engagement activity to look at what values were important to our employees and leaders and how they influenced the way they work.

Our employees were asked to consider:

- would the values be fit for the organisation's future
- can they be lived by on a day-to-day basis from the front-line employee to the chief executive
- are they unique to describe Dorset Council
- will they help deliver a positive customer experience

Using the data and evidence gathered, the values we have finalised are: Respect, Together, Accountability, Openness and Curiosity, with Inclusion central to all those values.

Our Organisational Values



How we develop our workforce will be key to realising our ambitions, and we need to ensure that our values reflect in the way that we work and how we engage with partners and residents.

Our equality statement

We believe equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business. Our services and facilities must be accessible to all. We will strengthen relationships with communities and support our diverse workforce and the diversity of Dorset.

[You can read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) strategy in full here.](#)

Transformation

We are undergoing a major transformation programme to improve our services, make things better for our customers and to save costs.

This work has a critical role in ensuring we can deliver our vision and priorities.

It includes establishing and embedding a new operating model and using new technologies to streamline our operations and become more efficient and effective. We use real-life data to inform activity and decisions.

We are encouraging more of our customers to contact us digitally while giving extra support to those who cannot.

We provide early help to prevent a problem becoming a crisis and we work with partners and communities to achieve change together.

Some transformation changes require upfront investment but will save money in the longer term.

This new way of operating is designed to improve our services to meet the needs of all our residents and communities.

Budget priorities and financial strategy

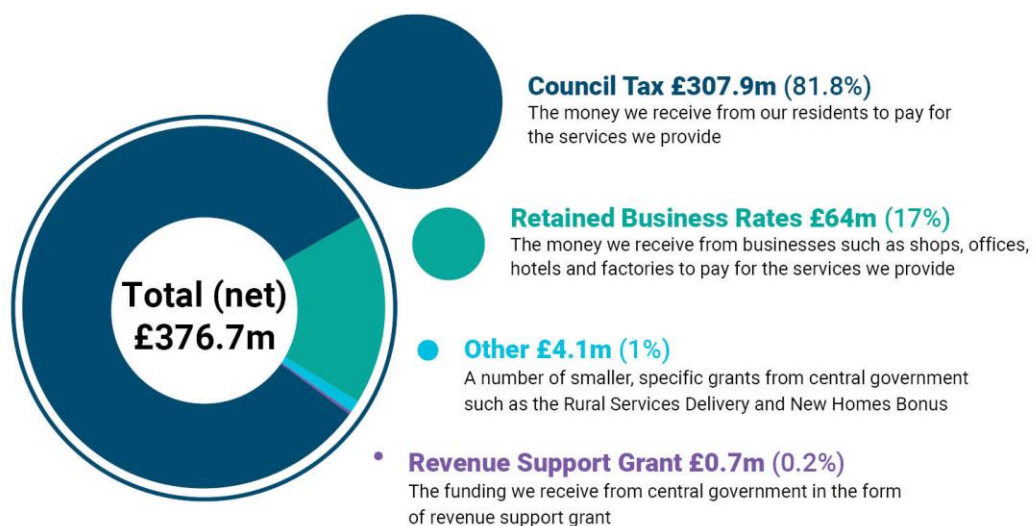
Our annual budget-setting process and medium-term financial plan are aligned to the Council Plan strategic priorities. This ensures the appropriate allocation of staffing, assets and financial resources (capital and revenue) to achieve those priorities.

We continue to face a challenging financial position, with rising demand for services, inflationary pressures and reduced funding from government. The budget setting process requires creativity, innovation, and robust prioritisation and planning.

How the budget is funded

This pie chart sets out the sources of funding for Dorset Council:

2024/2025 - Dorset Council sources of funding



How the budget is spent

The infographic below shows how Dorset Council's budget is allocated.



We are committed to fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Strategic risk management

Managing and mitigating potential risk is critical to the success of any organisation.

As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated, unforeseen circumstances require quick action and the ability to adapt.

There are major risks that could result in events or circumstances that might threaten our business model, future performance in achieving the ambitions set out in this Council Plan, solvency or liquidity and reputation.

Here are the principal risks we constantly plan for so we are ready to act should they happen:

Commercial – Commercial risks are those that could result in the council losing a commercial partnership or failure of a supply chain.

Data and information management – Risks of this nature are centred around failures to prevent unauthorised or inappropriate access, as well as failures to enable legitimate use of our data, systems, and assets.

Finance – Our financial stability is driven by increased budgetary pressures in an increasingly challenging financial environment.

Legal – These are risks concerned with non-compliance of regulations, laws or statutory obligations that may result in penalties, fines or other legal consequences.

Operations - Operational risks are associated with the uncertainties that we face during our day-to-day activities delivering services.

People – We are faced with a challenging environment in recruiting and retaining the necessary people to deliver our objectives.

Project / programme – Project and programme risks are centred around projects not aligning with our strategic priorities as well as projects being unable to deliver the intended benefits, on time and within budget.

Property – We have a large portfolio of properties and as such associated risks ranging from property defects to ineffective or inefficient safety management protocols.

Reputation – Reputational risks are those that could be uncovered through adverse events in the form of ethical infringements, failure to meet objectives or lack of innovation.

Security – Our security risks include unauthorised and / or in appropriate use of our systems and assets including cyber security, digital and physical access to our assets.

Technology - Technology risks are such risks that arise from technology not delivering services as expected because of deficient systems or processes.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Council Plan 2024-2029

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

New strategy

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

External (residents, communities, partners)

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

The Council Plan has been developed based on the current administration's election manifesto, as well as feedback from residents and partner organisations. The plan is underpinned by a 'PESTLE' analysis (looking at Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental data and trends), which examines the changing environment in which the council operates now and in future.

Our four strategic priorities set out where we want to make a significant and positive difference. They are:

- Provide high quality housing
- Grow our economy
- Communities for all
- Respond to the climate and nature crisis

The council plan is an overarching strategy which sits above and pulls together different council strategies and action plans which set out how the organisation will achieve the above priorities.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

It is important that Dorset Council is clear in its articulation of its priorities, so that the residents of Dorset, our partners and colleagues who work throughout the organisation have a clear understanding of what this authority is aiming to deliver. The Council Plan is the key strategic business plan for the council. It sets out the council's vision, values and strategic priorities for the period of the current administration.

The Council Plan is the document that will provide visible accountability for performance, risk management and will shape how the council adapts to a changing world during the next five years. It sets the 'golden thread' for the work of colleagues to ensure that we are delivering against the priorities of the administration.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):

6.1 Demographic data¹

Tables 1 to 14 share national and local protected characteristic data, which is based on the census 2021.

Table 1: Proportion of Armed forces veterans, census 2021

Armed forces veterans	Dorset council area residents 16+
Previously served in regular UK armed forces	4.9%
Previously served in reserve UK armed forces	0.4%
Previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces	0.3%

Table 2: Proportion of Dorset residents by age, census 2021

Age	Dorset council area (all residents)
24 and under	23.2%
25-39	14.1%
40-49	10.7%
50-59	14.9%
60-64	7.6%
65-74	15.1%
75+	14.4%

Table 3: Proportion of Dorset residents providing unpaid care, census 2021

Carers	Dorset council area (all residents, 5+)
Providing unpaid care	9.36%

Table 4: Proportion of Dorset residents by disability, census 2021

¹ There is no pregnancy or maternity data provided because it is not provided by the 2021 census or suitable information being available.

