



Place and Resources Overview Committee

Date: Monday, 24 November 2025
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

Andy Canning (Chair), Andrew Starr (Vice-Chair), Piers Brown, Richard Crabb, Simon Gibson, Sherry Jespersen, David Northam, Roland Tarr, David Taylor and Val Potheary

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services
Meeting Contact 01305 224450 /antony.nash@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. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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Agenda

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. MINUTES	5 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025	
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 disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the	

interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

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

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for 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 the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.** Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to antony.nash@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on 18 November 2025

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda

and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to antony.nash@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on 18 November 2025

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

6. BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 9 - 146

To receive the report from the Corporate Director for Planning and the Environment, Policy & Partnership Manager

7. DORSET LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY 147 - 376

To receive the report from the Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager

8. STATEMENT OF REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS BETWEEN DORSET COUNCIL AND PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS 377 - 444

To receive the report from the Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement

9. PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 445 - 460

To review the Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme.

To review the Cabinet Forward Plan.

10. 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.

11. 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 are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

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PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Andrew Starr (Vice-Chair), Piers Brown, David Northam, Roland Tarr, David Taylor and Val Potheary

Present remotely: Cllrs Sherry Jespersen

Apologies: Cllrs Andy Canning, Richard Crabb and Simon Gibson

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews and Cllr Belinda Bawden

Also present remotely: Cllr Ray Bryan and Cllr Gary Suttle

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

Jan Britton (Executive Director - Place), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Jack Wiltshire (Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Christopher Peck (Principal Transport Planner), Wayne Sayers (Transport Planning Team Leader) and Owen Clark (Strategic and Policy Team Manager)

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

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting 22 May 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

14. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors.

15. Dorset and BCP joint Local Transport Plan 4

The portfolio holder for Place services introduced this item and set out the connections between all 3 papers that were discussed.

The Strategic and Policy Team Manager set out the Dorset and BCP joint Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP). The plans vision, priorities, phases of delivery and connected plans and strategies were described.

Following the presentation there was a discussion that covered several areas such as;

- Cycle routes and the development of active travel ways with new housing developments.
- Emissions of public transport especially buses
- Funding and accessing grants and government funding
- The integration of rural bus provision to contracting providers
- The opportunities to collaborate with ward members.
- The role of Community led initiatives
- The potential of free bus travel for 16–18-year-olds and the impacts on education.
- The parity of funding across Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) areas
- The joint consultation with the Local Plan and its impacts on engagement levels
- Access to tourism points and areas of interest
- Age of population
- Road safety and its role as a fundamental principle of the LTP
- Rights of way and its role as supporting document and recognition of the difficulties and barriers of creating new ones.
- The plans priorities and consideration to other transport issues such as journey times.

Recommendation

The Place and Resources Overview committee suggested to officers that objectives D and E be moved to the top of the priority list within the local transport plan, and the vision statement be amended to include references to increased road safety and reduced journey times for all users of the local transport network.

16. **Active Travel Infrastructure Plan**

The Active Travel Infrastructure Plan was introduced by the Principal Transport Planner who shared the actions that had taken since the plan was last seen by the Place and Resources Committee. There was emphasis on how the routes and plan was developed drawing from an evidence-based approach.

The committee commended the officer on the effort and detail provided in the report and had a discussion that covered off the following areas;

- The options of funding sources and the requirements to access higher levels of central government funding.
- The importance of having a plan agreed and in place to ensure effective bidding for central government.

- The limitations of the data around road safety and unreported incidents.
- The fear of injury can be a deterrent to undertaking active travel.
- The potential of accessing CIL and section 106 funding
- Discussed specific route options including the barriers and impacts of changes made
- Electric scooter use and their use in Dorset.

The Place and Resource Overview Committee unanimously supported the adopting of the Active Travel Infrastructure Plan.

17. **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2025-2028**

The report was introduced by the Transport Planner who set out the future direction of Electric vehicle infrastructure and how this strategy integrates with other transport policy.

The committee discussion covered off areas such as;

- Electric Vehicle (EV) charge point usage currently and future need
- The income generated from charging provision
- The provision of home charging especially where people don't have off street parking and the difference of cost between home and public charging
- Funding opportunities from the public sector and matched funding from the private sector.
- Off street charging solutions to fit the needs of different urban areas
- Grid capacity as a limiting factor to the provision of charging.

The committee were unanimous in there support for the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2025-2028

18. **Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme**

The committee reviewed the work programme

19. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

20. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.54 pm

Chairman

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Place and Resource Overview Committee

24 November 2025

Biodiversity Duty report

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

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

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning, Bridget Betts, Environment, Policy & Partnership Manager

Email: mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

Report status: Public

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

- 1.1. This report brings the biodiversity duty reporting obligations to the committee's attention.
- 1.2. Dorset Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This duty requires the Council to embed biodiversity considerations into its policies, plans, and decision-making processes, and to publish a Biodiversity Report by January 2026.
- 1.2 The strengthened duty builds on the original Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and introduces a requirement for public authorities to take strategic action and report on progress. Dorset Council's approach is being coordinated through the Natural Environment Team, working across departments to identify current activity, address gaps, and prepare for statutory reporting. This includes aligning with the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which provides a key mechanism for delivering biodiversity enhancement at scale.
- 1.3. Delivering on this duty has wide-ranging benefits, including improved climate resilience, enhanced ecosystem services, and positive impacts on public

health and wellbeing. It also supports economic development, community engagement, and the Council's leadership role in environmental stewardship.

- 1.4. Failure to meet the requirements of the biodiversity duty presents legal, reputational, and environmental risks.
- 1.5. There was an initial delay in coordinating the work on biodiversity duty due to restructure and staff resources, but this has now been resolved.
- 1.6. A Biodiversity Duty First Considerations report (appendix 1) captures what can be done by Dorset Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity as well the different policies related to biodiversity during the 2023 time period.
- 1.7. Endorsing the recommendations will help ensure Dorset Council remains compliant, proactive, and aligned with national and local priorities for nature recovery.
- 1.8. Regular monitoring and reporting will ensure transparency and accountability, while helping to secure future funding and partnership opportunities.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. 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.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1. The recommendation is needed because Dorset Council has a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This duty requires the Council to embed biodiversity considerations into its decision-making and service delivery.
- 3.2. By formally recognising and monitoring this duty through the Overview Committee, the Council ensures that biodiversity is not only protected but actively improved. The recommendation supports transparency, accountability, and alignment with national biodiversity targets, while reinforcing the Council's leadership role in nature recovery.

4. **The report**

- 4.1 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them. Biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity, and has an important role to play in developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities.
- 4.2 Conserving biodiversity is essential for addressing climate change and sustaining vital ecosystem services like food production, flood management, pollination, and clean air and water. It also supports species and habitat restoration and protection, while offering broader benefits for tourism, economic growth, health, community development, and social cohesion.
- 4.3 By 2030, the government has committed to halting the decline in species abundance and protecting 30% of UK land. By 2042, it aims to increase species abundance by at least 10% from 2030 levels (surpassing those of 2022), restore or create at least 500,000 hectares of diverse wildlife-rich habitats, reduce the risk of species extinction, and restore 75% of the UK's one million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition.
- 4.4 Public authorities have a statutory duty under the Environment Act 2021 to consider and take action to enhance biodiversity, building on the original NERC Act 2006 duty to conserve biodiversity. This strengthened duty requires authorities to set strategic objectives, implement actions, and report progress through Biodiversity Reports, including on Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Authorities must also cooperate with Natural England's species and site strategies, aligning with national policy on nature recovery and environmental improvement.
- 4.5 Public authorities must produce a Biodiversity Report for the first reporting period which ends on 1 January 2026. The report must be published within 12 weeks of this date. The report must cover:
 - i. a summary of the action taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
 - ii. plans to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
 - iii. actions carried out to meet BNG obligations
 - iv. details of BNG resulting (or expected to result) from biodiversity gain plans the LPA has approved
 - v. plans to meet BNG obligations in the next reporting period
 - vi. any other information considered appropriate
- 4.5 Dorset Council have a key role to play in conserving biodiversity, through their work in: developing and implementing external and internal policies and strategies. For Dorset Council (DC) this could involve:
 - i. administering the planning system
 - ii. managing DC land and buildings

- iii. developing and maintaining infrastructure
- iv. engaging with business and the public
- v. conducting research and managing information
- vi. making decisions about procurement
- vii. implementing economic, environmental, and social programmes.

4.6 The work on biodiversity duty reporting was discussed back in 2023 within the Biodiversity Net Gain internal officer working group led by the Head of Environment and Wellbeing.

4.7 The timetable and steps for this work is set out in table 1:

Step 1	Consider what can be done by Dorset Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity	By 1 January 2024
Step 2	Agree policies and specific objectives based on the consideration	As soon as possible after 1 January 2024
Step 3	Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives and re-consider the actions taken	Within 5 years of the original consideration (by 1 January 2029)
Step 4	Publish a report of action taken to comply	By 1 January 2026 (and then every five years)

Table 1 – timescale and steps relating to the biodiversity duty

4.8 The work on Biodiversity Duty in 2023/24 was affected by structure and staffing changes in the Council which had an impact on capacity to progress the work, and therefore the current position is that we are currently working on step 1 and 2 simultaneously while gathering evidence for step 4.

4.10 The work is led by the Corporate Director for Planning with the work being coordinated by the Natural Environment Team, working with all relevant teams to ensure that Dorset Council has a robust process where our biodiversity duty is considered across all our services.

4.9 Actions required to ensure Dorset Council can submit its biodiversity duty report include:

- i. Finalising a comprehensive summary of current policies, objectives and actions towards the duty – this will be reported in the January 2026 first biodiversity report.
- ii. Review existing policies, processes and actions for biodiversity and highlight key gaps and agree actions for in the next five-year reporting period.

- iii. Review the Dorset Council landholding against statutory designated sites and determine if management plans are in place. Address any gaps to ensure all sites have plans in place as soon as possible.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 There are no other alternative options for this as we have a statutory duty to comply with the biodiversity duty.

6. Legal considerations

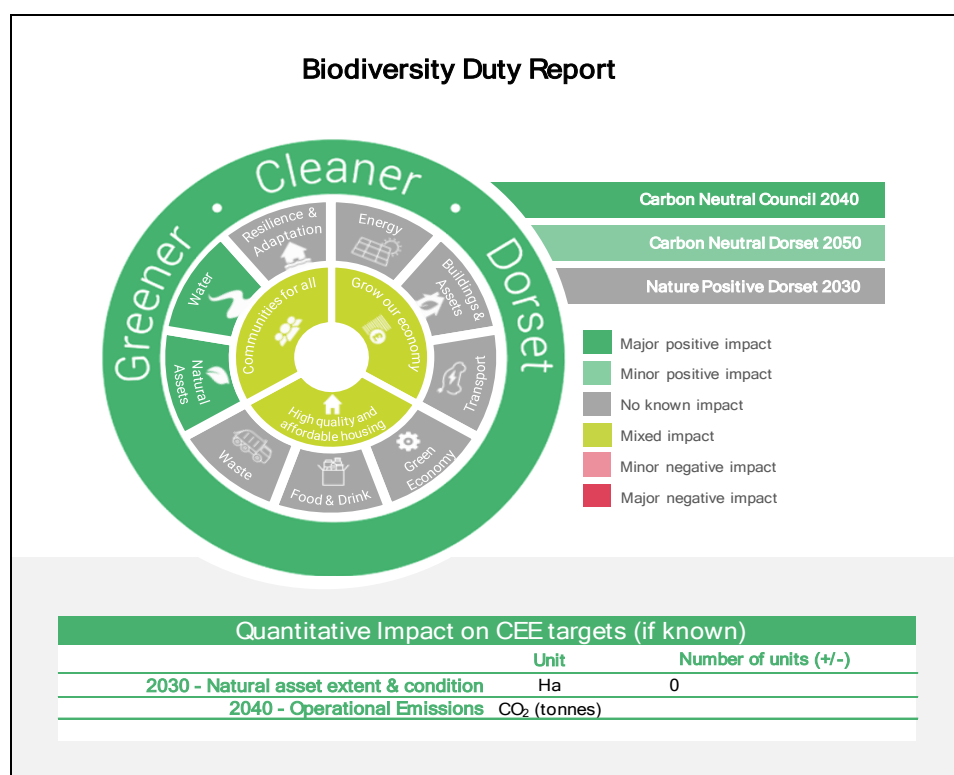
- 6.1 The legal considerations for Dorset Council in relation to the biodiversity duty include a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 (amending the NERC Act 2006) to not only conserve but also enhance biodiversity through strategic planning and action. This includes setting and implementing biodiversity objectives, publishing a Biodiversity Report by 1 January 2026 (and every five years thereafter), and having regard to Natural England's species and site strategies. Failure to comply may result in legal, regulatory, and reputational risks.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1. Not applicable

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 8.1 Carrying out Dorset Council's biodiversity duty has important implications for the natural environment, climate, and ecology and supporting nature recovery.



9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications of this report. However, delivering actions set out in the Dorset Council's biodiversity duty has positive health and well-being and implications by increasing access to nature-rich environments, which are proven to reduce stress, improve mental health, encourage physical activity, and support social cohesion.
- 9.2 Enhancing and recovering biodiversity contributes to cleaner air and water, climate resilience, and more attractive, liveable communities—all of which support long-term public health outcomes.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 There are no other specific implications contained in this report.

11. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: High

Residual Risk: Low

- 11.2. Due to the known high level of public interest in the nature emergency agenda and the commitment to show the public our commitment to biodiversity, to not do endorse and support this should be considered a high reputational risk to Dorset Council.

12. Equalities

- 12.1 There are no specific equalities implications for this report itself.

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - Biodiversity Duty considerations report 2023
Appendix 2 – Accessible table showing impacts

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
Grow our economy	neutral
High-quality and affordable housing	neutral
Communities for all	neutral

13. Background papers

13.1 Not applicable

14. Report sign-off

14.1 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)

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Dorset Council's Biodiversity Duty

Dorset Council must consider what the council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened [biodiversity duty](#) that the Environment Act 2021 introduces.

This means that we must:

1. Consider what the council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
2. Agree policies and specific objectives based on these considerations.
3. Act to deliver these policies and achieve the objectives.

First Consideration of functions relevant to the biodiversity duty

This report outlines the first consideration of Dorset Council functions relevant to the biodiversity duty. It also covers policies, objectives and actions that are being delivered across these functions to help conserve and enhance biodiversity. This first consideration provides a review of our current position, and prepares us to look for opportunities to update policy and practice to better conserve and enhance biodiversity, ahead of our first biodiversity report in 2026.

Land and property

There will be a need to consider how the land that we manage could conserve and enhance biodiversity. This includes green and blue spaces like:

- allotments
- cemeteries
- parks and sports fields
- amenity spaces and communal gardens
- roadside and railway verges
- field margins and hedgerows
- rights of way and access routes
- woodlands and nature reserves
- canals and rivers
- water-dependent habitats
- estuaries and coastal habitats

Dorset Council is encouraged to review management policies for all landholdings and consider how it will determine the current biodiversity value and monitor success of any changes to management. These areas are valuable to biodiversity as they create habitats for wildlife and

Report by: The Natural Environment Team - naturalenvironmentteam@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
December 2023

‘nature corridors’ that connect existing habitats. This allows species to move between habitats, maintain or increase populations and be more resilient to climate change.

Protected sites

Sites that we own or manage may be protected by other legislation. For example:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas (SAC or SPA)
- National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and local wildlife sites known in Dorset as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
- Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance)

Dorset Council needs to be aware of any land ownership within these protected sites and will need to have a plan in place to conserve and enhance biodiversity on this land.

The [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) sets the expectation that all public authorities should ensure they have management plans in place by the end of 2023 to support their protected sites to reach favourable status. Authorities should produce those plans and work actively with Natural England and others to identify and implement the actions needed to improve site condition.

Dorset Council also own or manage a number of sites as part of mitigation against the impacts of development on protected sites, such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) to attract people away from protected heathlands.

Planning Services and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

BNG is an approach to development or land management that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

Future development projects (apart from exempt developments) will need to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain. This will be on a phased rollout with major developments being mandatory from January 2024, minor developments from April 2024 and NSIPs being brought into the system no later than November 2025, although we are seeing some NSIPs commit voluntarily to BNG already.

