

PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Andy Canning (Chair), Andrew Starr (Vice-Chair), Piers Brown, Richard Crabb, Simon Gibson, Sherry Jespersen and David Taylor

Present remotely: Cllrs David Northam and Val Potheary

Also present: Cllr Belinda Bawden

Also present remotely: Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Ryan Hope and Cllr Peter Dickenson

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

Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Mike Garrity (Corporate Director for Planning), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Amy Smith (Local Nature Recovery Officer) and Anna Lee (Service Manager for Development Management and Enforcement)

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

Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer)

21. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting on 25 September 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

22. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

24. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

25. Biodiversity Duty report

The Corporate Director – Planning introduced the Biodiversity Duty report and set the context of the report.

The subsequent conversation covered the following areas.

- The 30% target and how that will be achieved with regards to the Dorset Council
- Nature Recovery Dorset was the mechanism for public reporting their changes in terms of nature recovery initiatives.
- The ability to measure and nuance around measurement approaches.
- The requirement of guidance from DEFRA before specific actions and monitoring can be initiated.
- Water ways and water safety and the implications in planning processes to ensure safety and flood management.
- The biodiversity duty is not the only mechanism for delivering the obligations of biodiversity.
- The scope of the environmental improvement plan and the properties that are owned by Dorset council's inclusion in the plan.
- The local plan's impact on the biodiversity duty and its role in the realisation of the targets.
- Farming processes and the role of farms and their opportunities to be involved through partnership working.
- Funding from local nature recovery strategies enabling the resource to fulfil the reporting requirements.
- The reporting and monitoring processes and the importance of consideration of the slow time realisation of nature benefits.

The committee were supportive of the approach and there was recognition of the report being out of date and it was to return to the committee with the updated information early in 2026.

26. **Dorset local nature recovery strategy**

The Environment/Policy/Partnership Manager set out the journey taken by the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy to that point including the summary of consultation and the support. The committee recognised the work undertaken by the team and the visibility of the development of the strategy from the Place and Resources Overview committee.

There was discussion on the formation of Nature Recovery Dorset and its part in the delivery of nature recovery and giving the visibility of projects.

Consideration was given to the reporting needs of Dorset Council and the role of DEFRA in setting metrics nationally.

The role of the Local Recovery Strategy in planning guidance and its role as a positive tool for nature enhancement rather than a planning constraint.

Recommendation(s)

1. The Committee is asked to note the reporting of the Biodiversity Duty and to agree that the considerations outlined in the 2023 Biodiversity Duty First Considerations Report accurately reflect the position for the 2023 reporting period.
2. The Committee further recommends that progress on biodiversity enhancement, including delivery through the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, be regularly monitored and reported to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with national biodiversity targets

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Jesperson Seconded by Cllr Starr and were unanimously agreed.

27. Statement of Reasonable Expectations between Dorset Council and parish and town councils

The Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement and the Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement introduced the report.

There was discussion about the background “Fresh Start” report written by two academics and the findings and language within this appendix that was given to set the scene.

Further discussion recognised the need for training and development for Town and Parish Councils and Councillors if absorbing additional responsibilities.

Consideration was given to the challenges around funding at the Town and Parish council tier and the importance of consideration of Town and Parish desires when absorbing additional responsibilities and the need for practical consideration in the development of those changes.

There was recognition for the importance of community governance review and the potential benefits and implications of that review.

The Place and Resources Overview Committee resolved to not accept the recommendation in the report and requested additional consideration be given to the Statement of Reasonable Expectations between Dorset Council and Town and Parish Councils before it can be recommended to Cabinet.

28. Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme

The Committee discussed the work programme.

29. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

30. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.54 pm

Chairman

.....