Disability	Dorset council area (all residents in households)
Disclosed disability	19.3%
No disability	80.7%

Table 5: Proportion of Dorset residents by ethnicity, census 2021

Ethnic minorities	Dorset council (all residents)
Arab	0.1%
Asian	1.1%
Black	0.3%
Mixed	1.2%
Other	0.3%
White: Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	0.2%
White: Irish	0.5%
White: Other	2.5%
Ethnic minorities	6.1%
White: British	93.9%

Table 6: Proportion of Dorset residents by gender identity, census 2021²

Gender identity	Dorset council area residents 16+
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	94.34%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.09%
Trans woman	0.07%
Trans man	0.05%
Non-binary	0.04%
All other gender identities	0.03%
Not answered	5.38%

Table 7: Proportion of Dorset residents by legal partnership status, census 2021

² The Office for National Statistics has confirmed this data set is 'official statistics in development.' This reflects their innovative nature and the evolving understanding of measuring gender identity, along with the uncertainty associated with these estimates.

Legal partnership status	Dorset council area residents 16+
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	10.8%
Married, civil partnership, separated but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership	53.7%
Single, never married and never registered a civil partnership	27.4%
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	8.2%

Table 8: Proportion of Dorset residents that are lone parents, census 2021

Lone parent	Dorset council area (all residents in households)
Single family households that are a lone parent family	8.1%

Table 9: Proportion of Dorset residents by nationality, census 2021

Nationality	Dorset council area (all residents)
United Kingdom	96.8%
European countries	2.3%
Non-European countries	0.9%

Table 10: Proportion of Dorset residents by religion and belief, census 2021

Religion and Belief	Dorset Council residents (all)
Buddhist	0.4%
Hindu	0.2%
Jewish	0.1%
Muslim	0.4%
Sikh	<0.0%
Other	0.6%
Christian	51.6%
No religion	40.1%
Not declared	6.5%

Table 11: Proportion of Dorset residents who live in areas of rural isolation³

Rural isolation	Dorset council area
Residents	46.0%

Table 12: Proportion of Dorset residents by sex, census 2021

Sex	Dorset council area (all residents)
Female	51.4%
Males	48.6%

Table 13: Proportion of Dorset residents by sexual orientation, census 2021

Sexual orientation	Dorset council area residents 16+
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Other	2.2%
Heterosexual	90.6%
Did not answer	7.2%

Table 14: Socio-economic deprivation within Dorset Council area, census 2021

Socio-economic deprivation	Dorset council area (households)
Households	15.1%

6.2 Dorset Council Residents Survey 2023

- The residents' survey provides insight into residents' perceptions of where they live and the council and its services. The findings are statistically representative of the population of the Dorset Council area.
- 2,461 respondents completed the survey
- Resident surveys were previously conducted in 2019, 2020 and 2021
- Respondents were asked to complete demographic questions about age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

6.3 Big Conversation Engagement activities, summer 2024

'A Big Conversation' resident engagement programme was delivered to achieve meaningful dialogue with our residents and communities, seeking their views on the council's proposed priorities for the next 5 years. By bringing people together (online and in person), we were able to understand individual views and use the insight to shape the Council Plan. There is a separate Big Conversation report available.

³ This data is based on Mid Year Estimates from 2018 - this is due to the Indices of Deprivation being released in 2019 which have current not been updated. Sources are 2018 MYE ONS; ID2019 Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Govt.

7. What did this tell you?

The data provided via these various sources shows that different communities live within the Dorset council area, which needs to be considered when developing policies and services for the future.

7.1 Census

The census data tells us the following:

- Nearly 5% of our residents are Armed forces veterans.
- The largest proportion of residents are drawn from the age groupings 24 and under or 65+.
- 9% of our residents are providing unpaid care.
- Just over 19% of our residents have a disability.
- Six per cent of our residents are from an ethnic minority.
- Many of our residents (94.3%) have the same gender identity as registered at birth.
- Many of our residents (53.7%) are married, civil partnership, separated but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership.
- Just over 8% of households are lone-parent families
- The nationality of our residents is from the United Kingdom
- Just over 50% of our residents identify as being Christian.
- 46% of our residents live in areas of rural isolation
- Many residents (51.4%) identify as being female.
- 15.1% of our residents experience socio-economic deprivation

7.2 Resident survey

A summary of the resident survey results tells us the following:

- Men, respondents aged 16 to 54, respondents from the most deprived quintile and respondents from Dorset South were less likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- Men, respondents aged 16 to 54, respondents from the most deprived quintile and respondents from Dorset South were less likely to be satisfied with the way Dorset Council runs things.
- Respondents aged 16 to 34 and respondents from Dorset South and South East Dorset were less likely to agree that Dorset Council provides value for money.
- Respondents aged 35 to 54, and respondents from South East Dorset were less likely to think Dorset Council acts on the concerns of residents.
- Respondents from younger age groups, respondents from the deprived quintile and respondents from Dorset North, Dorset South and South East Dorset were less likely to think Dorset Council keeps residents informed.
- Respondents aged 35 to 54 were less likely to say they trust Dorset Council.
- Women, respondents aged 16 to 34, those from the most deprived quintile and those from Dorset South were less likely to feel safe when outside in their local area after dark.

The residents' survey showed significant differences in perceptions and levels of satisfaction between residents in different parts of the Dorset Council area, which has directly informed the new 'Communities for all' strategic priority and the need to enhance the council's model for locality working.

7.3 Big Conversation

The Big Conversation engagement activity over the summer tested the proposed priorities with residents and other stakeholders. The overall outcome summary identified the following.

- The 'Communities for all' priority has the highest agreement overall compared to the other priorities.
- 'Kickstart the regeneration of Weymouth and surrounding areas' had the highest disagreement of all the themes at 21.79%.
- As an overall priority, the economy section had the highest disagreement percentages – namely due to 'Kickstart the regeneration of Weymouth and surrounding areas' (21.79%) and 'Support local and sustainable tourism' (9.19%).
- Across all the housing themes there is a high level of agreement, particularly in relation to reducing empty homes.
- 'Reduce Dorset's impact on climate change' and 'Help communities adapt for climate change impacts' had disagreement rates of 10.93% and 9.51% respectively. 'Support the recovery of nature' however had the 4th highest overall agreement, at 97.41%.
- Town and Parishes specifically disagreed with the 'Kickstart the regeneration of Weymouth and surrounding areas' aim, with 66.67% disagreeing across the 4 events.
- When looking at the youth events, the lowest agreement rate was with the 'Support local and sustainable tourism' aim at 60.71%.
- A reoccurring theme across all 12 of the overarching themes was regarding public and/or community transport.

Feedback from this engagement has been used to help shape the Council Plan and ensure it meets resident expectations.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

- Members of the Joint Overview Committee
- Cabinet members
- Corporate Director, Strategy, Performance and Sustainability
- Corporate Director, Transformation, Customer & Cultural Services
- Head of Strategic Comms and Engagement
- Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

No

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqIA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqIA, please answer the following question:

N/A

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require a EqIA because (provide details):

N/A

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

- Positive Impact**
 - the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
- Negative Impact**
 - protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
- Neutral Impact**
 - no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
- Unclear**
 - not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan, which include providing affordable, high-quality, and safe housing for all our residents of different age groups.