As a local planning authority, Dorset Council will need to demonstrate how it has achieved BNG through the reporting period.

Preparation of the Dorset Council Local Plan provides an opportunity to consider what policies and approaches are needed to protect biodiversity and support nature recovery, reflecting national policy and legislation

Protected Landscapes

54% of the Dorset Council area is within the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscapes, nationally protected areas of outstanding natural beauty. Dorset Council also shares a small border with the New Forest National Park.

For National Landscapes, the purpose of designation is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty; nature recovery is a strong contributor to that aim. Dorset Council:

- is the accountable body for the Dorset National Landscape and host to its team, as well as a contributor to its partnership
- is contributor to the Cranborne Chase National Landscape partnership
- has a duty to seek to further the purpose of their designation in the delivery of all its functions that relate to land within the area
- has a duty to cooperate on cross-border issues with the New Forest National Park Authority.

Dorset Council is required to help develop and implement management plans for its National Landscapes; these plans are nature-positive and set out the main policy framework and priorities for these areas.

National Landscape governance is through partnership; Dorset Council can use its influence in the partnerships positively for nature. The National Landscape teams are core funded largely by central government and frequently have a role in disbursing national funds that may be used for biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery across the whole landscape, working with farmers, landowners and other local stakeholders.

Educate, advise and raise awareness

Increasing understanding of biodiversity and why it's important to conserve and enhance it can form part of the duty. This can encourage land managers, businesses and the general public to take action to benefit biodiversity.

Policies, objectives and actions, could include:

- including the public in projects to improve biodiversity
- feature biodiversity in public or internal communications
- use libraries and museums to raise awareness of biodiversity
- putting information boards in green spaces or offering guided walks
- including biodiversity considerations in advice for internal and external clients and service users
- educating staff on the biodiversity actions and why they're important
- raising public awareness of how gardens can support biodiversity

Review internal policies and processes

Local authorities have internal policies and processes for staff and facilities that could affect biodiversity. Dorset Council can consider how such policies may affect biodiversity and seek to review and improve outcomes. Policies for the following could be considered:

- transport – support sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality
- waste – review waste management and recycling processes to reduce water pollution and air pollution from waste transport and landfill
- water – improve water efficiency to reduce the effect water abstraction can have on sensitive habitats and species
- procurement – buy sustainable materials and supplies to reduce the demand on natural resources
- light – make sure the design of artificial lighting minimises effects on nature

Ecological data - Local Environmental Record Centre

The local record centre in Dorset is the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC). DERC has an important role in assisting Dorset Council in meeting both its statutory duties in relation to environmental data, but also holds much of the data needed to understand our duty, monitor change, and provide data for the purposes of the biodiversity duty report.

There will be need to understand where other sources of data in relation to the duty exist and how best to gather these data into the future reports. Environmental assessment regulations require monitoring of the effects of development plans and projects. The results of this monitoring could be used as a source of environmental data.

First Consideration of current relevant policies, objectives and actions.

The table below sets out some of the key work areas with clear links to the biodiversity duty, a summary of current action and where further work is needed.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Council Plan 2022-2024	Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology is one of the Dorset Council plan priorities, it is about improving access to and use of Dorset's environment in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations	Delivery plan for this priority includes work to have 30% of land in positive management by 2030, and improved management of highways, coasts greenspaces, and harbours.	Ongoing monitoring of plan delivery
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy	Tackling biodiversity loss is one of the three core pillars of our Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy . The nature element of the strategy commits to the principle of 30% of Dorset's land being nature positive by 2030.	The 2019 strategy was refreshed and adopted in 2023, and delivery is steered through a council Operational Group.	Expanding on the work of mission 8 through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
	Mission 8 focuses on natural assets and nature-based solutions, setting an objective to <i>"Protect and restore Dorset's land, rivers, freshwater and sea habitats by making nature bigger, better and more joined-up for biodiversity, carbon, flood resilience, and wider benefits."</i> Its three sub-objectives regard taking action on our own estate, creating and embedding a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and enabling wider delivery beyond our estate.	Progress reporting on this strategy is made biannually to the council's Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.	The most significant areas of future work on climate change that directly intersects with the biodiversity duty pertain to (a) natural climate solutions for climate mitigation (protecting, enhancing and expanding natural climate stores) and adaptation (particularly natural flood and overheating measures); and (b) agriculture. The council is making significant progress against its carbon targets, but as part of this programme there are specific targets for nature recovery as well that are required both as part of the wider nature recovery strategy, but also to deal with residual emissions that the

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Decision Wheel	The council has adopted a Decision-Making Wheel, which is a form of climate and nature impact assessment undertaken for any papers going to committees (excluding licensing and planning, transport appeals and staffing committees).	The wheel includes prompts to officers to consider opportunities to increase biodiversity, enhance land management or strengthen habitat connectivity.	council will have to ensure that its operations become carbon neutral. Evaluate use of the wheel and how it has impacted decision-making, making any improvements required to ensure it leads to more actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of the council's functions. Explore options to improve environmental sustainability within our procurement activity
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	Dorset LNRS will collaboratively: • agree priorities for nature's recovery • map the most valuable existing areas for nature • map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals Delivering the LNRS will contribute to the council's biodiversity duty by: • educating, advising and raising awareness of biodiversity • identifying opportunities to create or improve habitat on land the council owns or manages	Dorset Council is the responsible authority for preparing Dorset LNRS. A steering and expert advisory groups have been formed with a range of local stakeholders. Further engagement will be planned, and a draft strategy will then go to public consultation. The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, 2010 remains relevant in Dorset,	Further engagement will be planned, and a draft strategy will then go to public consultation. A future task will also be to link this work with other emerging strategies relevant to biodiversity in Dorset. This includes Species Conservation Strategies (SCS), established by the Environment Act to safeguard the future of the species that are at greatest risk. Strategies will find better ways to comply with existing legal obligations to protect species at risk and to improve their conservation status.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
		setting out priority habitats and species in the county.	The Natural Environment Team (NET) are joint lead with Devon County Council working with Natural England on a Pilot Conservation Strategy for Hazel Dormice. NET also form part of a wider SCS group looking at species specific pilots.
Planning policy	Local Plans, once adopted, alongside Neighbourhood Plans set the basis for decisions on planning applications. Strategic Priorities and Policies are developed locally to reflect national policy and local objectives.	There are four adopted Local Plans across Dorset that were prepared and adopted by the former Local Authorities that make up Dorset Council. In addition, the Waste and Minerals plans were adopted by Dorset County Council. There are numerous Neighbourhood Plans in effect across Dorset that include local, non-strategic policies. The Local Plans all have policies that address biodiversity loss where development takes place however, these are inconsistent and largely out of date given changes in national policy and legislation. Neighbourhood Plans add a further level of detail that creates additional complexity.	Consider the implications of legislative requirements and national policy for the Local Plan. Develop approaches to suggest for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plans to give a degree of consistency.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Development Management	Determination of planning applications in accordance with current wildlife legislation and policy.	Please see appendix A for a summary of relevant biodiversity policies in the adopted local plans.	
	Biodiversity Net Gain Planning Guidance	In house NET ecologists providing technical advice and operate the Dorset Biodiversity Protocol which integrates biodiversity in the planning system. It is designed to meet the requirement of Natural England's Protected Species Standing Advice and to address the mitigation hierarchy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The audit and review of ecological information submitted with planning applications ensures impacts on biodiversity are addressed.	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a new area of work requiring further input in terms of the reporting structure and requirements. Awaiting secondary legislation and guidance.
	Minerals and Waste		Explore further data monitoring and reporting work with DERC.
	Highways schemes		
	Residential and employment sites		
	Energy (including renewable)		
		Detailed information about the strategy and technical guidance ecological consultants is published on the Dorset Council website: The Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol - Dorset Council	
		The strategy is regularly reviewed and updated annually in line with	

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Regulatory functions		relevant emerging legislation and policy.	
	Land Drainage Consents	Dorset Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) assesses Land Drainage Consent applications. This is to ensure works affecting an ordinary watercourse do not increase flood risk and that biodiversity interests are appropriately considered. The LLFA is also a Statutory Planning Consultee for major development. This ensures that surface water flood risk is appropriately managed and biodiversity interests are included via the promotion of Sustainable Drainage Systems. They also work with partners to reduce surface water flood risk to residential properties and reduce pollution to receiving land drainage systems.	Continue performing these regulatory functions Review and update the Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIP).
	Rights of Way	Dorset Council exercises its legal duty to process applications to change a public right of way and decide whether an order should be	

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
	Hedgerow removal notices	issued to make the change. The council also works with partners to maintain the rights of way network, to support access to the countryside.	
	Tree preservation orders (TPO)	Hedgerow Removal Notices must be submitted by landowners, Dorset Council then considers if the hedge is 'important' under the regulations and if a retention notice should be issued, to help address widespread loss of hedgerows in the countryside.	
		Dorset Council can serve TPOs to prohibit the damage or destruction of specific trees without consent from the council, to help protect trees that are a of amenity importance and may also be a key element of local biodiversity. TPOs can also be used to protect groups of trees or woodlands.	
Highways and transport	Capital and maintenance schemes	Support sustainable travel to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.	
	Teams work with the natural environment team to identify ways to		

Biodiversity Duty First Considerations - 2023

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
	avoid harm to species and habitats, mitigate for any biodiversity loss and deliver wildlife enhancements as part of delivering highway improvements or new active travel routes. Dorset Council verge management balances biodiversity with road safety, and this effective method means many verges now have SNCI status for their biodiversity value.	Ecology advice is provided in relation to individual schemes and wider general opportunities to include enhancements and biodiversity benefits e.g., avoiding importing soil, use of low fertility soils. Habitat Regulations Assessment and SSSI assent applications undertaken when required. Current partnership with Highways to review verge cutting policy including consideration of biodiversity.	
FCERM and bridges	Capital and maintenance works Flood and coastal erosion risk management projects	Advice provided by NET ecologists. Standing advice applied to all schemes includes best practice approaches to pollution prevention, dealing with non-native invasive species and mitigation as required on each scheme. Opportunities for enhancement individualised to schemes such as	Review of policy to incorporate BNG in schemes.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Dorset Council land (owned or managed)		built-in features for bats, grey wagtail.	
		External surveys commissioned when needed.	
		Habitat Regulations Assessment and SSSI assent applications undertaken when required.	
		For FCERM projects NET ecologist's sit on steering groups of major scheme to ensure integrated ecological advice.	
	Dorset Council manages countryside sites in order to conserve their biodiversity and take actions to enhance this where possible. This includes protected sites, parks, nature reserves and SANGs.	Projects are underway to conserve or enhance biodiversity on sites.	Ensuring all sites have management plans in place by the end of 2023 to support sites to reach favourable status, as set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan .
	Dorset Council verge management balances biodiversity with road safety, and this effective method means many verges now have SNCI status for their biodiversity value.	Ensuring all sites have management plans in place by the end of 2023 to support sites to reach favourable status.	Work actively with Natural England and others to identify and implement the actions needed to improve site condition.
	Projects to enhance heritage assets on our land are also delivered with	Work with the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) to log sightings of alien species such as Japanese Knotweed. The Living Record software used by DERC helps highways teams target problem	

Biodiversity Duty First Considerations - 2023

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
	biodiversity in mind and identify opportunities to add habitat and species enhancements where possible.	sites. Members of the public can also log on to register sightings of a range of invasive plants. Advice provided by NET ecologists as required.	
Dorset Council county farms	Ongoing review of Dorset Council assets, including exploring opportunities to manage the county farms estate sustainably to deliver biodiversity benefits.	The Natural Environment Team works with the council farm estate team to deliver projects to enhance the ecological value of our farms. Projects include Barn Owl Boxes , Great Crested Newt Ponds and baseline biodiversity surveys.	Develop a new farms strategy.
Dorset Council property and projects	Opportunities to enhance biodiversity are considered as part new build projects and schemes. For example, wildlife-friendly gardens in new school grounds and care homes with native planting for pollinators and boxes for birds or bats.	The Capital Projects Design and Delivery Team seek to include biodiversity enhancements as part of new projects. Input is sought from ecologists in the Natural Environment Team where required. Those enhancements are then maintained by the authority.	Continue this work as well as complying with new BNG requirements
Dorset National Landscape	As host to Dorset National landscape partnership, Dorset Council supports the National Landscape to deliver work that conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the landscape.	Dorset AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 adopted and in use, including	Revise and adopt Dorset National Landscape Management Plan for 2026-2031.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
		Farming in protected landscapes (FiPL) programme was established in 2021 enabling farm-based projects meeting outcomes for Nature, People, Climate & Place. Dorset National Landscape supports farm clusters and knowledge exchange programmes facilitating changes towards more regenerative and nature-friendly practice. It has also supported significant areas of survey for biodiversity baselines. Dorset National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan is in draft (and supports the LNRS). Dorset National Landscape team sit on 3 of the Dorset LNRS expert advisory groups.	Finalise and adopt Dorset National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan (aligned with the Dorset LNRS). Funding for the farming in protected landscapes programme is due to end, Dorset Council use its political influence to lobby for the continuation of funding. Core funding for national landscape teams is uncertain and depends on Defra's business planning process, Dorset Council use its political influence to lobby for enhanced funding. As partner in Cranborne Chase National Landscape, report more on how Dorset Council can support their work to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the parts of that designation covering Dorset.
Communications, media and raising awareness	Dorset Council uses a range of methods to raise awareness of our own actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and promote opportunities for others to get involved.	Examples of recent work include: • Webpages on ○ the Climate and Ecological Emergency including links to relevant strategy and updates on projects	Plan and deliver further communications and engagement relating to the council's climate and ecological emergency declarations.

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
		○ Biodiversity net gain to explain this to different audiences ○ Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy including introductory info and add progress updates • Trees guidance for different audiences: ○ Trees and development ○ Tree management ○ Tree Planting Checklist for the public, businesses and community groups ○ Management of Council Owned Trees Policy ○ Tree planting and the climate emergency paper ○ Species and habitat advice notes and guidance sheets • Green champions employee network • Love your verge – annual campaign with digital media and road signs across the county. • Green libraries week activities • Councillor webinars	Continue to deliver communications and engagement activities to support the delivery of the local nature recovery strategy preparation, in collaboration with the multi-sector comms and engagement group

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Hosted partnerships	Dorset Council hosts a number of partnerships that deliver projects to conserve biodiversity, mitigate harm and enhance biodiversity where possible.	• Town and Parish Council webinars and newsletters • Resident newsletters highlighting council activities and encouraging residents to get involved • Social media posts • Information in country parks • Youth activities such as poster competitions and assemblies	

Work area	Detail	Current position	Initial assessment of further work/action needed
Dorset Council Pollinators Action Plan	This plan outlines Dorset Council's commitment to reduce the decline in pollinators and where possible enhance populations. The actions are subdivided into five themes • the management of the council's green assets • enhancement opportunities via new development on Council land • opportunities via the Councils planning functions • raising awareness • monitoring, research and evidence	Dorset Council Pollinators Action Plan 2019 to 2024 - Dorset Council	Work across relevant functions to deliver on this plan.

Next steps

Following this first consideration, teams across all relevant functions should carry out the actions listed above and continue to look out for further opportunities to conserve or enhance biodiversity through their work.

A first biodiversity report will be prepared, the end of the first reporting period is 1 January 2026, a report will be produced every five years. The biodiversity report will include a summary of:

- action taken to comply with the biodiversity duty
- plans to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period
- details of biodiversity net gains resulting from the planning system

Appendix A

Summary of policies relating to biodiversity in adopted Local Plans in the Dorset Council area.

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Vision for Purbeck		... Local organisations will continue to enhance Purbeck's exceptional landscape and internationally important habitats in the face of modern pressures, including the effects of climate change. At the same time, its excellent tourist facilities will serve its world-famous visitor sites and will continue to draw visitors to its coast, beaches, historic towns and villages. While acknowledging and planning for the importance of the links between Purbeck and the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation, the need to travel will be reduced by increased self-containment and the concentration of employment, shops, services and community facilities. These will be accessible to communities through the provision of a wider range of transport methods and a shift in travel choices and patterns to reduce dependence on the private car. Connectivity between settlements will have been enhanced	The overarching vision for Purbeck includes the aim of enhancing the area's assets in the face of climate change. The vision also has an emphasis travel links to reduce car journeys.	