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Age	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on different age groups by encouraging growth, fostering innovation and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and help the council achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on different age groups because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of age. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on different age groups living within or visiting Dorset as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared for adapting to environmental change.
Disability	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact from achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan, which include providing affordable, high-quality, and safe housing for all our residents with a disability.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents/visitors who have a disability by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and help the council achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
		Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who have a disability because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive. Achievement of this priority will support improvements

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
	Communities for all		<p>to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors with a disability as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan, which will provide affordable, high-quality, and safe housing for all our residents of different gender identities.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents/visitors with different gender identities by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and help the council achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors with a different gender identity because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of their gender. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result,</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	<p>the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p> <p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors with a different gender identity as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact from achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan. These objectives will provide affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all married residents or civil partnerships living within the Dorset Council area.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our married or civil partnership residents/visitors by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are married or in a civil partnership because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of their legal status. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are married or in a civil partnership as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Pregnancy and maternity	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact from achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan. These objectives will provide affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all residents who are pregnant or undertake maternity leave.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all residents/visitors who are pregnant/undertake maternity leave by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are pregnant or undertake maternity leave because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of their family leave status. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents who are pregnant or undertake maternity leave as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change. This priority will also benefit future generations – i.e. the babies born to people who are pregnant or on maternity leave.
Religion and belief	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan. These objectives will provide affordable, high-

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Religion and belief			quality, safe housing for all residents who hold a religion and belief. The achievement of this goal will enable all our residents who hold a religion and belief to live and thrive in Dorset.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents/visitors who hold a religion and belief by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who hold a religion and belief because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of their faith. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who hold a religion and belief as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
Sex (consider men and women)	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan and providing affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all our residents, whether female or male.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents/visitors, whether female or male, by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Sex (consider men and women)			to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are either female or male because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of their sex. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are female or male as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
Sexual orientation	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact from achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan, which will provide affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all our residents of different sexual orientations.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents/visitors with different sexual orientations by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
		Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors with different sexual orientations because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of sexuality. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
	Communities for all		<p>individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors with different sexual orientations as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
Rural isolation	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by providing affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all our rurally isolated residents by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents who experience rural isolation by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents who experience rural isolation because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of location. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents who experience rural isolation as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
Socio-economic deprivation	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact from achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan, which will provide affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all our residents who experience socio-economic deprivation. Achieving this goal will enable all our residents who experience socio-economic deprivation to live and thrive in Dorset.
	Grow our economy	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all our residents who experience socio-economic deprivation by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents who experience socio-economic deprivation because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of location. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents who experience socio-economic deprivation as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Lone parents	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by providing affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all our lone parents by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan. Achieving this goal will enable all our lone-parent residents to live and thrive in Dorset.
	Grow our economy	Positive I	We anticipate a positive impact on all our lone parent residents/visitors by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
Lone parents	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are lone parents because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of location. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion, and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on residents/visitors who are lone parents who experience socio-economic deprivation as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.
	Provide high-quality housing	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact by providing affordable, high-quality, safe housing for all members of the armed forces communities by achieving the key housing objectives outlined in the council plan.
		Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all members of the armed forces

Impacts on who or what?	Strategic Priorities	Choose impact	How
Armed forces communities	Grow our economy		communities by encouraging growth, fostering innovation, and supporting business within Dorset. These actions will help create new jobs and enable the council to achieve its economic objectives as outlined in the council plan.
	Communities for all	Positive	<p>We anticipate a positive impact on the armed forces communities because we want to create communities where everyone can thrive regardless of location. Achievement of this priority will support improvements to health, social mobility, inclusion and reduced poverty, which benefits individuals and families and improves the well-being, resilience, and prosperity of a whole community.</p> <p>We recognise that this council priority is the least developed, and further work is needed to share it through co-design with partners and communities. As a result, the action plan has identified the requirement to undertake further work.</p>
Armed forces communities	Respond to the climate and nature crisis	Positive	We anticipate a positive impact on all members of the armed forces as we prepare our communities to become more resilient and well-prepared as they adapt to environmental change.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

We anticipate the new council plan will positively impact residents/visitors.

Further work is required concerning the Communities for all strategic priority. It is recognised that further work will help to strengthen the positive impact identified in the current version of the council plan.

The council plan is considered to have a positive impact as it is committing it to achieve the five level outcomes identified in the EDI Strategy 2024-27. These are:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone’s business
- Services and facilities are accessible for all
- We will strengthen our relationships with communities
- We celebrate and support our diverse workforce
- The council celebrates the diversity of Dorset

It is recognised that possible risks related to cyber, financial issues, climate change, or global events will impact the delivery of the council plan. If this occurs, this EqIA will be reviewed and updated if appropriate.

DRAFT

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Communities for all	To undertake further work to shape the Communities for all priority, which will be achieved through co-design with partners and communities.	Cllr Ryan Hope	TBC
Reporting	Ensure the outcomes of the council's strategic priorities are shared within and outside the council at key points throughout the year.	Steve Ford	TBC
Accessible formats	Ensure the council plan is available in accessible formats that meet the needs of different communities within the Dorset Council area.	Jen Lowis	31 Jan 2025

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: Jen Lowis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Laura Cornette, Business Partner for Communities and Partnerships, James Palfreman-Kay, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Date of completion: 17.10.2024

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date: 17.10.2025

Equality Lead Sign Off: Laura Cornette Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships

Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)

DRAFT

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Recommendation to Dorset Council 5 December 2024

From General Licensing Committee on 23 October 2023

Street Trading Controls – Adoption of Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:
Cllr G Taylor, Health & Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director:
Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: John Newcombe
Title: Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety
Tel: 01305 838027
Email: john.newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the General Licensing Committee recommends to Council:

- i) That Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (as amended) be adopted and shall apply throughout the Dorset Council administrative area with effect from 6 December 2024, or such later date as is agreed by Council.
- ii) That all existing street trading delegations and designated streets remain in place subject to any future amendments.

Appendices and Background papers

[Report to General Licensing Committee 23 Octoer 2024 - Street Trading Controls – Adoption of Schedule 4 of the Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1982](#)

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General Licensing Committee

23 October 2024

Street Trading Controls – Adoption of Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

For Recommendation to Council

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s):

All Councillors

Executive Director:

Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: John Newcombe

Title: Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety

Tel: 01305 838027

Email: john.newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report sets out the details of a proposal to regularise the adoption of the provisions of Part III and Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 ('the 1982 Act') for the whole of the Dorset Council administrative area. Schedule 4 of the 1982 Act contains provisions relating to street trading and the designation of Prohibited, Licensed, and Consent Streets, the setting of fees, the administration of licences and consents, and enforcement in the event of non-compliance.

Recommendations:

That the General Licensing Committee recommends to Council:

- i) That Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (as amended) be adopted and shall apply throughout the

- Dorset Council administrative area with effect from 6 December 2024, or such later date as is agreed by Council.
- ii) That all existing street trading delegations and designated streets remain in place subject to any future amendments.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Adoption of Schedule 4 of the Act, for the whole of the Dorset Council area would enable a new Street Trading Policy to be implemented which would be fair, consistent and equitable across the Dorset Council area. This would give the Council, as Licensing Authority greater control over street trading and would ensure that all traders are subject to the same application, enforcement and licence conditions regardless of where they trade.