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		through improvements to existing public footpaths, cycle ways, the District's road network, and a greater provision of public transport, including support for the reconnection of the Wareham to Swanage branch line to the national rail network. ...		
Policy SD	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.	At 5.12 it further clarifies that "To achieve sustainable development, new development should be located in the most sustainable locations with the aim of minimising car trips and the subsequent impact on climate change."	
Policy LD	General Location of Development	Development will be directed towards the most sustainable locations in accordance with the following settlement hierarchy: Towns: Swanage, Upton, and Wareham Key Service Villages: Bere Regis, Bovington, Corfe Castle, Lytchett Matravers, Sandford and Wool	In order to minimise travel and ensure residents have easier access to facilities and services, the settlement hierarchy directs development towards the area's towns, key service villages, local service villages, and other villages with a settlement boundary. Only in exceptional circumstances will development be allowed outside settlement boundaries, as set out in Policy CO.	Location of development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, unless exceptional circumstances apply as set out in Policy CO.

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 36		Local Service Villages: Langton Matravers, Stoborough, West Lulworth and Winfrith Newburghs Other Villages with a Settlement Boundary: Briantspuddle, Chaldon Herring, Church Knowle, East Burton, East Lulworth, Harmans Cross, Kimmeridge, Kingston, Lytchett Minster, Moreton Station, Studland, Ridge and Worth Matravers Other Villages without a Settlement Boundary: Affpuddle, Bloxworth, Coombe Keynes, East Knighton, East Stoke, Holton Heath, Morden (East and West), Moreton, Organford and Worgret New development should be concentrated within the settlement boundary of the Towns, Key Service Villages, Local Service Villages and Other Villages with a Settlement Boundary. New retail development should be focussed within town centres or local centres as shown on the Proposals Map.		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		Land outside of settlement boundaries will be classed as ‘countryside’ (including Other Villages without a Settlement Boundary) where development will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances as set out in Policy CO: Countryside. For example, an exception is made for existing employment sites that do not fit within this hierarchy, yet remain a focus for new employment growth, such as Holton Heath and Dorset Green. Settlement boundaries in Lytchett Matravers, Upton and Wareham are amended to reflect the location of the settlement extensions proposed in these settlements. These amended boundaries are set out in Appendix 4: Changes to the Proposals Maps, Inset Maps 1, 2 and 6. All other settlement boundaries, town centre and local centre boundaries will be carried forward as set out in the Purbeck District Local Plan Final Edition 2004 until they are reviewed through the Swanage Local Plan, neighbourhood plans, or the Site Allocations Plan.		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Spatial Objective 3		Conserve and enhance Purbeck's natural habitat.		
Policy BIO	Biodiversity & Geodiversity	Purbeck's biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected, managed and enhanced through: • The promotion of Strategic Nature Areas as identified on the Nature Map (Map 3); • Efforts to enhance, link and create habitats to enable adaptation to climate change; • Projects associated with the Purbeck Nature Improvement Area and the achievement of 'Wild Purbeck'; • Encouraging development proposals to incorporate biodiversity having regard to District design guidance; • Maintaining regionally important geological and geomorphological sites (RIGS) for their scientific and educational value; and • Allowing natural processes to continue along the coast in order to protect any wildlife and geological features maintained by active erosion, as reflected in the Shoreline Management Plan policy. New development: • Will need to ensure that there are no adverse effects upon the integrity of European protected sites (SPA, SAC, Ramsar, possible SAC, potential SPA).	A large proportion of the District is heathland that is designated as Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar. Impacts upon heathland can arise from cumulative pressures, principally from residential development, across the wider sub-region. All residential development and tourist accommodation within 5km of the heathlands must provide effective mitigation measures. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of this Local Plan has identified a number of specific measures that are required to ensure that the Dorset Heathland sites are not adversely affected by development. Some of the proposed measures rely upon expansive alternative greenspaces coming forward with development proposals.	

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		• Within the vicinity of areas that support nationally significant numbers of Annex 1 bird species (nightjar and woodlark), undertake a risk based approach to ensure that there is no significant adverse effect upon these species and their habitats. • Will need to ensure that there are no adverse impacts upon SSSI, for example an indirect effect of disturbance from increased public access. • Will need to demonstrate that it avoids significant adverse impacts upon Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Ancient Woodland, aged or veteran trees, wetland interests (for example, watercourses, ponds, reedbeds), and Habitats of Principal Importance. Any significant adverse impacts on these sites and features which cannot be avoided through location on an alternative site, must be adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated. • Should incorporate any opportunities for biodiversity in and around the development In considering the acceptability of proposals, the Council will assess their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		relative to the significance of the nature conservation value, and balance them against other sustainable development objectives.		
Policy DH	Dorset Heaths International Designations	Development will not be permitted unless it can be ascertained that it will not lead to an adverse effect upon the integrity, of the Dorset Heaths' International designations. The Council is jointly preparing a Heathlands DPD with affected neighbouring authorities to set out a long-term mitigation strategy to ensure that the growth planned for South East Dorset can be accommodated without having an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Dorset Heaths. This policy will apply until the Heathlands DPD supersedes it: The following forms of development (including changes of use) will not be permitted within a 400m buffer around protected heathland: • Residential (C3) development that would involve a net increase in dwellings; • Tourist accommodation including hotels, guest houses, boarding houses, bed and		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 41		breakfast accommodation, tented camping and caravans which require planning permission (C1 uses) and self-catering tourist accommodation;and • Equestrian-related development that may directly or indirectly result in an increased adverse impact on the heathland. Between 400 metres and 5km of a heathland, new residential development and tourist accommodation will be required to take all necessary steps on site to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects upon the internationally designated site's integrity or, where this cannot be achieved within the residential development, to make a contribution towards mitigation measures designed to avoid such adverse effects taking place. Measures will include: • Provision of open space and appropriate facilities to meet recreation needs and deflect pressure from heathland habitats; • Heathland support areas; • Warden services and other heathland/harbour management; • Access and parking management measures; and • Green infrastructure.		
	Policy PH	Poole Harbour	Water Quality	Poole Harbour is designated as an SPA and Ramsar site for breeding passage and

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 42		New development may be required to incorporate measures to secure effective avoidance and mitigation of the potential adverse effects of nutrient loading on the ecological integrity of the Poole Harbour internationally designated sites. The Council will work with neighbouring local authorities, the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and Natural England, supported by other relevant stakeholders, to secure effective and deliverable mitigation, and mechanisms that will fund and enable implementation of these measures. Recreational Pressures The Council will work with neighbouring local authorities, statutory bodies and landowners to manage shoreline access to Poole Harbour and implement the Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan to manage water based activities.	wintering birds. The HRA has concluded that there is a significant risk that additional development (mainly housing) would adversely affect the integrity of SPA/Ramsar site through increasing the nutrient loading (nitrogen) being discharged into the harbour and from the disturbance to birds caused by increased recreational pressures in and around the harbour. New development served by the four sewage treatment works (STWs) in Purbeck that discharge, directly or indirectly, into Poole Harbour could have an adverse effect upon the SPA/Ramsar site. The STWs are located at Wool, Blackheath, Corfe and Lytchett Minster. Measures will be required to remove this adverse effect. Increased housing and tourism will increase the recreational pressure in and around Poole Harbour with potential for disturbance of birds. Recreation pressures are addressed by the Aquatic Management Plan (2011), which has directed certain uses to areas where impacts on nature conservation are thought to be minimal. Access to the shores is predominately at Arne, Studland Wareham	

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
			and Upton. Recreational boating is popular and uses in particular parts of the harbour are restricted. In the summer increased tourism and camping on the rural southern shores can lead to disturbance and during winter months visitors can disturb overwintering birds when they are at their most vulnerable.	
Spatial Objective 4		Support local communities	Spatial Objective 4 includes the provision of Green Infrastructure, covered by policy GI of the plan.	
Policy GI	Green Infrastructure, Recreation and Sports Facilities	New Facilities New residential development will be required to make provision for: • Recreation, sport and/or open space facilities; and • Green infrastructure Where possible, facilities should be provided on site, as an integral part of the development. However, where on-site provision is not appropriate, off-site provision or a financial contribution will be sought. The level of contributions will be set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule.	Green Infrastructure will be required for applications proposing new residential development. Provision should be integrated on-site, however off-site provision or financial contributions will be sought where on-site provision would be inappropriate. Larger developments will need to contribute towards the delivery of significant areas of new green infrastructure and the management of green networks and corridors - in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Strategy standards. The policy also seeks to protect all open space, with losses only permitted where adequate existing provision exists.	Design of schemes to include adequate green infrastructure. Include details within a submitted Sustainability Statement and associated Sustainability Checklist.

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 44		Settlement extensions and major employment sites will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of significant areas of new green infrastructure and the management of a connected, coherent and functional network of new and enhanced green spaces corridors and public rights of way in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Strategy standards.		
		Safeguarding Existing Facilities All open space, sport and recreation areas will be protected. Any loss of these uses will only be permitted where there is a proven excess of such provision and the proposed loss will not result in a current or future shortfall in the plan period and/or suitable replacement facilities are provided.		
		Areas afforded protection through the 2004 Purbeck Local Plan Final Edition will be carried forward to the Proposals Map and reviewed in the Swanage Local Plan, neighbourhood plans, or the Site Allocations Plan.		
		Replacement Facilities Any replacement provision will take account of the needs of		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		the area and current standards of open space, sport and/or recreational provision but should be equivalent to, or an improvement upon, the existing resource, in terms of size, attractiveness, quality and accessibility.		
Spatial Objective 5		Reduce vulnerability to climate change and dependence on fossil fuels	Spatial Objective 5 focusses specifically on addressing vulnerability to climate and fossil fuel dependence, through policies FR (Flood Risk), GP (Groundwater Protection), and CE (Coastal Erosion).	
Policy FR	Flood Risk	The impact of flooding will be managed by locating development in accordance with Purbeck's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) In Flood Zone 1, an FRA will be required for planning applications with a site area under 1 hectare that: • Will alter the natural rate of surface water run-off; or • Are located in areas where there is known to be a localised flooding, or drainage problem as set out in the SFRA maps; or • Are located in areas below 3.55 metres above ordnance datum; or • Are located in areas below 6 metres above ordnance datum and are within 50		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 46		metres of the coast (defined as back edge of beach or coast protection line). An FRA will not normally be required for householder development in Flood Zone 1. Exceptional circumstances will need to be agreed with the Council on a site by site basis. All FRAs should include topographic survey with levels reduced to ordnance datum. Finished Floor levels must be set at an agreed level above ordnance datum which should include 600 millimetres freeboard. Where appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into the design of the development.		
	Spatial Objective 6	Ensure high quality, sustainable design	Spatial Objective 6 encompasses policies covering design (Policy D) and renewable energy provision (Policy REN).	
	Policy D	Design	Domestic buildings New homes in developments of 10 dwellings or more to: • achieve Part L of Building Regulations, and • reduce regulated greenhouse gas emissions as predicted by SAP/SBEM by 10% via the use of	In line with the Council's planning Local List , applications for new residential, mixed use, commercial, retail, community or leisure uses should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate how sustainable design and

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 47		objectives through site layout and building design, which should be as comprehensive as other policies and criteria allow. Where applicable: - Development of more than 10 dwellings (net) or 1,000m² (net) of non-residential floor space should, having achieved a Part L of the Building Regulations pass, further reduce its regulated greenhouse gas emissions (as predicted by SAP/SBEM) either by 10% via the use of on-site renewable energy generation, or by 20% overall. Where viability constraints of the proposal would preclude the additional cost, the onus will be upon the applicant to demonstrate this (using an open book method if deemed necessary by the Council, the independent verification of which the applicant will be expected to fund). These requirements will be reviewed as further information becomes available about the changes to Part L of the Building Regulations. - Demonstrate that every effort has been or will be made to achieve a	on-site renewable energy generation of 20% overall. - Building for Life standards have been amended and 'gold' or 'silver' standards no longer apply. This article provides guidance about current considerations: Building for life - Designing Buildings, some of which relate to reducing car dependency and access to existing connections, and facilities. Non-domestic buildings New non-domestic buildings are required to be at least of BREEAM very good standard for development up to 1,000m² and Excellent standard for larger developments. For developments more than 1000m² will need to: - achieve Part L of Building Regulations, and - reduce regulated greenhouse gas emissions as predicted by SAP/SBEM by 10% via the use of	construction have been addressed, including: - reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions; - minimising waste and increasing recycling; - conserving water resources; - incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage minimising pollution; - maximising the use of sustainable materials, and; - adaptation to Climate Change The Sustainability Checklist should be completed to inform and accompany the Sustainability Statement.

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 48		significant carbon reduction in all new built development, at least matching the national targets set out in 'Building a Greener Future' and by the Building Regulations; - Achieve a score of at least 14 points ('gold' or 'silver' standard) measured against 'Building for Life' standards where development consists of ten or more dwellings; - Achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating or higher for new build non-domestic development up to 1,000m² (net) floor space, and as a minimum a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating for larger developments. Where viability constraints of the proposal would preclude the additional costs of achieving an 'excellent' rating the onus will be upon the applicant to demonstrate this (using an open book method if deemed necessary by the Council, the independent verification of which the applicant will be expected to fund).	on-site renewable energy generation of 20% overall Requirements will be reviewed in light of changes to part L of Building Regulations. Should viability costs preclude the additional costs of meeting requirements this will need to be demonstrated by the applicant.	
		The Council supports energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings provided		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		improvements are in accordance with national guidance and other policies in this plan.		
Policy REN	Renewable Energy	The Council encourages the sustainable use and generation of energy where adverse social and environmental impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level. Proposals for renewable energy apparatus will only be permitted where: • The technology is suitable for the location and does not cause significant adverse harm to visual amenity from both within the landscape and views into it; • It would not have an adverse ecological impact upon the integrity of protected habitats unless there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest; • It would not cause interference to radar or telecommunications, or highway safety; • It would not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity by virtue of visual impact, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated	Proposals involving the generation of renewable energy to demonstrate: • Minimising of impacts to an acceptable level; • Suitability of location • No significantly adverse landscape impact • No adverse ecological impacts unless there is overriding public interest; • No interference to radar or telecommunications, or highway safety; • No significant neighbouring amenity impact; • Accord with Dorset County Council's Landscape Change Strategy, including restoration scheme and mitigation measures; • Provide safe access No harm to heritage assets;	In line with the Council's planning Local List, applications for renewable energy generation will be accompanied by: • A landscape impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts • A heritage impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts • A transport assessment • Ecological appraisal including details of proposed mitigation of impacts Details in relation to the proposed level of generation and how the proposal will address climate change, including the contribution towards meeting the aims and targets of the Council's

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 50		with turbines), or other nuisances and emissions; - It accords with Dorset County Council's Landscape Change Strategy and includes an agreed restoration scheme, any necessary mitigation measures, with measures to ensure the removal of the installations when operations cease; and - Safe access during construction and operation must be provided. - It avoids causing harm to the significance and setting of heritage assets		Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy
	Spatial Objective 9	Provide an integrated transport system and better accessibility to services for everyday needs.		
	Policy IAT	Improving Accessibility & Transport Improving accessibility within Purbeck will be achieved through better provision of local services and facilities that reduce the need to travel, especially by car. This will be achieved by assessing development proposals against the following criteria: - The development should be located in the most accessible location and reduce the need to travel; - The development should		

Purbeck Local Plan (2012)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		maximise the use of alternative and sustainable forms of travel; • The development, where it is likely to result in significant transport implications, should be supported by a detailed transport assessment and a travel plan; • The development should provide for improved safety and convenience of travel, including improved access to local services and facilities by foot, cycle and public transport; • The development should provide safe access to the highway, and/or should provide towards new/improved access to the highway and improvement of the local highway. • The development should provide for adequate parking levels in line with the Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset Residential Car Parking Strategy.		

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)

Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Strategic Objectives		... Support sustainable, safe and healthy communities with accessibility to a range of services and facilities. Protect and enhance the outstanding natural and built environment, including its landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity, and the local distinctiveness of places within the area – this will be the over-riding objective in those areas of the plan which are particularly sensitive to change Reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, both by minimising the potential impacts and by adapting to those that are inevitable– this will be the over-riding objective in those areas of the plan which are at highest risk Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use; improve safety; ensure convenient and appropriate public transport services; and seek greater network efficiency for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. Achieve high quality and sustainability in design, reflecting local character and distinctiveness of the area. ...	The Strategic Objectives of the plan encompass sustainability through access to services and facilities, reducing vulnerability to impacts of climate change (through minimising and adapting to impacts), and reducing car use, and achieving sustainability of design. In areas at the highest risk of climate change impacts, reducing vulnerability will be the over-riding objective. It's Strategic Approach to Environment and Climate Change further notes that: "Development should protect and enhance the natural environment - its landscape, seascapes and geological conservation interests, its wildlife and habitats and important local green spaces - by directing development away from sensitive areas that cannot accommodate change. Where development is needed and harm cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation to off-set any adverse impact to the landscape, wildlife and green infrastructure network will be	

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 54			required. High priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the area's heritage assets – including its Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, and other features with local historic or cultural associations, particularly where they contribute to the area's local distinctiveness. Development will be directed away from areas where there is likely to be significant risk to human health or the wider environment, through flooding, coastal erosion and land instability, air and water pollution. Development should be of high quality design to help achieve sustainable, safe and inclusive communities, enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors, and designed in keeping with or to positively contribute towards the local identity of the area."	
	ENV2	Wildlife and Habitats	i) Internationally designated wildlife sites (including proposed sites and sites acquired for compensatory measures), will be safeguarded from development that could adversely affect them, unless there are reasons of overriding public interest why the development should proceed and there is no alternative acceptable	

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		solution. ii) Development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Poole Harbour and Dorset Heaths International designations will only be permitted where there is provision to avoid, or secure effective mitigation of, the potential adverse effects in accordance with the strategy in Table 2.2. iii) Development that is likely to have an adverse effect upon nationally designated wildlife sites will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution. iv) In other locations, including locally identified wildlife sites and water-bodies, where significant harm to nature conservation interests cannot be avoided, it should be mitigated. Where it cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensation will result in the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity otherwise development will not be permitted. Features of nature conservation interest should be safeguarded by development. v) Proposals that would result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodlands and veteran trees, will be refused unless the need for and public benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss. vi)		

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 56		Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported. Opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around developments will be encouraged. Development of major sites should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks. vii) Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on internationally protected species will not be permitted unless there are reasons of overriding public interest why the development should proceed and there is no alternative acceptable solution. Development on sites supporting other protected species will only be permitted where adequate provision can be made for the retention of the species or their safe relocation.		
	Policy ENV13 Achieving high levels of environmental performance	i. New buildings and alterations / extensions to existing buildings are expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance.	All new buildings and extensions Expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance. Supporting text indicates that appropriate methods include: • optimising opportunities for the passive solar heating of buildings and the spaces between and around them; • southerly facing roof slopes used for solar thermal and /	In line with the Council's planning Local List , applications for new residential, mixed use, commercial, retail, community or leisure uses should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed, including:

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
			or photovoltaic installations, which where possible should be integrated into the roof design; • maximising opportunities for natural lighting and ventilation to buildings; • minimise the amount of unnecessary overshadowing, including impact on existing renewable energy generators dependent on sunlight; • putting in place systems to collect rainwater for use; • not using those materials that are the most harmful to the environment; and • Sustainable Urban Drainage principles. A Sustainable Design and Construction Statement should be submitted with planning applications to explain methodologies.	• reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions; • minimising waste and increasing recycling; • conserving water resources; • incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage minimising pollution; • maximising the use of sustainable materials, and; • adaptation to Climate Change The Sustainability Checklist should be completed to inform and accompany the Sustainability Statement.

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 58			Listed buildings The following types of improvement are suggested in order to improve energy performance: • improved draught proofing; • increased roof insulation; • installation of secondary glazing; • installation of an energy efficient boiler; • installation of a ground heat source pump.	
	Policy COM11	Renewable energy development	i) Proposals for generating heat or electricity from renewable energy sources (other than wind energy) will be allowed wherever possible providing that the benefits of the development, such as the contribution towards renewable energy targets, significantly outweigh any harm. In addition, permission will only be granted provided: • any adverse impacts on the local landscape, townscape or areas of	Other than for wind energy development, proposals for renewable energy generation will be supported, subject to assessment as to whether the benefits of the development (i.e. the contribution towards tackling climate change) significantly outweigh any harm. Additionally, the following will need to be demonstrated: • satisfactory assimilation of impacts on local

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 59		historical interest can be satisfactorily assimilated; - the proposal minimises harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker, or other detrimental emissions, during construction, its operation and decommissioning; - adverse impacts upon designated wildlife sites, nature conservation interests, and biodiversity are satisfactorily mitigated.	landscape, townscape or areas of historical interest; - minimising of harm to residential amenity; - satisfactory mitigation of ecological impacts	- A transport assessment - Ecological appraisal including details of proposed mitigation of impacts - Details in relation to the proposed level of generation and how the proposal will address climate change, including the contribution towards meeting the aims and targets of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy
	Policy SUS2	Distribution of development i) Development will be distributed according to the following settlement hierarchy, with a greater proportion of development at the larger and more sustainable settlements. The main towns of Dorchester and Weymouth (of which Chickerell and parts of Littlemoor form outlying parts) will be the highest priority locations for new development;	Policy SUS2 sets out the overall development strategy for the plan. This includes directing development towards the main towns, market and coastal towns, and rural settlements with development boundaries (at an appropriate scale). The policy specifies that outside defined development boundaries development will be strictly controlled.	Location of development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. For renewable energy development see requirements for policy COM11.

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 60		- Elsewhere in the plan area, the market and coastal towns of Beaminster, Bridport, Lyme Regis, Portland and Sherborne and the village of Crossways will be a focus for future development; - Development in rural areas will be directed to the settlements with defined development boundaries, and will take place at an appropriate scale to the size of the settlement. Settlements with no defined development boundary may also have some growth to meet their local needs.	In these areas renewable energy generation development is deemed acceptable in principle, subject to other considerations (see policy COM11).	
		ii) Within the defined development boundaries residential, employment and other development to meet the needs of the local area will normally be permitted.		
		iii) Outside defined development boundaries, development will be strictly controlled, having particular regard to the need for the protection of the countryside and environmental constraints, and be restricted to: ...		

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		proposals for the generation of renewable energy or other utility infrastructure; ...		
Policy COM7	Creating a safe and efficient transport network	i) Development that generates significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes including public transport, walking and cycling can be maximised. v) The delivery of a strategic cycle network and improvements to the public rights of way network will be supported. Development should not result in the severance or degradation of existing or proposed routes. Where development degrades the attractiveness of a route, compensatory enhancements will be sought such that there is a net improvement to the public right of way network. Where development proposals provide the opportunity to significantly improve links within the public rights of way network, an appropriate link through the development will be required	This policy expects development to minimise the need to travel and maximise use of sustainable travel, through its appropriate location.	Location of development appropriately so as to minimise the need to travel, and maximise access to sustainable transport modes.
COM8	TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES	ii) Proposals for community travel exchanges in urban and rural areas will be supported, provided		

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
	AND COMMUNITY TRAVEL EXCHANGES	that: • it can provide safe access to the public right of way network, cycle network and highway network and can accommodate and provide safe access and egress for large vehicles; • it has space to accommodate sufficient car and cycle parking; and • it will support existing community facilities located in the local area.		
COM9	PARKING STANDARDS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT	ii) Cycle parking facilities should be provided where suitable private storage is not provided, at a ratio of one cycle space per 2 dwelling units.		
COM10	THE PROVISION OF UTILITIES SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE	iii) The provision of infrastructure to support superfast broadband technology will be a requirement on all new site specific allocations and on all other housing development of 50 or more units and on commercial premises where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more.		
Policy ENV3	Green Infrastructure Network	i) The councils will work together with local communities and other relevant partners to develop a green infrastructure strategy for the plan area. ii) Development that would cause harm to the green infrastructure network or undermine the reasons for an area's inclusion within the network will not be permitted unless clearly outweighed by other considerations.	The policy sets out that a Green Infrastructure Strategy will be produced for the plan area. Due to work now being undertaken on the Dorset Council Local Plan, a strategy for the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Area hasn't been produced. The policy also protects existing green infrastructure, and supports proposals	Design of schemes to protect existing green infrastructure and promote enhancements and access to the existing network. Include details within a submitted Sustainability Statement and associated Sustainability Checklist.

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		iii) Development proposals that promote geodiversity and biodiversity within this network of spaces and provide improved access and recreational use (where appropriate) should be supported.	that enhance geodiversity, biodiversity, and access to the existing network.	
Policy ENV5 Page 63	Flood Risk	i) New development or the intensification of existing uses should be planned to avoid risk of flooding (from surface water run-off, groundwater, fluvial and coastal sources) where possible. The risk of flooding will be minimised by: - steering development towards the areas of lowest risk and avoiding inappropriate development in the higher flood risk zones; - ensuring development will not generate flooding through surface water runoff and/or exacerbate flooding elsewhere. ii) In assessing proposals for development in an area with a medium or higher risk of flooding, the council will need to be satisfied that: - there are no reasonably available alternative sites with a lower	The policy seeks to direct development away from areas affected by medium and higher levels of flood risk, and ensures that development doesn't increase flood risk elsewhere, through surface water management. In areas of medium and higher flood risk, there will need to be demonstration that no alternative sites in areas of lower risk exist, and that appropriate levels of mitigation are proposed.	Appropriate location of development, necessary assessments of flood risk, demonstration a sequential approach, and provision of adequate mitigation in design. Provision of SuDs to manage surface water, details to be provided in application documents, including the Sustainability Statement and associated Sustainability Checklist.

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 64		probability of flooding (where a site has been allocated this test will have been satisfied) adequate measures will be taken to mitigate the risk and ensure that potential occupants will be safe, including measures to ensure the development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant; and • safe access and escape routes are provided where required. iii) In the case of major development on unallocated sites, wider sustainability benefits should not remove the need to consider flood risk or surface water management, or the need to mitigate accordingly. iv) Development will not be permitted where it would adversely impact on the future maintenance, upgrading or replacement of a flood defence scheme.		
	ENV8	AGRICULTURAL LAND AND FARMING RESILIENCE	i) Community schemes providing local food, or crops for local energy production, will be encouraged. ii) Where possible, the councils will steer built development towards areas of poorer quality agricultural land where this is available,	

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		except where this would be inconsistent with other policy and sustainability considerations.		
ENV9	POLLUTION AND CONTAMINATED LAND	i) Development will not be permitted which would result in an unacceptable risk of pollution to ground water, surface water-bodies and tidal waters. ii) Planning permission for development on or adjoining land that is suspected to be contaminated will not be granted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable risk to future occupiers of the development, neighbouring uses and the environment from the contamination		
ENV10	THE LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE SETTING	i) All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. Development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings. ii) Development will provide for the future retention and protection of trees and other features that contribute to an area's distinctive character. Such features may not always be designated or otherwise formally recognised. iii) Development should only be permitted where it provides sufficient hard and soft landscaping to successfully integrate with the character of the site and its surrounding area. iv) Opportunities to incorporate features that would enhance local character, including public art, or that relate to the historical, ecological or		

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		geological interest of a site, should be taken where appropriate.		
ENV16	Amenity	iii) Proposals for external lighting schemes (including illuminated advertisement schemes) should be clearly justified and designed to minimize potential pollution from glare or spillage of light. The intensity of lighting should be the minimum necessary to achieve its purpose, and the benefits of the lighting scheme must be shown to outweigh any adverse effects.		
CON8	DIVERSIFICATION OF LAND-BASED RURAL BUSINESSES	i) Diversification projects (for agricultural and other land-based rural businesses) for the use of land or buildings for non-agricultural employment purposes will be supported, provided they are in keeping with the rural character and comprise: • The use of land; or • The re-use or replacement of an existing building or buildings; or • New ancillary development that relates well to existing development provided that there are no redundant buildings capable of re-use / replacement. ii) The proposed diversification must make an on-going contribution to sustaining the enterprise and may be required to be tied by legal agreement to the business that is diversifying.		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)

Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Core Strategy Vision		... The intrinsic landscape and biodiversity value of the Dorset Heathlands, the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Christchurch Harbour, the coast, beaches and rivers will be protected and their connectivity enhanced. Improving our special environment and its green infrastructure will ensure that recreation and commercial activity sustains these areas. ...The area will adapt to the emerging demands of climate change through clear strategies to reduce risk of flooding, and through encouraging high standards of building design and construction. ...An element of this housing will be in the form of new, well planned, sustainable residential areas in both Christchurch and East Dorset. These will be attractive new areas, including high quality and sustainable homes, areas of open space, new community facilities, and improved transport links to the surrounding area. The area will be easier to get around, not just for those who have a car, but for those who	The overarching vision sets out the aim to adapt to the demands of climate change, through reducing risk of flooding, as well as through high standards of design and construction. New residential areas will include sustainable homes, access to community facilities, and public transport links. Transport corridors to promote sustainable transport modes.	

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 69		wish to use public transport, to walk or to cycle, with major development focused in locations accessible by different means of transport. In Christchurch, development will be focused on the existing public transport corridors on the A35 and A337 and better links will be made to Christchurch and Hinton Admiral stations, with the urban extension also linked to the transport network....In East Dorset, transport corridors will be developed to help to promote a wider choice of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport.		
	Objective 1 To Manage and Safeguard the Natural Environment of Christchurch and East Dorset.	The Green Belt will be retained and protected, except for strategic release of land to provide new housing, and for employment development in East Dorset and at Bournemouth Airport. Impact on or close to designated sites will be avoided, and residential development will contribute to mitigation of its effects on Heathland habitats. New greenspace and biodiversity enhancements will be provided as part of major housing proposals. Important natural features such as Christchurch Harbour, the coast, rivers and beaches and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced.		
Strategic Objectives	Objective 3 To Adapt to the Challenges of Climate Change.	The impact of carbon emissions from transport will be reduced by more sustainable patterns of development in accessible locations, and by encouraging travel by bike, on foot, or by public transport. Developments will be expected to incorporate carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency measures as part of measures to reduce impact on climate change and support important ecosystem services. At least 10% of total energy used on developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000m2 of non-residential floorspace will come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources. Development will be located in areas at lowest risk of flooding. A Supplementary Planning Document for Flood Risk will be produced on how the sequential and exception tests will apply locally	This objective provides detail for addressing climate change impacts, mainly through: - Reducing transport carbon emissions through sustainable location of development - Incorporating carbon reduction, water and energy efficiency in design - Supporting ecosystem services - Specific targets set for renewable energy used on major developments - Locating development in lower flood risk areas	
Strategic Objectives	Objective 6 To Reduce the Need for Our Communities to Travel, and to do so More Easily	The overall aim will be to reduce congestion in key locations, by reducing the need to travel and encouraging public transport use, walking and cycling as alternatives to the car. Development will be located in the most accessible locations, focused on prime transport corridors and town centres. New	This objective sets out aims for encouraging sustainable transport use, to reduce congestion. Development will be located in the most accessible locations, with housing sites close or with good access to facilities.	

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 71	by a Range of Travel Choices.	residential development will be located either close to existing facilities, or where good transport links exist to such facilities.	Transport corridors will be improved in the area.	
		Prime transport corridors will be improved in the short term on the A35 and A337 in Christchurch, the A348 in East Dorset, and the B3073 between the two areas. In the medium term, further prime transport corridors will be developed in East Dorset on parts of the A347, B3074 and B3072, and corridors north of the A31(T). Key transport schemes proposed to support the Core Strategy will include: • Improvements to the A35 corridor through Christchurch • Improvements to the A338/B3073 corridor around Bournemouth Airport • Improvement of the A31(T) around Wimborne The development of new Green Infrastructure including footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, will also encourage people to enjoy recreation without the need to travel by car.	Development of green infrastructure routes to encourage people to enjoy recreation without the need to travel by car.	