There are currently existing designations for Street Trading in the former Weymouth & Portland, West Dorset, Purbeck and East Dorset Council administrative areas.

Each of the former District and Borough Council's had their own policies and procedures for Street Trading and Officers intend to introduce a new Street Trading Policy covering the whole of the Dorset Council administrative area.

1. Background

- 1.1 Street Trading is covered under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. Schedule 4 of the Act has not been adopted across the entire Dorset Council area however there were arrangements in place within several of the predecessor Council areas. Each predecessor Council area also had its own policy and procedures.
- 1.2 A new overarching policy and procedure is therefore required in order for Dorset Council, as Licensing Authority, to be able to exercise Street Trading functions in a fair, safe, well-regulated and equitable manner.
- 1.3 An overarching Street Trading control would also enable a new Street Trading Policy to be implemented which would take into consideration localised schemes managed through Town and Parish Councils (where they exist) as well as any existing bylaws or other restrictions (where they exist).
- 1.4 Should the General Licensing Committee agree to recommend the adoption of Schedule 4 of the Act then the intention would be to publish a draft Street Trading Policy for consultation. Once the consultation has ended, a further report will be considered by the General Licensing Committee regarding the designation of streets in accordance with the new Street Trading Policy.

2. **Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The introduction of the Dorset Council wide adoption of Schedule 4 of the Act, Consent streets, policy and associated administration and enforcement will utilise existing resources. There will be cost implications for adopting Schedule 4 of the Act and advertising the intention to designate streets. However, additional licensing income may be generated as a result of the area wide Policy.

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

- 4.1 There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

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

- 5.1 There could potentially be an impact on the health and wellbeing of the public if street trading controls are not implemented with traders operating from unauthorised pitches at potentially undesirable or dangerous locations.

5. **Other Implications**

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council.

6. **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

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An EqIA will be prepared as part of the wider Dorset Council Street Trading Policy consultation.

8. **Appendices**

Appendix A: Extract from the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

9. **Background Papers**

None

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Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

1982 CHAPTER 30

PART III

STREET TRADING

3 Power of district council to adopt Schedule 4.

A district council may resolve that Schedule 4 to this Act shall apply to their district and, if a council so resolve, that Schedule shall come into force in their district on such day as may be specified in the resolution.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Part III.

Full Council

5 December 2024

Purbeck Pleasure Boat Byelaw 2013 Amendment

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s):

Cllr Bill Trite, Cllr Gary Suttle, Cllr Mike Baker, Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Ben Wilson

Executive Director:

Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: Bridget Betts

Job Title: Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager

Tel: 01305 224760

Email: bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Dorset Council is responsible for the Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws 2013 that covers Swanage, Studland, Kimmeridge and Lulworth. This Byelaw was transferred to Dorset Council as part of Local Government Reorganisation from Purbeck District Council. The Byelaw requires Dorset Council to have responsibility for reducing speed within this area and put out 5 knot speed marker buoys at locations along the bays. The byelaw details the coordinates these buoys are placed around the bays at Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge.

Due to ongoing concerns around water safety Dorset Council set up the Studland and Swanage water safety multiagency partnership to address the water conflicts between different user groups, in particular motorboats/jet skis and other users (swimmers, paddle boarders). In the past three years incidents in the water, particularly from jet ski users has reduced due to this partnership and a range of measures that have been put in place.

The byelaw that is currently in place now requires amendment due to a number of reasons:

- i. Dorset Council has had a formal request from the Studland Marine Bay Partnerships to amend the byelaw as the 5 knot speed marker buoys goes through the newly established voluntary marine no anchor zone where there are now over 75 eco moorings situated during the summer. This has led to confusion from boat users and conflict within a boat mooring area.
- ii. Recreational areas for Studland and Swanage have changed since the original byelaw was drawn up in 2013 and there is a large increase in non-motorised use of the Bay with paddleboards, swimmers and kayakers. The mix of motorised and non-motorised users need to be more seriously considered within the byelaw so that everyone can use the areas for their own interests but at a safe speed.
- iii. There is sea swimming and paddleboarding all year round.
- iv. The language used in the byelaw is confusing and there is no reference to jet skis therefore often those riding them do not think the byelaw is applicable to them.
- v. There has always been debate about whether the buoy positions are located in the right place (currently at 300m) and perhaps need to move closer to the shore. This would be a good opportunity to explore this with those that use the area for water recreation.

Approval for any change in the byelaw will need to be reported back to Full Council after a public consultation period and final confirmation of an amendment to the byelaw will need to be passed to the Secretary of State.

Recommendation:

To authorise officers to proceed with work to amend the Purbeck Pleasure Boat Byelaw 2013 and to carry out engagement with user groups through a formal public consultation and bring back to Full Council before going to the Secretary of State.

Reason for Recommendation:

To protect people's safety at Swanage and Studland in line with our byelaw and to help protect the seagrass beds within the voluntary marine no anchor zone at Studland.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset Council is responsible for the Seaside Pleasure Boat byelaws 2013 that covers Swanage, Studland, Kimmeridge and Lulworth. This byelaw was transferred to Dorset Council as part of LGR from Purbeck District Council.
- 1.2 The byelaw requires Dorset Council to have responsibility for reducing speed within the Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge area and put out 5 knot speed marker buoys at locations along the bays to show where speed restrictions are in place. The byelaw details the coordinates these buoys are placed around the bays at Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge. They also state the time of year they can be placed and removed from the sea (31 March and 30 September).
- 1.3 The 5 knot speed marker buoys are licenced by the Marine management organisation (marine licence - L/2023/00110/1). They are placed at approximately between 100 - 130m intervals by a specialist contractor with an agreed method statement. 26 buoys are placed in Studland, 20 marker buoys are placed in Swanage Bay and 3 marker buoys are placed in Kimmeridge Bay. There are no buoys at Lulworth.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared in response to a formal notice to Dorset Council from Studland Marine Bay Partnership to request that for the 2025 season the position of the 5 knot speed markers in Studland Bay is moved to coincide with the outer limit of the Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ).
- 1.5 The Studland Marine Bay Partnership has been working for the past three years to ensure compliance with the Marine Conservation Zone, and in particular with the Studland Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ) introduced by the MMO in 2022. See appendix ii for the map of the area. Facilitated by the Dorset Coast Forum and supported by Dorset Council, over £400,000 has been secured to install 87 Eco moorings in the bay, which enables recreational boating to continue without damaging the seagrass habitat in the southern part of the bay.
- 1.6 Marker buoys delimit the VNAZ and cover a large area around the eco moorings. The 5 knot speed marker buoys currently run parallel to the shore, and in the southern part of the bay this means they cut through the middle of the VNAZ and through the middle of the Eco moorings. During the 2024 season this created a number of issues, all of which would be resolved if in future the speed restricted zone were extended in the

southern part of the bay to encompass the whole of the VNAZ. These can be summarised as follows:

- i. feedback from numerous boaters that the number of different marker buoys is now quite confusing and makes the bay look very busy.
 - ii. Some of the speed markers are on top of the locations where we have a licence to install new Eco moorings – we have not been able to install them as a result.
 - iii. the prospect of vessels moving at speed through part of this area raises serious health and safety concerns: from a public safety perspective it would make sense that the speed restrictions apply throughout the area where boats can moor rather than just half the area.
- 1.7 By amending the byelaw and therefore changing the location of the 5-knot speed marker buoys the messaging would be clearer as the speed restriction in the whole VNAZ area would mean that on entering the VNAZ, craft must move slowly and not anchor. Currently it gives the impression that outside the 5-knot zone the area is less sensitive, but this is not the case.
- 1.8 An informal consultation was carried out with the Swanage and Studland Water Safety Group who stated that:
- i. recreational areas for Studland and Swanage have changed since the original byelaw was drawn up in 2013 and there is a large increase in non-motorised use of the Bay with paddleboards, swimmers and kayakers.
 - ii. There is sea swimming all year round at Swanage and Studland.
 - iii. There has been an increase in jet skiing in the area since covid and this continues although there are less incidents due to the regular paid water safety patrols set up by the Swanage and Studland water safety partnership,
 - iv. The mix of motorised and non-motorised users need to be more seriously considered within the byelaw so that everyone can use the areas for their own interests but at a safe speed.

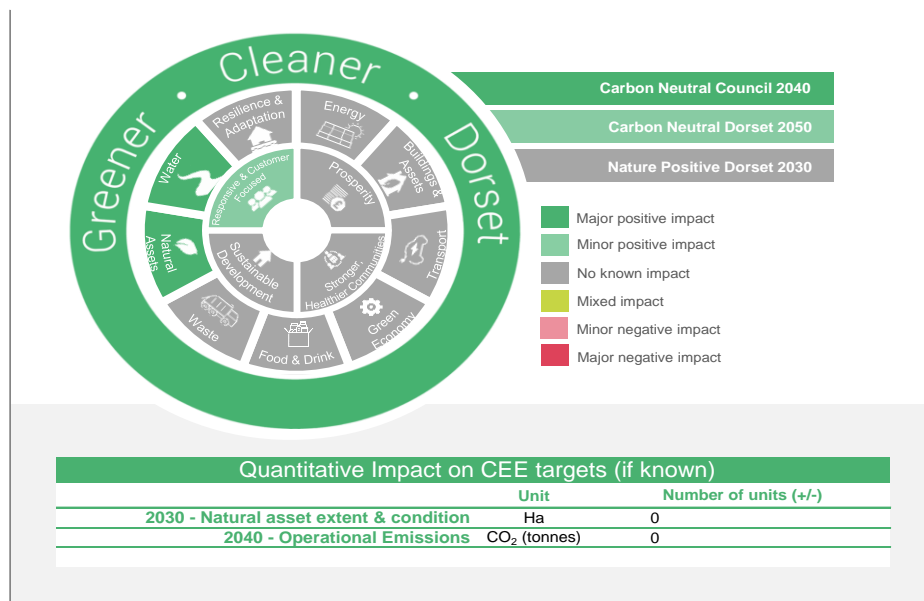
- 1.9 The language used in the byelaw is not clear and who is it for. There is no reference to jet skis therefore often those riding them do not think the byelaw is applicable to them and are surprised to find out that it is.
- 1.10 There has always been debate about whether the buoy positions are positioned in the right place (currently at 300m from the shore) and perhaps need to move closer to the shore. Often jet skis/boats slow down initially but due to the 300m to shore start to speed up again as the distance to the shore is quite some way. This would be a good opportunity to explore this with those that use the area for water recreation.

2. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications from this initial work except for staff resource. There are not anticipated to be any financial implications from a new amended byelaw as there is a budget of £18,000 pa for the putting out and bringing in of the speed marker buoys, repairs and storage. Any change in position of the buoys will require a new marine licence or amendment to the existing licence which could require a small cost.

3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The relocation of the 5 knot speed marker buoys at Studland around the VNAZ area will help protect the seagrass beds.



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

The mix of motorised and non-motorised users at both Swanage and Studland need to be more seriously considered within the byelaw so that everyone can use the areas for their own interests.

5. **Other Implications**

None

6. **Risk Assessment**

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

The risk of not amending the byelaw is:

Current Risk: Medium – reputational risk and health and safety risk

Residual Risk: Low

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not required for asking for approval to proceed with amendment of the byelaw

8. **Appendices**

- i. The Purbeck Seaside Pleasure boat byelaw 2013
- ii. Map showing voluntary no anchor zone area and speed marker buoys
- iii. Accessible Impact Assessment & Table of Recommendations

9. **Background Papers**

None

10. **Report Sign Off**

11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)



The Purbeck District Council (Seaside Pleasure Boats) Byelaws 2013

Purbeck District Council makes these byelaws in exercise of powers conferred by section 76 of the Public Health Act 1961 for the prevention of danger, obstruction or annoyance to persons in the area or using the seashore.

Interpretation

1. (1) These byelaws may be cited as the Purbeck District Council (Seaside Pleasure Boats) Byelaws 2013.

(2) In these byelaws:-

‘the Council’ means Purbeck District Council; and

‘navigator’ means the person who, whether as owner or otherwise, has the charge or control of a pleasure boat or, being present, is entitled to give orders to the person having charge or control of it.

Extent

2. These byelaws apply in the areas described in Part 1 of the Schedule and shown as the areas on the landward side of the broken lines on the maps in Part 2 of the Schedule.

Operation of Pleasure Boats

3. (1) The navigator of a pleasure boat must not from 15th March to 30th September inclusive in any year cause or permit it to exceed or be driven by means of an engine at a speed faster than 5 nautical miles per hour through the water.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a person who is:

- (a) taking part in any event organised by the Council or by any other person with the consent of the Council in writing;
- (b) providing safety facilities at such an event and using a vessel designated for that purpose by the person organising the event; or
- (c) acting in a rescue operation or involved in some other emergency.

Avoidance of danger

4. The navigator of a pleasure boat must not cause or permit it to be used
 - (a) in a dangerous manner;
 - (b) without due care and attention; or
 - (c) without reasonable consideration for other persons.

Use of internal combustion engines

5. The navigator of a pleasure boat propelled by an internal combustion engine must not use the pleasure boat unless the engine is fitted with a silencer suitable and sufficient for reducing as far as may be reasonable the noise caused by the escape of the exhaust gasses from the engine.

Penalty

6. A person who contravenes any of these byelaws is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Saving of Crown and other rights

7. Nothing contained in any of the foregoing byelaws is to be deemed to be or operates as a grant by or on behalf of the Crown as owner of any part of the foreshore and seabed below high watermark of any estate or interest in or right over any such part of the foreshore and seabed, nor does anything contained in or done under any of the provisions of the foregoing byelaws in any respect prejudice or injuriously affect the rights and interests of the Crown in such foreshore and seabed, or prevent the exercise thereon of any public rights or prejudice or injuriously affect any right, power or privilege legally exercisable in, over and in respect of the foreshore and seabed.

Revocation

8. The byelaws relating to seaside pleasure boats which were made by Purbeck District Council on 29th June 1989 and which were confirmed by the Home Office on 4th September 1989 are hereby revoked.