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
ME1	Safeguarding Biodiversity and Geodiversity	The Core Strategy aims to protect, maintain and enhance the condition of all types of nature conservation sites, habitats and species within their ecological networks including: Internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC, Ramsar) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) Local Nature Reserves Priority species and habitats Important geological and geomorphological sites Riverine and coastal habitats Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) Within Strategic Nature Areas identified on Map 13.3, specific action will be taken towards meeting targets for the maintenance, restoration and recreation of priority habitats and species, and linking habitats to create more coherent ecological networks that are resistant to climate change. Where development is considered likely to impact upon particular sites, habitats or species as set out within the Dorset Biodiversity Protocol, it will need to be demonstrated that the development will not result in adverse impacts. To determine the likelihood of harm occurring, there should be		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 73		an assessment of effects on any existing habitats, species and/or features of nature conservation importance, and the results of this assessment documented. The method of survey and level of detail will vary according to the size and type of development and whether any priority species and habitats exist on site. The survey should involve consultation and advice from Natural England, the Dorset Wildlife Trust, and Dorset County Council.		
		In considering the acceptability of proposals, the Council will assess their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts relative to the significance of the features' nature conservation value. National policy will be applied to ensure the level of protection afforded international, national and locally designated sites and species is commensurate with their status.		
		The following criteria should be addressed when development is proposed: Avoidance of harm to existing priority habitats and species through careful site selection, artificial lighting design, development design and phasing of		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		construction and the use of good practice construction techniques. • Retention of existing habitats and features of interest, and provision of buffer zones around any sensitive areas. • Enhancement of biodiversity through improving the condition of existing habitats and achieving net gains in biodiversity, where possible. Particular attention should be paid to priority habitats and species referred to in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, and the Strategic Nature Areas identified on the Dorset Nature Map. • Where harm is identified as likely to result, provision of measures to avoid or adequately mitigate that harm should be set out. Development should be refused if adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensation cannot be provided. • Provision of adequate management of the retained and new features. • Monitoring of habitats and species for a suitable period of time after completion of the development to indicate any changes in habitat quality or species		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		numbers, and put in place corrective measures to halt or reverse any decline. In addition, and in recognition of the function of the New Forest National Park, the Core Strategy will carefully consider any adverse impacts on the New Forest as a result of development.		
ME2	Protection of the Dorset Heathlands	In accordance with the advice from Natural England, the evidence available to the authorities and Core Strategy Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), no residential development will be permitted within 400m of protected European and internationally protected heathlands. Any residential development between 400m and 5km of these areas will provide mitigation through a range of measures as set out in the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document and the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document including: Provision of on-site and off-site suitable alternative natural greenspace (provided in accordance with guidelines set out Appendix 5).		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 76		Provision of other appropriate avoidance/mitigation measures. The avoidance or mitigation measures are to be delivered in advance of the developments being occupied and must provide for mitigation in perpetuity. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) will be secured by way of a legal agreement between the developer and the relevant council. The delivery of Heathland mitigation measures will be secured as set out in the Councils' Regulation 123 list. The authority will ensure that mitigation measures to avoid harm are given priority as required by this policy. The Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document will set out the type of development circumstances where mitigation is required, and a list of mitigation projects. The Councils' Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document sit alongside the Supplementary Planning Document in identifying SANGs provision. This will ensure that suitable measures are in place by the time development is occupied. The combination of the 400m exclusion zone with		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		the heathland mitigation measures set out above are designed to function together as an effective package avoiding the harmful effects of additional residential development on the European and internationally designated heathlands.		
Policy ME3	Sustainable Development Standards for New Development	Residential and non-residential development including new homes, and the extension of existing homes will be expected to meet national sustainable development standards. The Councils wish to encourage higher standards of sustainable developments where they are viable and do not significantly compromise other policies in this plan. Developments will be required to incorporate carbon emissions reduction, water and energy efficiency measures and to demonstrate they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options. The most appropriate range and type of measures for each development should be informed by the Code for Sustainable Homes Design Categories for residential development and BREEAM standards for non-residential (or subsequently agreed national standards for sustainable development). In particular this includes:	Domestic buildings: - new residential development and extensions to dwellings need to meet nationally prescribed sustainable development standards, i.e. those set by the Building Regulations. - Higher standards are supported when viable or compatible with other policies . - Applicants should be guided by the Code for Sustainable Homes Design Categories in relation to the policy requirement to incorporate measures for carbon emissions reduction and water and energy efficiency measures. - Subsequently agreed standards will apply where necessary.	In line with the Council's planning Local List, applications for new residential, mixed use, commercial, retail, community or leisure uses should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed, including: - reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions; - minimising waste and increasing recycling; - conserving water resources; - incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage minimising pollution;

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 78		- Water and energy efficiency. Orientation and solar gain (natural lighting and heating). - Use of renewable and low impact materials. - Minimising waste, pollution and water run-off, incorporating Sustainable Drainage where possible. - Minimising soil disturbance to reduce soil carbon issues. In line with current government requirements and targets, all new development will ensure CO2 emissions are minimised to practical and viable levels by following the hierarchy for regulated energy below (unless it can be demonstrated that utilising measures further down the hierarchy will achieve greater carbon reductions): - Energy efficiency measures resulting from maximising building fabric performance, scheme layout and building orientation. - On-site renewable, decentralised, and low carbon energy.	Non-domestic buildings - new non-residential development will need to meet nationally prescribed sustainable development standards - higher standards are supported when viable or compatible with other policies. - Applicants should be guided by BREEAM standards for non-residential development in relation to the policy requirement to incorporate measures for carbon emissions reduction and water and energy efficiency measures. All new development - Developments will ensure CO2 emissions are minimised in line with government requirements and targets by following the energy hierarchy. - For historic buildings, a range of sustainable and low carbon options for construction and	- maximising the use of sustainable materials, and; - adaptation to Climate Change The Sustainability Checklist should be completed to inform and accompany the Sustainability Statement.

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 79		3. Carbon reductions through off-site measures, known as 'Allowable Solutions' (to compensate for carbon emission targets that are difficult to achieve on site). Emissions arising from regulated energy refer to those related to space heating, hot water provision, fixed lighting and ventilation. Unregulated emissions are those related to cooking and plug-in appliances. Unregulated emissions are not counted for the purposes of calculating the carbon compliance of new development. Developments involving the conversion or alteration of historic buildings will be expected to demonstrate that they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options for construction and energy use and incorporated them into the design where practically possible, provided that this does not harm the character of the building or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to fabric or fittings.	energy use should be explored and incorporated where practically possible, and where harm to the character, or risk to the integrity of the building can be avoided.	
	Policy ME4 Renewable Energy Provision	The provision of renewable, decentralised, and low carbon energy will be encouraged in	Renewable energy provision is encouraged on major	Please see the requirements for Policy ME3.

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
	for Residential and Non-residential Developments	residential development of 10 or more dwellings (or sites of 0.5 hectares or greater), and non-residential development of 1,000m2 gross floorspace (or 1 hectare or greater). This will include new development, and the extension and refurbishment of existing homes or premises. Until such time that national requirements and targets necessitate higher percentages of renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy generation to meet carbon emissions targets, the expectation will be that 10% of the total regulated energy used in these types of development will be from such energy sources, unless having regard to the type of development involved and its location and design, this is not feasible or viable. In such cases carbon reductions using off-site measures as set out in the energy hierarchy in Policy ME3 will be sought. The Councils will require all schemes or phases within a development to meet a set overall site pre-development target for sustainable energy generation rather than allowing a piecemeal approach. Where new national requirements and targets increase the	development sites, including new development, and extension and refurbishment of existing property. • Unless not feasible or viable, 10% of total regulated energy used in these types of development will be from renewables. Where not feasible or viable off site measures will be sought • All schemes will set an overall site pre-development target for sustainable energy generation. • If national policy changes, then developments must incorporate into ongoing development. • For larger developments, investigation of options for district heating or power facilities will be required. • Proposals will be in accordance with the Energy Hierarchy (see policy ME3), or secured in accordance with the Councils' current Regulation 123 List	

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		requirement then such standards will be required to be integrated into any further on-going development on the site. Within larger developments and new neighbourhoods/urban extensions, the Councils will require the investigation of options for district heating and/or power facilities. Developments may be required to connect to district heating and/or power facilities where appropriate, feasible and viable. In line with the energy hierarchy set out in Policy ME3, developers will be expected to assess a range of suitable options including district wide and/or micro generation in respect of their sites, with the suitability of the chosen technology being judged on a site-specific basis. Energy provision should normally be provided on-site as set out in the energy hierarchy in Policy ME3, particularly on larger developments, or will be secured in accordance with the Councils' current Regulation 123 List until the introduction of 'Allowable Solutions' frameworks.		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy ME5	Sources of Renewable Energy	The Councils encourage the sustainable generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources where adverse social, environmental and visual impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level. Proposals for renewable energy apparatus will only be permitted where: • The technology is suitable for the location and does not cause significant adverse harm to visual amenity from within the landscape and views into it, and within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is in accordance with its current Management Plan; • It is in accordance with Policy ME1 regarding adverse ecological impacts upon the integrity of priority habitats or local populations of priority species and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement; • Cumulative impacts are taken into account, and assessments undertaken for impacts on the	Proposals for renewable energy generation will only be permitted where they; • Minimise impacts to an acceptable level; • Are suitably located, and not cause significantly adverse landscape impacts (from within or in views into it), or within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is in accordance with its current Management Plan; • Are in accordance with Policy ME1 regarding ecological impacts, and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement; • Take into account cumulative impacts, and include assessments of impacts on the landscape, visually, the local amenity and biodiversity; • Would not cause interference to radar, or electronic communications networks, or highway safety;	In line with the Council's planning Local List, applications for renewable energy generation will be accompanied by: • A landscape impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts • A heritage impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts • A transport assessment • Ecological appraisal including details of proposed mitigation of impacts • Details in relation to the proposed level of generation and how the proposal will address climate change, including the contribution towards meeting the aims and targets of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		landscape, visually, the local amenity and biodiversity; • It would not cause interference to radar, or electronic communications networks, or highway safety; • It would not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity by reason of visual impact, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated with turbines), or other nuisances and emissions; • It includes an agreed restoration scheme, any necessary mitigation measures, and measures to ensure the removal of the installations when operations cease; • Safe access during construction and operation must be provided; and • It avoids harm to the significance and settings of heritage assets. Further work will be undertaken to identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources.	• Would not be significantly harmful to neighbouring amenity; • Include a restoration scheme for when operations cease; • Include safe access during construction and operation, and • Avoid harm to the significance and settings of heritage assets.	

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy KS2	Settlement Hierarchy	The location, scale and distribution of development should conform with the settlement hierarchy, which will also help to inform service providers about the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities. Main Settlements - Christchurch, Wimborne Minster, Ferndown and West Parley, Verwood, Corfe Mullen The settlements which will provide the major focus for community, cultural, leisure, retail, utility, employment and residential development. This will include infill development as well as options for some greenfield development. District Centres - West Moors, Highcliffe Settlements which will provide for smaller scale community, cultural, leisure, retail, employment and residential development within the existing urban areas. Suburban Centres - Colehill, St Leonards and St Ives Settlements with no existing centres that will provide for some residential development along with community, leisure and retail	The policy focuses development to larger settlements, with District centres to provide smaller scale growth, and suburban centres some growth. Rural service centres to have residential development that reinforces their role as providers of facilities and services.	Location of development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 85		facilities to meet day to day needs within the existing urban areas. Rural Service Centres - Alderholt, Cranborne, Sixpenny Handley, Sturminster Marshall, Three Legged Cross Main providers for the rural areas where residential development will be allowed of a scale that reinforces their role as providers of community, leisure and retail facilities to support the village and adjacent communities. Villages Settlements where only very limited development will be allowed that supports the role of the settlement as a provider of services to its home community. Hamlets Settlements where development would not be allowed unless it was functionally required to be in the rural area.		
	Policy ME6 Flood Management, Mitigation, and Defence	When assessing new development, the local authorities will apply the sequential and exception tests set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.	Reference to the need to apply the sequential and exception tests set out in national policy.	Appropriate location of development, necessary assessments of flood risk, demonstration a sequential

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 86		Where exceptionally, all developments (including redevelopments and extensions which require planning permission) can be permitted within areas at risk of flooding they will be required to incorporate appropriate flood resistance and resilience measures as a means of "future proofing" against the effects of climate change. Historic buildings and sites may be exempt from this Policy where measures would harm their character or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to fabric or fittings.	Developments will be permitted in areas at risk of flooding as an exception and will require flood resistance and resilience measures to mitigate against effects of climate change.	approach, and provision of adequate mitigation in design.
		All developments will be required to demonstrate that flood risk does not increase as a result of the development proposed, and that options have been taken to reduce overall flood risk. Post-development surface water run-off must not exceed pre-development levels and options should have been sought to reduce levels of run-off overall. This will primarily be through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and a range of flood resistance and resilience measures. Space for such measures should be set aside within larger developments.	The policy seeks to ensure that flood risk isn't increased as a result of development, with no increase in surface water run off. SuDs will be used primarily, with design, construction, operation and maintenance of SuDs meeting national standards.	Provision of SuDs to manage surface water, details to be provided in application documents, including the Sustainability Statement and associated Sustainability Checklist.

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		The design, construction, operation and maintenance of SUDS must meet national standards. Plans for new drainage systems will need to be approved by Dorset County Council (as SUDS approval body) before construction can start.		
Policy HE4	Open Space, Leisure and Green Infrastructure	... Location of new provision When considering sites for new open space and leisure provision, priority will be given to sites which are easily accessible by a range of transport modes and which can be integrated into a network of green infrastructure. Sites for new open space provision will be identified through an implementation and delivery plan and considered for allocation through the forthcoming Site-Specific Allocations Development Plan Document. Green Infrastructure Where appropriate, elements of green infrastructure will be incorporated into the design of new open space provision such as 'permeability', with green foot and cycle paths running through the development, connecting with existing routes wherever possible.	The policy sets out that elements of green infrastructure will be incorporated into the design of new open space provision. Emphasis is placed upon the 'permeability' of sites, including incorporating green foot and cycle paths, and connecting with existing routes.	Design of schemes to include elements of green infrastructure, including appropriate permeability of sites with green footpaths and cycleways that connect to existing routes. Details to be provided within application documents and submitted Sustainability Statement and Checklist.

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
KS11	Transport and Development	The Councils will use their planning powers to influence development so that it reduces the need to travel, provides improved access to key services and facilities and promotes alternative modes of travel. Development will be permitted where mitigation against the negative transport impacts which may arise from that development or cumulatively with other proposals is provided. This shall be achieved through the implementation of measures identified within a submitted transport assessment or transport statement, including where appropriate: i. contributions to transport modelling work; ii. the provision of new and the improvement of existing public transport, pedestrian and cycle routes; iii. the provision of travel plans to promote sustainable travel patterns such as park and change, car sharing and car clubs; and iv. the implementation of works to the highway. Developers will be required to contribute towards local and strategic transport improvements through site specific legal agreements and payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy Development should be in accessible locations that are well linked to existing communities by walking, cycling and public		

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		transport routes. Development must be designed to: provide safe, permeable layouts which provide access for all modes of transport, prioritising direct, attractive routes for walking, cycling and public transport; provide safe access onto the existing transport network; allow safe movement of development related trips on the immediate network; and minimise the number of new accesses on the A338.		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)

Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
The Vision for North Dorset		By 2031 North Dorset will: • be a District that has played a positive role in addressing the causes and effects of climate change; • have more sustainable forms of development that are adequately served by infrastructure (including sustainable transport solutions) and make prudent use of natural resources (including previously developed land); ...		
Objectives for the Local Plan Part 1	Objective 1 - Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change	The objective is to address the causes and effects of climate change by: • encouraging the use of sustainable construction techniques; • encouraging the use of renewable energy technologies appropriate to the local area; and • ensuring the wise use of natural resources, particularly previously developed land and water.		
	Objective 2 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic and Natural	The objective is to conserve and enhance the environment of North Dorset by: • ensuring that North Dorset's wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage are protected and well managed;		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
	Environment	- encouraging design that maintains the quality of the District's built and natural environment; and - ensuring that the District's residents are able to enjoy their homes and public places without undue disturbance or intrusion from neighbouring uses.		
Policy 3 Page 91	Climate change	Development proposals within the District should seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including through appropriately sited renewable and low carbon energy developments. Where the proposal involves the re-use or extension of existing buildings, developments should seek to improve the buildings energy performance unless it can be demonstrated that it is not practical or viable to do so. Where the proposal includes new buildings they should: be located in line with the Core Spatial Strategy in Policy 2 and where possible in areas served by a good range of everyday facilities	The policy seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through appropriately sited renewable and low carbon energy developments. For reuse or extension of existing buildings – seek to improve the energy performance unless not practical or viable. <u>New buildings should:</u> - Be located in line with the Core Spatial Strategy, and in areas served by facilities and active travel; - Make best use of solar radiation and passive cooling through the incorporation of passive solar design principles; - Meet current national targets for energy performance through building fabric OR through the inclusion of renewable or low	In line with the Council's planning Local List, applications for new residential, mixed use, commercial, retail, community or leisure uses should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed, including: - reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions; - minimising waste and increasing recycling; - conserving water resources; - incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage minimising pollution;

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 92		and facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport; and b. be designed to make best use of solar radiation and passive cooling through the incorporation of passive solar design principles; and c. incorporate measures to meet the current national targets for energy performance by incorporating measures into the building fabric itself or through the inclusion of renewable or low carbon energy measures. Where this is not practical or viable, near-site or off-site measures may be considered.	carbon energy measures. Where this is not practical or viable, near-site or off-site measures may be considered.	- maximising the use of sustainable materials, and; - adaptation to Climate Change
		Development should seek to minimise the impacts of climate change overall through: d. incorporation of measures to reduce water consumption; and e. avoidance of areas at risk of flooding from all sources and the incorporation of measures to reduce flood risk overall; and f. incorporation of measures to reduce the impact of excessive heat on the urban environment through	Development should: - Reduce water consumption. - Avoid risk of flooding. - Reduce impact of excessive heat through GI, passive shading and ventilation	The Sustainability Checklist should be completed to inform and accompany the Sustainability Statement.