The Schedule

Part 1

These byelaws apply to an area at:-

- (1) Lulworth Cove – landward of an imaginary straight line drawn between East Point and West Point, as shown by the broken line on map 1 in Part 2 of the schedule;



Purbeck District Council
 Thriving communities in balance
 with the natural environment

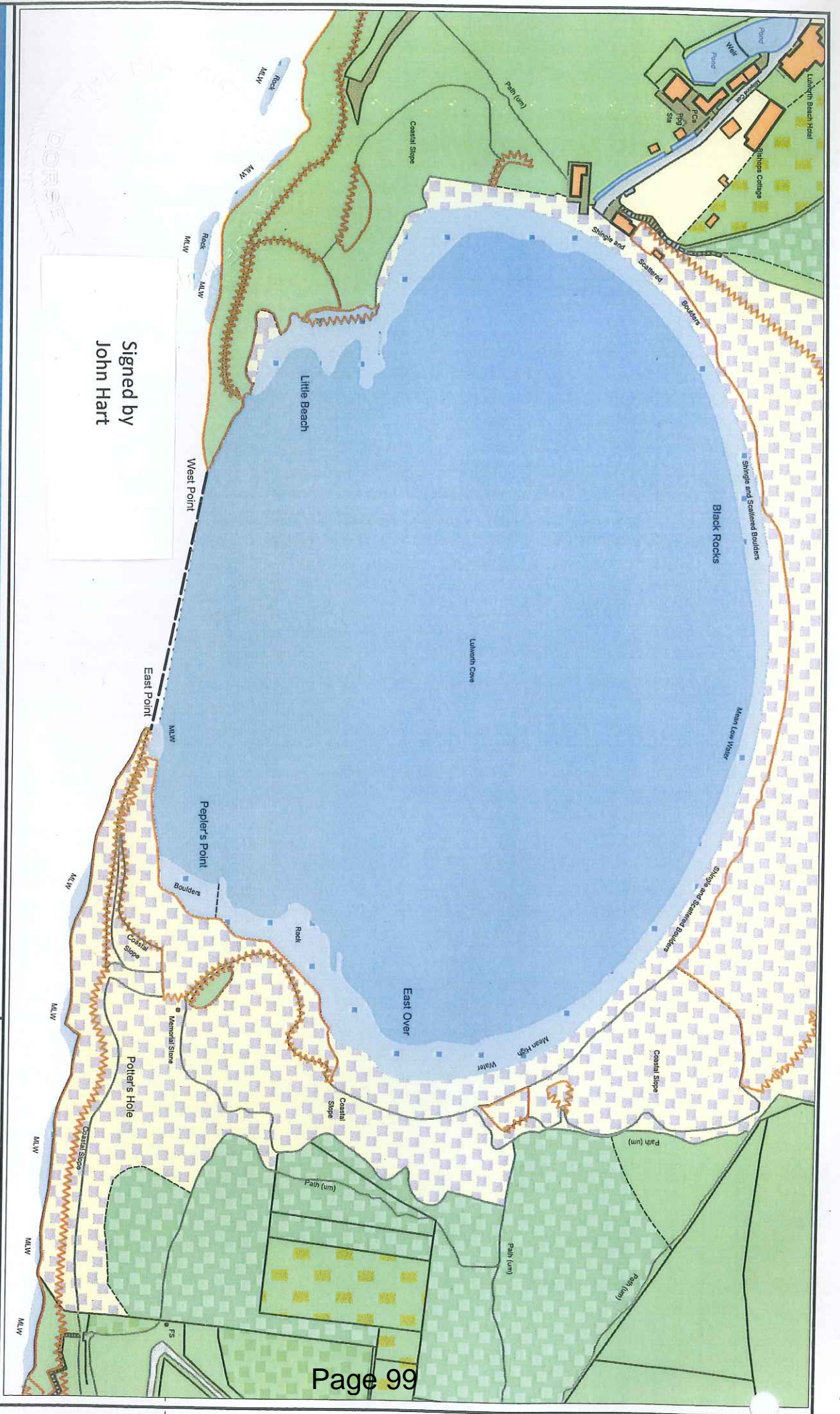
Pleasure Boat Byelaws
 Map 1

For Identification Purposes Only

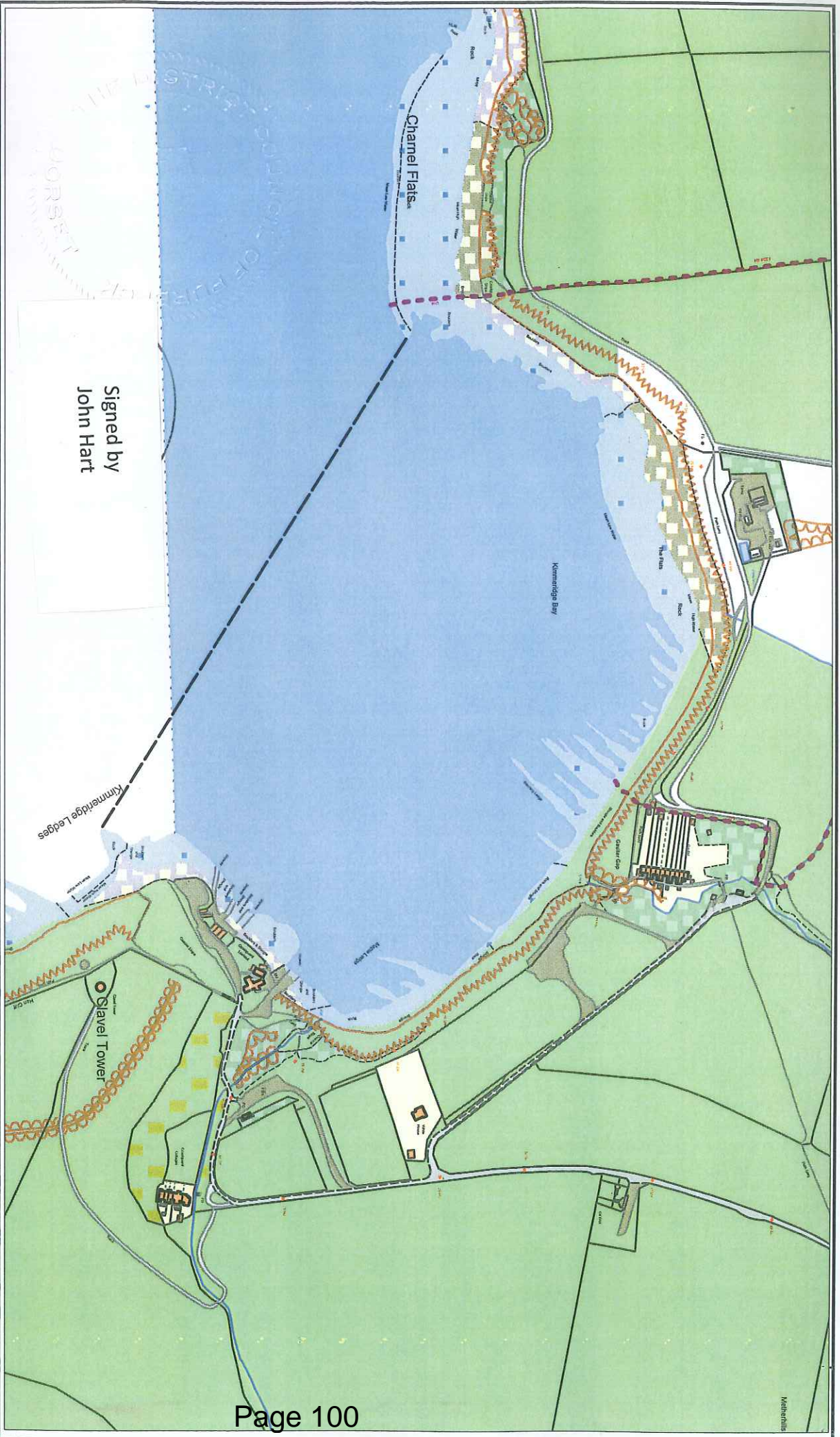
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 Ordnance Survey LA100022098



Signed by
 John Hart



Signed by
John Hart

Purbeck District Council

Thriving communities in balance
with the natural environment

**Pleasure Boat Byelaws
Map 2**

For Identification Purposes Only

Scale 1:5000
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Purbeck
District Council



Purbeck District Council
Thriving communities in balance
with the natural environment

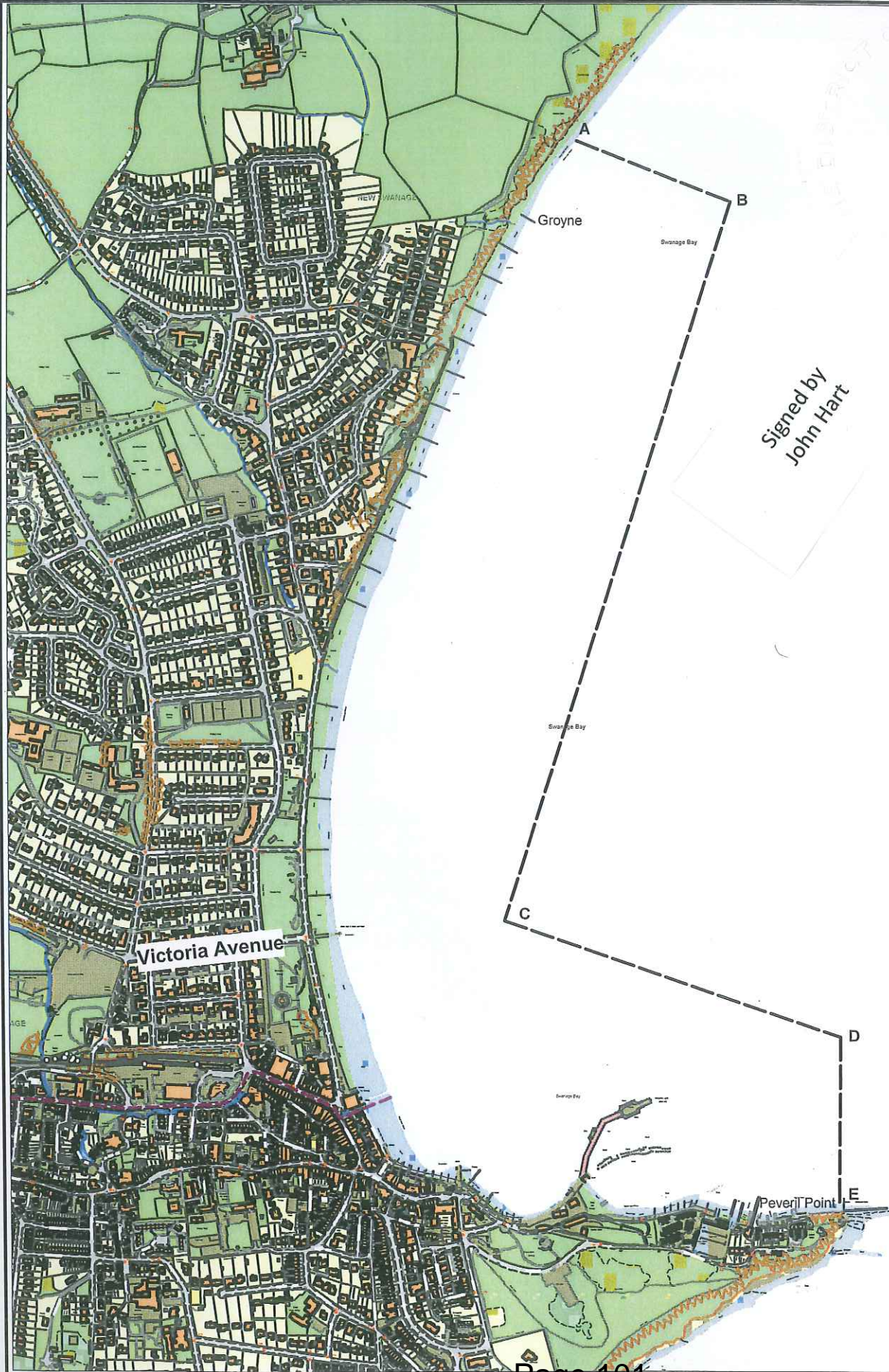
Pleasure Boat Byelaws Map 3

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Ordnance Survey LA100022058

For Identification Purposes Only



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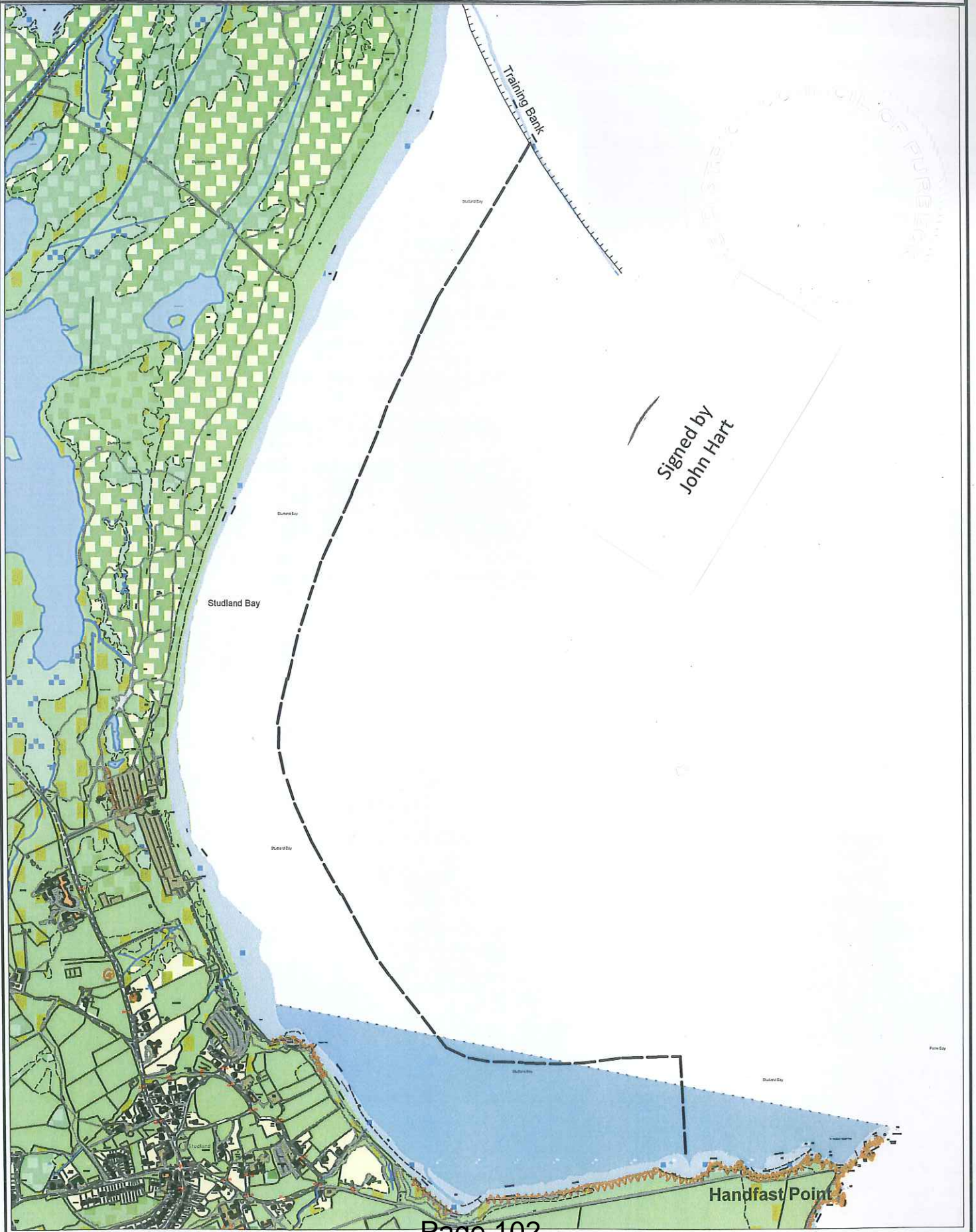