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		the incorporation of green infrastructure and passive shading and ventilation. Neighbourhood plans will be required to consider local community actions that will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change.		
Policy 4	The Natural Environment	The natural environment of North Dorset and the ecosystem services it supports will be enhanced through the protection of environmental assets and the establishment of a coherent ecological network of designated sites and stepping stone sites linked via corridor features. Where development takes place, buffers should be provided to environmental assets to improve their biodiversity value and facilitate adaptation to climate change. Where opportunities exist, new habitats should be created to enhance this network further. Developments that offer gains in biodiversity whether through the restoration of habitats or the creation of linkages between existing sites, will be looked upon favourably in the decision-making process.		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 94		Developments are expected to respect the natural environment including the designated sites, valued landscapes and other features that make it special. Developments should be shaped by the natural environment so that the benefits it provides are enhanced and not degraded.		
		Development proposals which seek to conserve or enhance the natural environment should be permitted unless significant adverse social or environmental impacts are likely to arise as a result of the proposal.		
		Landscape Character The landscape character of the District will be protected through retention of the features that characterise the area. Where significant impact is likely to arise as a result of a development proposal, developers will be required to clearly demonstrate that the impact on the landscape has been mitigated and that important landscape features have been incorporated in to the development scheme.		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Within the areas designated as AONB and their setting, development will be managed in a way that conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area. Proposals which would harm the natural beauty of the AONBs will not be permitted unless it is clearly in the public interest to do so. In such instances, effective mitigation should form an integral part of the development proposals. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how they have had regard to the objectives of the relevant AONB management plan for the area. Internationally Important Wildlife Sites Developers should demonstrate that their proposals will not have significant adverse effects, including cumulative effects, on internationally important wildlife sites. Where this cannot be demonstrated, appropriate mitigation measures will be required otherwise permission will be refused. Mitigation measures for specific sites will include:		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		a in relation to Fontmell and Melbury Downs SAC, contributions towards the effective management of the site to reduce recreational pressure; b in relation to Rooksmoor SAC, contributions towards the establishment of the North Dorset Trailway between Sturminster Newton and Stalbridge to reduce traffic pollution on the site; c in relation to the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heaths (Purbeck and Wareham) and Studland Dunes SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA, and Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site, contributions from developments within 5km of the heathland designations towards the sustainable management of the heathland sites or contributions towards the provision of alternative accessible recreation space to reduce recreational pressure on the Dorset heathlands; d in relation to the Poole Harbour SPA and Poole Harbour Ramsar site, developments within the harbour catchment will be required to be nitrogen neutral to avoid increasing nitrogen inputs into Poole harbour. A package of measures including upgrade of sewage treatment works or through the transfer of land from intensive agricultural		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 97		use to less intensive grassland or woodland uses is available.		
		Sites of Special Scientific Interests (SSSIs) Nationally designated wildlife sites should not be harmed by development unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the impact on the site and the wider SSSI site network.		
		Developers should demonstrate that their proposals will not have a negative impact, including cumulative impacts, on nationally designated wildlife sites. Where the potential for harm is identified, effective mitigation measures will need to be put into place. Developments should seek to link sites together to contribute towards the establishment of a coherent ecological network.		
		Locally Designated Natural Environment Sites Locally designated sites represent some of the most valuable local environmental sites. Development should have regard to the reasons for the designation and not		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 98		harm the integrity of these sites nor connections between them and other environmental assets. Development proposals should aim to avoid impact on local biodiversity sites however where impact is unavoidable; developers will be required to provide effective mitigation for this loss in biodiversity. As a last resort, compensation measures may be acceptable if effective mitigation cannot be provided. Such compensation measures must offer gains equivalent in magnitude to the loss resulting from the development. Agricultural Land The best and most versatile agricultural land will be safeguarded from permanent loss unless it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable alternative sites, or that the proposal has significant economic or social benefits that outweigh the loss of the land from agricultural uses, or that the proposal would support an existing agricultural business. Species		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		Where there is likely to be an impact on nationally protected or locally rare or scarce species, an assessment of the impact on these species should be submitted to accompany development proposals. This should be appropriate to the scale of development and be informed initially through consultation with the local environmental records centre.		
Policy 22 Page 99	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Assessing Benefits against Impacts When considering proposals for heat or electricity generation from renewable or low carbon sources, the social, economic and environmental benefits of the scheme should be assessed against the likely impacts. A proposal for generating heat or electricity from renewable or low carbon sources (excluding wind energy development) will be permitted provided it can be demonstrated that: a. both individually and cumulatively, all adverse impacts arising from the proposal have been satisfactorily assessed; and	Social, economic and environmental benefits of the renewable or local carbon energy scheme should be assessed against the likely impacts. Proposals will be permitted provided there is demonstration that: - all adverse impacts arising from the proposal have been satisfactorily assessed; - potential to mitigate any adverse impacts has been maximised; - actual benefits that the scheme will deliver outweigh the adverse impacts that remain. Adverse impacts include visual impact; and impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment including designated	In line with the Council's planning Local List, applications for renewable energy generation will be accompanied by: - A landscape impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts - A heritage impact assessment including details of proposed mitigation of impacts - A transport assessment - Ecological appraisal including details of proposed mitigation of impacts

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 100		b. the proposal has maximised the potential to mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified; and c. the actual benefits that the scheme will deliver outweigh the adverse impacts that remain. Impacts Potential adverse environmental impacts (together with measures to mitigate such impacts) that will be assessed in relation to any proposal include: visual impact; and impacts on biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment including designated and non-designated heritage assets, the water environment and agricultural land. In addition, in assessing the adequacy of mitigation measures in relation to a proposal it will be expected that: d. the proposal's location has been identified having regard to sites that make best use of existing transport infrastructure and the minimisation of traffic movements whilst providing safe access; and	and non-designated heritage assets, the water environment and agricultural land. Assessment will include expectation that: - Location is suitable in terms of transport infrastructure and the minimisation of traffic movements, and safe access is provided; - issues of, noise and vibration or interference to radar or any communication systems including televisions can be fully overcome; - early meaningful consultation has been undertaken with people in the locality that might be adversely affected; - proposal incorporates an agreed restoration scheme; Potential benefits to be assessed include: - the amount of heat or electricity that is likely to be generated, and the in greenhouse gas emissions - local community benefits - jobs, investment in the local	Details in relation to the proposed level of generation and how the proposal will address climate change, including the contribution towards meeting the aims and targets of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		e. any issues of, noise and vibration or interference to radar or any communication systems including televisions can be fully overcome; and f. early meaningful consultation has been undertaken with people in the locality that might be adversely affected by the proposal and clear regard has been had to the responses received; and g. the proposal incorporates an agreed restoration scheme including measures to remove installations when operations cease. Benefits Potential benefits that will be assessed in relation to any proposal include: h. the amount of heat or electricity that is likely to be generated from the proposed renewable or low carbon energy development and the consequential reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; and	economy, community ownership or shareholding of a scheme, and local provision of renewable and low carbon energy	

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		i. local community benefits, including jobs, investment in the local economy, community ownership or shareholding of a scheme and local provision of renewable and low carbon energy, for example, through a district heating network.		
Policy 2 Page 102	Core Spatial Strategy	All development proposals should be located in accordance with the spatial strategy for North Dorset. The Four Main Towns Blandford (Forum and St. Mary), Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton are identified as the main towns in North Dorset. They will function as the main service centres in the District and will be the main focus for growth, both for the vast majority of housing and other development. Policies 16 to 19 set out the main locations for growth at the four main towns, which will be shown in more detail in Part 2 of the Local Plan that deals with site allocations, with the exception of the southern extension to Gillingham, which is identified as a strategic site allocation in Policy 21 of this document.	The policy directs development to the main towns in the district as the main focus for housing and other development. Local needs will be met at Stalbridge and the larger villages. Outside of these areas development will be strictly controlled and subject to countryside policies.	Location of development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy/spatial strategy.

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		Stalbridge and the Larger Villages Stalbridge and eighteen larger villages have been identified as the focus for growth to meet the local needs outside of the four main towns. These larger villages are: Bourton, Charlton Marshall, Child Okeford, East Stour, Fontmell Magna, Hazelbury Bryan, Iwerne Minster, Marnhull, Milborne St Andrew, Milton Abbas, Motcombe, Okeford Fitzpaine, Pimperne, Shillingstone, Stourpaine, Winterborne Kingston, Winterborne Stickland and Winterborne Whitechurch. The Countryside Outside the defined boundaries of the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages, the remainder of the District will be subject to countryside policies where development will be strictly controlled unless it is required to enable essential rural needs to be met.		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 104		At Stalbridge and all the District's villages, the focus will be on meeting local (rather than strategic) needs. Settlement Boundaries The settlement boundaries defined around the four main towns, Stalbridge and the larger villages in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan 2003 and proposals maps are retained and, in conjunction with Policies 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21 of this document, which identify the broad locations for housing and employment growth and regeneration, will continue to be used for development management purposes until reviewed either: through site allocations in Part 2 of the Local Plan or a neighbourhood plan. The settlement boundaries defined around all other settlements in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan 2003 and proposals maps are removed and these settlements will be subject to countryside policies unless new settlement boundaries are defined in neighbourhood plans or in Part 2 of the Local Plan.		
	Policy 13 Grey Infrastructure	... Drainage and Flood Prevention	Appropriate sustainable drainage solutions should be incorporated into large scale	Provision of SuDs to manage surface water, details to be

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy 15	Green Infrastructure	The Council will work with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies to make provision for dealing with flood risk, the transfer and treatment of wastewater and the introduction of sustainable drainage systems. Sustainable drainage solutions appropriate to the development and underlying ground conditions should be incorporated into all new development of ten dwellings or more and connect with the overall surface water management approach for the area. ...	housing development (10 or more dwellings) and connect to existing surface water management systems.	provided in application documents, including the Sustainability Statement and associated Sustainability Checklist.
		The Council will seek to: a. integrate the new green infrastructure to be provided in association with strategic growth at the four main towns with existing green infrastructure networks; and b. enhance the provision of green infrastructure in the countryside (including at Stalbridge and the District's villages), especially where it helps to improve recreational opportunities; and	The policy sets out that development would need to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and deliver environmental benefits, with provision to be achieved on-site unless not practical or viable. Otherwise, new green infrastructure will be expected to be provided off-site or through contributions towards enhancements. The policy also places emphasis on the need for developments to achieve (or contribute towards) conservation of existing	Design of schemes to ensure green infrastructure is conserved enhanced, alongside new provision, with connectivity to other networks. Details to be provided within application documents and submitted Sustainability Statement and Checklist.

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		c. protect and enhance existing open space of importance, character areas, outdoor sport and recreational facilities and provide new facilities to support growth; and d. take forward new and improved strategic facilities, such as the North Dorset Trailway; and e. promote the public enjoyment of wildlife, where this is compatible with maintaining biodiversity; and f. identify opportunities to work with partners at the local, district and sub-regional levels to deliver multiple key green infrastructure benefits. Development will be required to enhance existing and provide new green infrastructure to improve the quality of life of residents and deliver environmental benefits. All elements of green infrastructure should be provided on site in line with standards of provision set in the development plan unless:	green infrastructure, creation of new sites and linkages, enhancements to the connectivity, and area specific packages.	

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 107		g. it can be demonstrated that it would not be practical or viable to do so; or h. exceptionally, it could be demonstrated that greater benefits could be realised through off-site measures. Where the full requirement for green infrastructure is not provided on-site, development would be expected to provide new green infrastructure off site, and/or enhance (or make a contribution towards the enhancement of) existing green infrastructure off site. Developments will also be expected to deliver, or contribute towards the delivery of: i. the conservation and management of existing assets; and j. the creation of new sites and links including new or improved open space for children's play, outdoor sport and recreation; and		

North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		k. enhancement to the functionality, quality and connectivity of green infrastructure; and l. area-specific packages which achieve multiple benefits including those identified in Figure 7.2. Neighbourhood plans should consider measures that assist in delivering key green infrastructure benefits as outlined in this policy, including the designation of local green space, where appropriate		

Swanage Local Plan (2017)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Spatial Objectives for the Swanage Local Plan		Protecting and enhancing existing green spaces, and providing new open spaces and links to the countryside that fit with the historic character and setting within the AONB and wildlife designations.		
Additional key objectives for Swanage		A more sustainable town, with improved resilience to climate change and flooding Seafront enhancement and improvements to traffic management and walking and cycling links		
Policy SGI Page 109	Swanage Green Infrastructure	All development proposals in Swanage should take account of the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy, once this is completed. Applications for major development should be accompanied by a statement setting out how the proposals: - will avoid damage or loss to the existing green infrastructure network (as defined in the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy) unless such damage or loss is outweighed by other benefits of the development; and - will maximise any opportunities to improve and enhance the green	This policy sets out the need to take account of the adopted Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy SPD . Applications for major development to ensure (through a submitted statement) that it will conserve the existing green infrastructure network, unless there are overriding benefits, and maximise opportunity to enhance the existing network.	Applicants to refer to the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy. Details to be provided within application documents and submitted Sustainability Statement and Checklist.

Swanage Local Plan (2017)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		infrastructure network, in line with the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy.		
	Heathland mitigation	Each settlement extension will deliver appropriate mitigation to avoid adverse impacts on nearby heathland.	Links to Policies DH and SE within the Purbeck Local Plan	
	Biodiversity	Biodiversity and geodiversity in Swanage will be protected, managed and enhanced in line with policy BIO (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) of the PLP1.	Links to Policy BIO within the Purbeck Local Plan	

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)

Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy 22	Waste from new developments	Proposals for major development should: a. demonstrate that the waste arising from construction, demolition and excavation works will be minimised and managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy; b. incorporate adequate facilities on-site into the design that allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery and c. demonstrate that there is adequate capacity available at sewage treatment facilities or suitable arrangements are made for their provision. Financial contributions towards the off-site provision of adequate waste management infrastructure to accommodate a non-waste development may be required where the Waste Planning Authority considers this necessary, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2016 (as amended), unless it is demonstrated that existing waste management infrastructure serving the development is adequate.	For major development: Preparation of Site Waste Management Plan to demonstrate how waste arising from construction is minimised and managed is good practice for construction projects and is required through policies in Local Plans in some areas. Proposals should include appropriate on-site provision of facilities for the separation or storage of waste, adequate to meet the needs of the proposed development and the type and amount of waste arising from occupation. E.g. indoor and outdoor storage space for bins and separating materials; and for larger sites waste storage facilities and on-site treatment facilities. Provision of waste audit statement outlining compliance with Policy 22.	Include relevant details within application document, a submitted Sustainability Statement and Checklist, and a Site Waste Management Plan.