For Identification Purposes Only



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- (2) Kimmeridge Bay – landward of an imaginary straight line extending from a point on Kimmeridge Ledges 150m west of Clavel Tower to the most eastern seaward end of Charnel Flats, as shown by the broken line on map 2 in Part 2 of the schedule;
- (3) Swanage Bay – enclosed within and on the landward side of a broken line defined by the following points:
“A” being a point at low watermark 150m north of the northern most groyne
“B” being a point 300m seaward of point “A”
“C” being a point 300m seaward of a point on the low water mark at the end of Victoria Avenue
“D” being a point 300m north of the eastern most point of the land mass at Peveril Point and
“E” being mean low water mark at the eastern most point of the land mass at Peveril Point
as shown on map 3 in Part 2 of the schedule;
- (4) Studland Bay – enclosed by an imaginary line parallel and 300m seaward from the mean low water mark running between the Training Bank and a point 500m west of the eastern end of Handfast Point as shown by the broken line on map 4 in Part 2 of the schedule.

Dated this 11th day of October 2013

The Common Seal of Purbeck District Council was hereunto affixed in the presence of

Signed by
John Hart

Witnessed signature



2203



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

The Purbeck District Council (Seaside Pleasure Boats) Byelaws 2013 are hereby confirmed by the Secretary of State and shall come into operation on 26 February 2014.

Signed by the authority of the Secretary of State

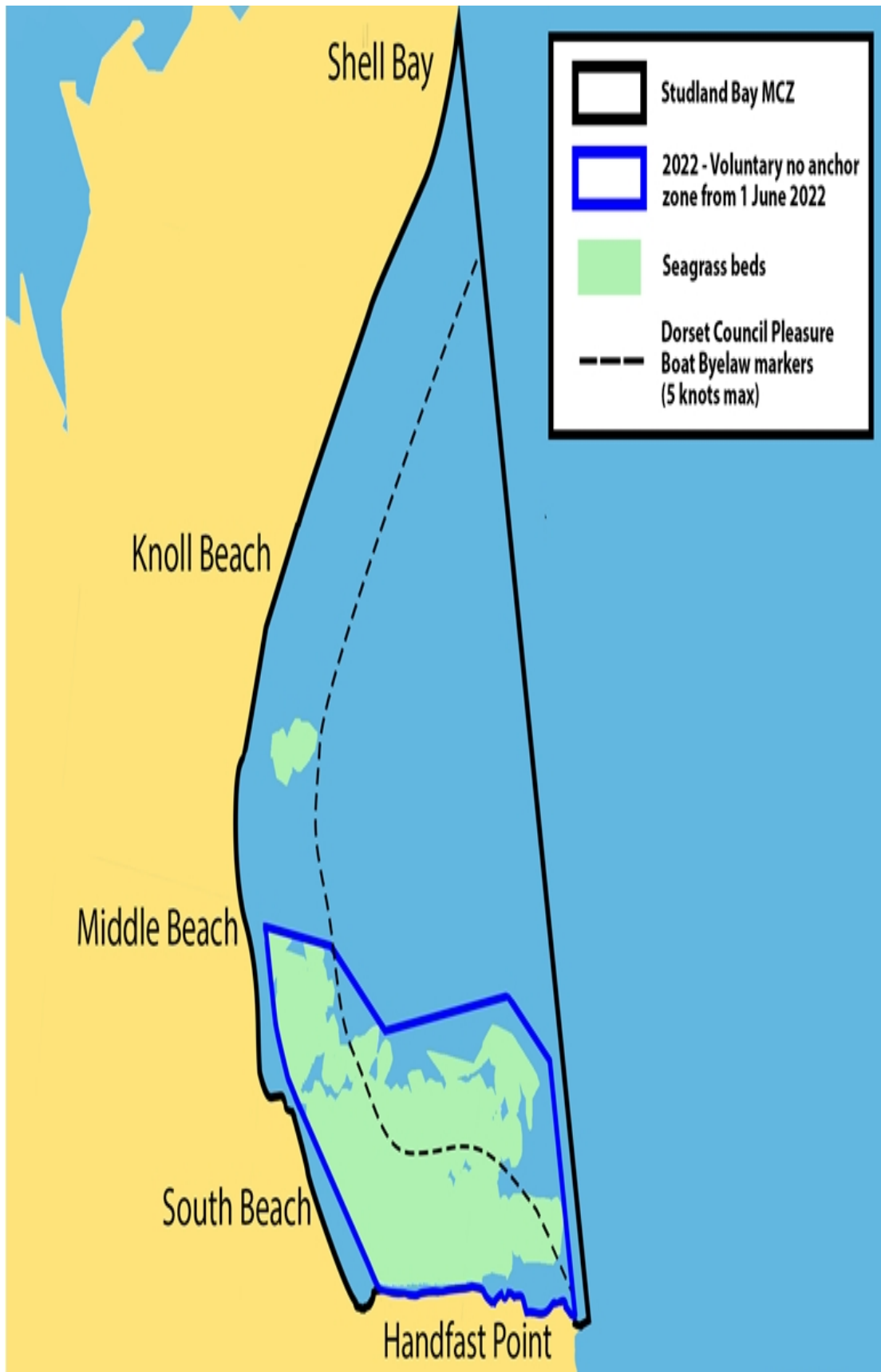


Signed by

Philip Naylor
Director of Maritime Safety and Standards
28 January 2014

Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Directorate of Maritime Services
Spring Place
Southampton
SO15 1EG





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Appendix iii - Accessible Impact Assessment & Table of Recommendations

ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	major positive impact
Water	major positive impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	no response
Stronger healthier communities	no response
Sustainable Development & Housing	no response
Responsive & Customer Focused	minor positive impact

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
consider opportunities to generate renewable energy on the land	Not applicable as this is a marine environment in a sensitive seagrass area
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	n/a
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	n/a
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	n/a
Food & Drink	

No recommendations found for this category	n/a
Waste	
No recommendations found for this category	n/a
Natural Assets & Ecology	
No recommendations found for this category	n/a