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy 18	Biodiversity and geological interest	Natura 2000 Sites Proposals for waste management facilities must not adversely affect the integrity of European or Ramsar or other internationally designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, unless the tests set out under Article 6(4) and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive/Regulation 63 and 64 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 are met. Sites of national and local importance Proposals for waste management facilities will only be permitted where adverse impacts on biodiversity and/or geodiversity will be: i. avoided; or ii. where an adverse impact cannot be avoided, the impact will be adequately mitigated; or iii. where adverse impacts cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensation will result in the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity / geodiversity. Wherever practicable, proposals should enhance biodiversity and geological interest. Development which adversely affects a Site of Special Scientific Interest will not		

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		normally be permitted, except where the benefits of the development at the site clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site. All relevant proposals should be accompanied by an objective assessment of the potential effects of the development on features of biodiversity and/or geological interest, taking into account cumulative impacts with other development and the potential impacts of climate change. In addition, the assessment must have particular regard to the need to protect, maintain and / or enhance sites and species of international and national importance, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. It should also consider the potential for existing habitats on the site to be restored to higher quality habitats, where relevant. The assessment must also demonstrate how the proposal intends to address the need to maintain and/or enhance features of local and regional importance including Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. The proposals should seek to achieve this wherever practicable and consistent with viable development.		

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy 23	Restoration, aftercare and afteruse	Proposals for waste management development which do not constitute a permanent use of land will only be permitted where the Waste Planning Authority is satisfied that acceptable restoration and aftercare measures will be implemented at the earliest practicable opportunity, either in a phased manner during operation or immediately on completion of the operational life of the development. Proposals should demonstrate how they comply with the Landscape Management Guidelines and contribute to the targets of the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Vision for Mineral Extraction in Dorset		... By 2028, the supply of minerals from and into Dorset will have supported Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole's continuing economic and population growth (which will be concentrated in South East Dorset) and the development of sustainable communities. An adequate and steady supply of Dorset's minerals will have been secured efficiently and in environmentally acceptable ways. The plan will have supported the sustainable production of oil and gas and the extraction of aggregates and ball clay. The above will have been achieved whilst protecting local communities, enhancing the places in which people live, and protecting and enhancing the area's unique natural and built environment, including the AONBs, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, the internationally and nationally designated ecological and geological sites and Dorset's many heritage assets. At the end of the plan period, mineral workings in Dorset will be making their contribution to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change through the efficient use of resources, positive restoration of worked and completed sites,	The overarching vision focuses on sustainable mineral extraction and site restoration which will protect and enhance the natural environment while protecting and enhancing the places where people live.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		the sustainable transportation of mineral resources and the provision of materials for flood defences and coastal protection and stability. ...		
Objective 4		To maximise the opportunities for environmental enhancement offered through the restoration of worked sites and outside worked areas to enhance Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole's unique natural environment, historic environment and potential for recreation. This will be achieved at the earliest possible opportunity.		
Objective 5		To ensure that adverse impacts of mineral working on the environment, local communities, businesses and tourism are minimised and that Natura 2000 sites are protected and enhanced appropriately in accordance with the Habitats Regulations.		
Policy SS1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development.	When considering development proposals the Mineral Planning Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever	Development will be secured that improves the environmental conditions in the area. No permission will be granted if there are any adverse impacts outweigh the benefits, as assessed against the NPPF.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 117		possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Mineral Planning Authority will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether: any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted		
	Chapter 6	Climate Change	 6.3 There are two key aspects of climate change that are relevant to minerals planning: a. reducing carbon emissions; and b. preparing/providing for the effects of climate change. 6.4 Much of the discussion around climate change is about reducing	Chapter 6 presents the overall Plan approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change. This includes: • Carbon Management Action Plan • the Low Carbon Bournemouth Community Action Plan,

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		carbon emissions, but preparing for the effects of climate change is just as important. Planning for the provision of the minerals required by our communities must include achieving lower carbon emissions and greater resilience to the impacts on climate change. 6.5 The Minerals Strategy addresses both these issues in various ways, including: a. encouraging the reduction of transport of minerals by road and thereby reducing carbon emissions; b. ensuring that mineral workings do not increase the risk of flooding; c. where practicable, increasing flood storage capacity; d. providing opportunities for the provision of winter water storage through quarry reclamation; e. encouraging the mining of Portland Stone as opposed to quarrying – mining has been shown to produce less CO2 than quarrying; f. providing stone that can be used in sea defences and aggregates for use in flood defence works, where appropriate; 3 Comprehensive Climate Change Risk Assessment September 2010: Dorset County Council & Dorset Districts & Borough Councils. 42 Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Minerals Strategy (2014) g. encouraging the increased provision of recycled aggregates,	- the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Renewable Energy Strategy - the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Energy Efficiency Strategy and Action Plan	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		and minimising the impacts of extraction of primary aggregates; h. providing opportunities, through restoration schemes, to benefit biodiversity with particular emphasis on the creation of habitat for species affected by climate change; and i. encouraging the growing of bio-mass energy crops as a possible after-use on mineral development sites, subject to suitability in the environment		
Policy CC1	Preparation of Climate Change Assessments	Proposals for mineral developments and aggregates recycling operations should be supported by an assessment of how climate change mitigation and adaptation measures have been incorporated in the design and operation of the proposed development and considered in its location. This assessment will include demonstrating that the proposals are energy, material, and water efficient. It must also demonstrate how emissions generated from traffic will be minimised.	All applications to be supported by a climate change assessment where relevant.	
Policy AS1	Provision of Sand and Gravel	 Sites will only be considered where it has been demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration)	Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where relevant.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heathland Ramsar site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.		
Policy BC1	Provision of Ball Clay	 The sensitive environment of the ball clay bearing areas should be recognised and permission will be granted for the extraction of ball clay where all of the following specific criteria are met: a. The scale, nature, location and duration of the proposal would not have a significant impact on the landscape character and quality of the AONB. b. Where sites are situated within the AONB, the scale and method of working should be appropriate in scale and specifically tailored to reduce harm. c. Where it has been demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heathland Ramsar site either alone or in combination	Habitat Regulations Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be required where relevant.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		with other plans or projects, unless in exceptional circumstances the provisions of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are met. d. A detailed restoration and aftercare scheme demonstrates how the enhancement of landscape, nature conservation habitats and geodiversity interest will be achieved, as appropriate.		
Policy BC2	Ball Clay Transportation	Where the Mineral Planning Authority has identified unacceptable adverse impacts arising from road borne transportation of ball clay, operators will be expected to use alternative means of transport for the movement of ball clay to and from Furzebrook and for the onward distribution of ball clay from Furzebrook where practical.	Climate change mitigation is prioritized. Supporting text also states: 'To ensure that European wildlife sites are safeguarded from any effects of development, proposals should comply with Policy DM5 (Chapter 16).'	
Policy PK2	Considerations for Purbeck Stone Quarries	Proposals for Purbeck Stone quarries must meet all of the following criteria: a. their scale, extent and location are such that adverse impacts upon the environment and amenity can be avoided, minimised or adequately mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority; b. they are accompanied by details of anticipated overburden and evidence of how this will be accommodated within the landform so as not to have a significant impact on the landscape character and quality of the	Habitat Regulations Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be required where relevant.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 122		Dorset AONB; c. there will not be an unacceptable cumulative impact on the landscape character or amenity having regard to activities within the proposed site and other sites within the area; d. existing characteristic landscape features, such as stone walls, are retained in situ unless the stone is incapable of being viably worked without disturbance to such features. Where disturbance is unavoidable proposals must include measures to minimise disturbance and/or mitigate the impact to an acceptable degree; e. there would not be unacceptable impacts on the highway network or amenity arising from transporting stone from the quarry to the service area; and f. in the case of applications for non-allocated sites, they would not prevent or constrain the delivery of an existing permitted or allocated site, having regard to the potential for cumulative impacts to occur.		
	Policy PD2 Surface Quarrying of Portland Stone	The Mineral Planning Authority will only grant permission for surface quarrying of Portland Stone on the Isle of Portland if: a. significant environmental gains which deliver a net environmental benefit will be provided, which will generally be achieved through the agreement to relinquish permission for		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		surface quarrying for at least an equivalent amount of stone in Areas Sensitive to Surface Quarrying, as identified on the Policies Map; and b. environmentally acceptable surface quarrying techniques will be employed.		
Policy PD3	Relinquishment of Permission	The relinquishment of planning permission for surface extraction or extraction of stone from the cherty series will be sought when opportunities arise within the Areas Sensitive to Surface Quarrying, namely those areas identified on the Policies Map, and in other areas where significant environmental improvements would result.	Additional natural environment benefits will be sought by transitioning from surface extraction to mining of Portland Stone where possible.	
Policy PD4	Minimising Impacts of Existing Permissions on Portland	The Mineral Planning Authority will through the Review of Old Mineral Planning Permissions and through voluntary agreements seek to: a. secure more environmentally acceptable ways of working; b. establish appropriate stand-offs between quarry operations and adjacent residential dwellings (and other sensitive locations and developments); c. ensure that quarries are operated in a way which minimises adverse impacts arising from dust, noise and blasting vibration upon the amenity of people in residential areas or upon other uses sensitive to such impacts; d. secure the	Where permission already exists but will be reviewed, voluntary agreements will be sought to enhance benefits for biodiversity.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 124		protection of the Isle of Portland Site of Special Scientific Interest, the Isle of Portland Local Geological or Geomorphological Site, Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, BAP Priority Habitats and the habitats of protected species; e. ensure that the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site and its setting is safeguarded; f. secure the protection of scheduled monuments and their settings, and other important undesignated archaeological remains including evidence of former quarrying; g. secure the protection of Easton, Weston and the Grove Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and historic landscapes (heritage assets); h. protect and/or enhance the landscape and minimise the visual impact of quarrying on Portland.		
	Policy PD5 Restoration of Sites on Portland	Schemes for the restoration of mineral sites on Portland should achieve the following: a. reinstatement of areas of the Isle of Portland SSSI to a favourable condition; b. safeguarding, enhancement and where necessary reinstatement of significant ecological and geological interests; c. creation or reinstatement of limestone grassland habitats in localities that link up or	Restoration schemes will contribute to the Portland Quarries Nature Park as well as reinstatement and enhancement of the Isle of Portland SSSI.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 125		buffer areas of existing significant ecological interests; d. preservation of any industrial archaeological features or landscapes that show evidence of traditional methods of quarrying; e. reinstatement of typical Portland landscape features, such as field patterns and stone walls, where appropriate; f. reinstatement and where appropriate enhancement of public rights of way; g. reinstatement of agricultural land and facilitation of agricultural afteruse where appropriate. Proposals for the afteruse of sites will be expected to contribute to the aims of the Portland Quarries Nature Park where relevant.		
	Policy HY1	Proposals for Exploration and Appraisal (of Hydrocarbons)	Proposals for exploration and appraisal of onshore oil and gas will be permitted where they meet all of the following criteria: a. well sites and associated facilities are sited in the least sensitive location from which the target reservoir can be accessed; b. it has been demonstrated that possible effects that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; c. any adverse impacts can be avoided or mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning	Habitat Regulations Assessment and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be required where relevant, and restoration will prioritise protection and enhancement of the natural environment, particularly designated sites.

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 126		Authority, with safeguards to protect environmental and amenity interests put in place as necessary; d. it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure; e. an indication of the extent of the reservoir and the extent of the area of search within the reservoir is provided to the Mineral Planning Authority; f. exploration and appraisal operations are for an agreed, temporary length of time; and g. well sites and associated facilities are restored at the earliest practicable opportunity if oil and gas is not found in economically viable volumes, or they are developed within a time frame agreed.		
	Policy HY2 Proposals for Production Facilities and Ancillary Development	Proposals for hydrocarbon production well sites and facilities, and other related ancillary development, will be permitted where they meet all of the following criteria:..... d. extraction, processing, dispatch and transport facilities are sited, designed and operated to minimise environmental and amenity impacts and provide proportionate environmental enhancements; e. any adverse impacts, both individual and cumulative, can be avoided or mitigated to		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority; f. it has been demonstrated that possible effects that might arise from the development would not adversely affect the integrity of any SAC, SPA or Ramsar site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; g. it can be demonstrated that there would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure		
Policy HY3	Transportation of Hydrocarbons	Developments for hydrocarbons production will be required to use pipelines. Where it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible, economically and/or environmentally, rail or road transport will be considered. Where road transportation is the only feasible option, it should be demonstrated that this would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the environment or highway safety.	Transportation of hydrocarbons will be carried out in a way which minimises climate change and environmental impacts.	
Policy IS1	Industrial Sand	 Sites will only be considered where it has been demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from the development would		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		not adversely affect the integrity of the Dorset Heaths SAC, Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heathland Ramsar site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.		
Policy RS1	Restoration, Aftercare and Afteruse of Minerals Development	Proposals for minerals development will be permitted where they demonstrate a high quality and appropriate restoration scheme which will enable an appropriate after-use and the long-term maintenance and enhancement of the environment. They will be required to have regard to the Landscape Management Guidelines and, where possible, contribute to the targets of the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy. Proposals must demonstrate that: Restoration a. where possible the restoration scheme incorporates phased restoration of the site that will minimise the period of operations to protect settlements and residential amenity and to minimise the duration of landscape and environmental impacts; b. measures will be taken to ensure that soil quality will be adequately protected and maintained throughout the life of the development and, in particular, during stripping, storage and management of soils, subsoils and overburden arisings as a result	A strong focus on restoration to protect and enhance biodiversity and promotion of uses which protect the natural environment and/or provide climate change mitigation measures.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		of site operations; c. there is an available supply of appropriate materials to be used for restoration purposes, as required to implement the proposed restoration scheme; d. where inert waste is to be used in restoration the constituent parts capable of use in the production of high quality washed recycled aggregates have, as far as reasonably possible, already been removed; e. the restoration scheme will maximise the potential of the site for the successful adoption of the proposed after-use and where necessary offer flexibility for a range of potential after-uses; f. restoration will be undertaken at the earliest opportunity and the amount of time expected to be required for restoration of the site will be indicated; g. where appropriate, geological exposures will be retained; h. for sites within the Green Belt, all minerals-related and other uses will have ceased by the time the extraction has been completed and the site will be restored in a manner appropriate to its original inclusion in the Green Belt designation; i. financial provision is, in exceptional circumstances, made for the proposed restoration; Aftercare j. the aftercare scheme incorporates an aftercare period of at least		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		five years; where appropriate, voluntary longer periods for certain uses will be sought through agreement; After-use k. where the proposed after-use is agriculture, provision is made for retention or replacement of soils and any necessary drainage, access, hedges and fences; l. where the proposed after-use includes habitat creation, it should contribute to the delivery of the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy objectives where appropriate; m. the after-use will be compatible with the wider context of the site, in terms of the character of the surrounding landscape and historic environment (informed by the Dorset Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Character Assessment) and existing land uses in the area, having considered the relative potential benefits of alternative after-uses in local or national terms; n. the green infrastructure network will, where possible, be strengthened and improved; o. where opportunities arise, the after-use provides benefits to the local and wider community which may include enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity interests, linking of site restoration to other green infrastructure		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		initiatives, enhanced landscape character, improved public access, employment, tourism or provision of climate change mitigation measures.		
Policy DM1	Key Criteria for Sustainable Minerals Development.	Proposals for minerals development should support the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits whilst any adverse impacts should be avoided or mitigated to an acceptable level. In order to achieve this, all proposals for minerals development must demonstrate that all the following criteria have been addressed satisfactorily: a. minimisation of impacts which could increase the effects of climate change; b. protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of local amenity; c. protection and, where possible, enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity, including nationally and internationally designated sites; d. protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets; e. protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of landscape, including the avoidance and/or mitigation of visual and landscape impacts through sensitive design, screening or other means; f. preparation of a scheme of working that will keep production of mineral waste to a minimum, while	Overarching sustainability and environmental principles which all mineral development must adhere to.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 132		ensuring availability of an adequate amount of material for timely restoration of workings; g. protection of soil resources throughout the life of the development and, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary and there is a choice of location, giving preference to the development of poorer quality land over higher quality or best and most versatile land; h. efficient use of water resources on the site; i. avoidance or mitigation of, or compensation for, adverse impacts on the water environment and flood risk; j. avoidance of cumulative impacts resulting from minerals or other development, whether current or proposed; k. use of sustainable transport; and l. restoration, aftercare and after-use proposals and compliance with the strategy for restoration.		
	Policy DM3 Managing the Impact on Surface Water and Ground Water Resources	Proposals for minerals development which would have an impact on water resources, including aquifers, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the local water environment would be protected and where appropriate enhanced. Provision should be made to ensure the protection and maintenance of the: a. quality; b. direction and rate of flow; and c. volume of flow of	Flood Risk Assessment is required for all relevant applications as well as the use of SuDS and other measures to protect and enhance existing wetlands and riparian features.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 133		ground water, water courses and all other surface water. Rivers, open watercourses, wetlands and ponds which have a significant ecological value, together with the land alongside these features, should be protected. Development should aim to prevent deterioration and where appropriate enhance the quality of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands. Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required for minerals development proposals in areas at risk of flooding or likely to contribute to flooding elsewhere, relative to the nature and scale of the development, and must take into account cumulative effects with other existing or proposed development. Where a risk of flooding is identified through FRA, proposals must include measures to ensure the avoidance and / or mitigation of that risk. Development proposals will also be required to include provisions for the efficient use of water resources on site and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS).		
	Policy DM4	Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character and the Countryside	Minerals development will only be permitted when the proposals include provisions to protect and/or enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and landscape. Development	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 134		will be expected to ensure the protection of the following designations of national importance, together with their settings, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements: a. the New Forest National Park; b. the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and c. the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The importance of non-statutory designations, such as the West Dorset Heritage Coast and the Purbeck Heritage Coast, must also be taken into consideration.		
	Policy DM5 Biodiversity and Geological Interest	Proposals for minerals development must not adversely affect the integrity of European or Ramsar or other internationally designated sites either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, unless the tests set out under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are met. Proposals for minerals development which do not adversely affect the integrity of European or Ramsar sites or other internationally designated sites will only be permitted where adverse impacts on biodiversity and/or geodiversity will be: i. avoided; or ii. where an adverse impact cannot be avoided, the	The overarching biodiversity policy for the Mineral Strategy – outlining how development will protect and enhance existing designated sites, within the existing legal framework, including the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment.	

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		impact will be adequately mitigated; or iii. where adverse impacts cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensation will result in the maintenance or enhancement of biodiversity / geodiversity. Where possible, proposals should enhance biodiversity and geological interest. Proposals for minerals development must be accompanied by an objective assessment of the potential effects of the development on features of biodiversity and/or geological interest, taking into account cumulative impacts with other development and the potential impacts of climate change. In addition, the assessment must have particular regard to the need to protect, maintain and / or enhance sites and species of international and national importance, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. It should also consider the potential for existing habitats on the site to be restored to higher quality habitats, during and after mineral working. The assessment must also demonstrate how the proposal intends to address the need to maintain and/or enhance features of local and regional importance including Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. The proposals should seek to achieve this wherever		

The Bournemouth Dorset and Poole Mineral Strategy (2014)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		possible and consistent with viable development.		
Policy DM8	Transport and Minerals Development	Minerals development which could have an adverse impact as a consequence of the traffic generated by it will only be permitted where it is demonstrated, through a Transport Assessment..... Sustainable transportation should be used where possible and practical, including through minimising distance travelled by road and maximising the use of transport means such as rail, water, pipelines or conveyor belts to transport minerals where practicable and environmentally acceptable. Mineral site transport plans should be established.		
Site Selection Criteria		Criteria 1-15 relate to environmental sustainability objectives eg: Site Selection Criterion C1: Does the proposal have any impact on international/European nature conservation designations?	If site impacts are identified then relevant detailed assessment reports must be prepared to ensure that the site is compliant with related Mineral Strategy policies.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)

Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy MS-1	Production of Sand and Gravel	An adequate and steady supply of sand and gravel will be maintained..... Proposals within the allocated sites for the proposed development, as set out in Appendix A, will be permitted where they meet all the following criteria: i. They address the Development Guidelines set out for each site in Appendix A of this Plan, as well as any other matters relevant to the development of each proposed allocation; and ii. They demonstrate that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, associated with their development and operation will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority; and iii. Proposals for the development of these allocations must demonstrate that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from their development would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; implementation of the full range of mitigation measures as identified through Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening and listed under the Development Guidelines in	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 139		Appendix A of this Plan will be a key element in meeting these requirements. Habitats Regulations Appraisal screening indicates that development at AG1 Great Plantation may have significant effects on species, proximity and displacement of recreation in particular; development at AG2 Roeshot Quarry Extension may have significant effects on species in particular and development at AG7 Land at Horton Heath may have significant effects on hydrology and displacement of recreation in particular. In each of these cases development proposals must either mitigate these effects or reduce them to non-significant levels in order for any development to take place		
	Policy MS-2 Unallocated Sand and Gravel Sites	 In all cases any adverse impacts must be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority; iv. Sites will only be considered where it has been demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from their development would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites either	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		alone or in combination with other plans or projects;		
Policy MS-3	Swanworth Quarry Extension	Any proposal for the development of this allocation must address the development guidelines set out for the site in Appendix A, with particular emphasis on landscape and visual impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as any other matters relevant to the development of the allocation, and demonstrate that any adverse impacts will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority. Should the proposed development result in adverse landscape and visual impacts that cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated, compensatory environmental enhancements will be required to offset the residual landscape and visual impacts. This proposed development will only be considered where it has been demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from their development would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Policy MS-4	Site for the provision of recycled aggregate	 All relevant development guidelines, including those set out in Appendix A, must be fully addressed and any adverse impacts will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority. In addition, it must be demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from the ongoing development of this site would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	
Policy MS-5	Sites for the provision of Purbeck stone	Any proposals for the development of these allocations must address the development guidelines set out for each site in Appendix A, with particular emphasis on landscape and visual impacts on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as any other matters relevant to the development of the allocations, and demonstrate that any adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority. Proposals for development of these allocations will only be considered where it has been	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
		demonstrated that possible effects (including those related to hydrology, displacement of recreation, species, proximity, land management and restoration) that might arise from their development would not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.		
Policy MS-7	Sites for the provision of other building stone (excluding Portland and Purbeck stone).	Any proposal for the development of any of these allocations must address the development guidelines set out for each site in Appendix A, as well as any other matters relevant to the development of each proposed allocation, and demonstrate that any adverse impacts will be mitigated to the satisfaction of the Mineral Planning Authority.		
Policy MS-7	Puddletown Road Area Policy	Within the Puddletown Road Area as shown on the Policies Map and in Figure 6, the Mineral Planning Authority will work with operators, landowners, Natural England and the Local Nature Partnership to secure a consistent and coordinated approach to the development, working and restoration of land permitted for mineral development. This consistent and coordinated approach will: i. create a coherent and resilient ecological network, with primary emphasis on restoration of heathland and acid grassland;	Provides detailed information on how development proposals must contribute to a co-ordinated plan to protect and enhance biodiversity within the Puddletown Road area.	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
Page 143		ii. support the management objectives of the Heath/Forest Mosaic Landscape Type; iii. avoid or minimise adverse transport, environmental or amenity impacts arising from mineral workings; iv. maximise opportunities for biodiversity gains, including through effective and timely restoration of lowland heath and associated habitats and linking restored sites with areas of nature conservation interest; v. secure cost-effective and long-term aftercare and management; vi. meet environmental and compatible recreational objectives in the area. vii. provide landowners/developers with the opportunity to cooperate over the detailed design and implementation of restoration and/or future development proposals Development, restoration, management or other activities will only be undertaken where it can be demonstrated that any possible effects that might result will not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.		
			Provides detailed information on how development proposals must protect and enhance biodiversity, in particular through	

The Mineral Sites Plan (2019)				
Policy Number	Policy Name	Policy Wording	Commentary/summary	Application requirements
			the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. Similar wording is contained in all relevant Mineral Sites policies.	

Other supplementary planning documents and guidance relevant to Biodiversity Duty reporting.

Document Name

Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document 2020-2025

Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document 2019-2024

Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy 2020-2025

Interim Strategy for Recreational Pressure at Chesil and the Fleet 2020

Dorset AONB (National Landscape) Landscape Character Assessment

Cranborne Chase AONB (National Landscape) Landscape Character Assessment

Place and resource overview committee

24 November 2025

Dorset local nature recovery strategy

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

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

Local Councillor(s):

All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Bridget Betts, Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager

Email: bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

Report status: Public [Choose an item.](#)

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

- 1.1 The Environment Act 2021 introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) as a new system of spatial strategies for nature in England. These strategies, created at a county level by responsible authorities, map out actions needed to restore nature, working with local stakeholders. The LNRS will play a crucial role in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain and meeting national environmental targets. Dorset's LNRS will be part of the network of LNRSs covering the whole of England, with no gaps or overlaps, contributing to national environmental objectives and targets.
- 1.2 Dorset's LNRS is co-produced, led by Dorset Council as Responsible Authority alongside supporting authorities, BCP Council and Natural England, and working with large numbers of stakeholders. It provides a comprehensive framework for restoring nature across the whole of Dorset and has a series of maps that will help target efforts to achieve the greatest gains for nature and the wider environment.
- 1.3 Dorset Council has made climate and nature recovery a key priority, with its Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023–2025 supporting this collective plan for nature recovery across the county. Additionally, Dorset Council's council plan has responding to the climate and nature crisis as one of its 4 key priorities.

- 1.4 The purpose of the report is to update the committee on the public consultation findings and pre-publication feedback from supporting authorities BCP Council and Natural England. Key changes are being made to the strategy based on this feedback, before it goes to cabinet for the final approval to publish the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the key changes made to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy following public consultation and recommends its progression to Cabinet for final approval, recognising the formal support from BCP Council and Natural England.
- 2.2 The Committee notes the consultation outcomes and encourages continued cross-authority collaboration to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

- 3.1 The recommendation is made to ensure that the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy reflects the views and feedback gathered during public consultation, incorporates any necessary changes, and acknowledges the formal support of key partners including BCP Council and Natural England. This process strengthens the strategy's legitimacy, promotes transparency, and ensures it is ready for Cabinet consideration and final publication as well as meeting the DEFRA requirements as set out by the Environment Act 2021.

4. The report

- 4.1 Local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) present a system of spatial management for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Each LNRS must:
- Agree priorities for nature's recovery
 - Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
 - Map specific proposals and potential activities for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals
- 4.2 Defra published LNRS [Statutory Guidance](#) and [Regulations](#) on 23/03/23. These documents outline our role as a Responsible Authority (RA) and the rules we must follow, as well as the step-by-step process for LNRS preparation.
- 4.3 Dorset Council is the Responsible Body that is leading in the preparation of Dorset's LNRS, with BCP Council and Natural England as the supporting authorities.
- 4.4 Work started on the Dorset LNRS in July 2023 and has involved working with over 76 organisations and engaging with over 1375 people at workshops, events, county shows etc. across a wide range of sectors and organisations.
- 4.5 Dorset LNRS consultation ran for 12 weeks between 7 May and 30 July with 375 responses, mainly from individuals. The results of these findings and the consultation response can be found in the two reports: Dorset LNRS consultation analysis final report (appendix 1) and Response to the Dorset LNRS Consultation findings report (appendix 2).
- 4.6 Achieving nature recovery requires a shared vision, agreed priorities and collective action. The strategy sets a clear direction and ambition for Dorset (DC and BCP Council areas) with the commitment to reverse the decline in nature.
- 4.7 Key findings from the public consultation show there was overall support, including:
- i. 66% agreement with the Shared Vision
 - ii. 86% agreement with the Joint Mission
 - iii. >90% agreement with Priorities 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 & 12
 - iv. >80% agreement with Priorities 1, 5 & 8
 - v. 59% will use the strategy to find potential activities they can do
 - vi. 50% will use to see how their activities join up with others
 - vii. Suggestions for more potential activities to deliver the priorities and projects and land to be added to the LNRS maps

4.8 Key challenges and concerns were around:

- i. User experience - strategy is long, maps are complex, unclear how to make relevant to me / my organisation
- ii. Concerns about the balance between nature, access, farming, development etc
- iii. Lack of information on nature decline and urgency, geodiversity
- iv. Hedgerows are very important in Dorset
- v. People wanted more opportunities to get involved and guidance on doing the activities
- vi. Needs to be more recognition of existing action
- vii. Targets needed to measure progress
- viii. How it will be delivered and by who and Dorset Council's role in this.

4.9 Key changes from the draft LNRS to the final Dorset LNRS include:

- i. A section on geodiversity has been added as it underpins diverse habitats and ecosystems, supporting nature recovery.
- ii. The draft vision has changed from 'Nature in Dorset is thriving, resilient, and connected across our landscapes. It is accessible to and celebrated by all' to 'Nature in Dorset is recovering, thriving, resilient and connected across our landscapes. Everyone in Dorset is able to access nature and be involved in nature recovery'
- iii. The draft mission has changed from 'Collectively work together to meet the urgent need to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery' to 'Work together to meet the urgent need to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery, bringing benefits for our wellbeing and communities'
- iv. Water vole has been added to the species priority list with specific actions that enable its recovery.
- v. There are now 13 priorities (previously 12) with the new priority being hedgerows – 'Hedgerows are maintained, enhanced and expanded to support wildlife and provide corridors that connect habitats across the county'
- vi. Changes to the local habitat map include:
 - adding more projects and land manager proposals to the high opportunity nature areas layer
 - adding Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) to the nature areas of national importance layer
 - reducing some areas of the large landscape scale projects that are yet to have funding or land manager support
 - changing the habitat suggested as primary activity in the potential activities layer in some specific locations
 - some improvements to the guide to the maps and layer descriptions. During the delivery phase we will make further

improvements and share tailored videos to help people access the maps

- 4.10 The Dorset LNRS contains 13 nature recovery priorities, supported by detailed management activities. Plus 55 priority species identified as needing bespoke activities to ensure they remain or return to Dorset. Together, these tools ensure a strategic, collective and effective approach to nature recovery across the county.
- 4.11 The strategy promotes nature recovery through biodiversity net gain, nutrient mitigation schemes, environmental land management schemes, community-driven and individual projects.
- 4.12 From the work, the initiative [Nature Recovery Dorset](#) has been created which is a celebration of collaboration, uniting individuals, communities, and organisations in a shared mission to restore and protect the county's landscapes. Currently there are 288 members.
- 4.13 The Defra guidance states that progress will be monitored through a review process led by Dorset Council, which will assess achievements every three to ten years. This process will review the priorities and record where nature recovery action has taken place, supported by existing monitoring initiatives that track habitats, species, and enabling measures. These insights will help refine and strengthen ongoing efforts, ensuring the strategy remains adaptive and effective.
- 4.14 The Dorset LNRS represents the work of the LNRS groups and ongoing refinement in response to the engagement activities. There are several supporting documents detailing some of the methodology and wider pressures and opportunities.
- 4.15 Local nature recovery strategies are intended as a tool to help Local Planning Authorities continue delivering on requirements to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- 4.16 Local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the local nature recovery strategy. The strategy will therefore be used alongside other evidence and planning requirements to inform plan making and in the determination of planning applications. There is proposed updated wording on nature in planning and development for the website, reflecting Natural England recent feedback on BNG implementation. This draft wording is available in appendix 3.
- 4.17 It is important to note, the strategy is not a planning constraint and does not constitute a planning designation. It does not prevent development, including that of new homes, employment uses or other infrastructure. Instead, the

strategy helps guide nature recovery and environmental activities that can be delivered as part of sustainable development

- 4.18 The strategy does not force the owners and managers of the land identified as high opportunity nature areas to make any changes, they have flexibility to identify what, if any, activities and funding options will work best for them.
- 4.19 The next phase, as set out by government is the delivery of the Dorset LNRS where we have been asked to:
 - i. Lead and convene a delivery partnership
 - ii. Embed LNRS into local decision making
 - iii. Identify strategic projects and facilitate project development
 - iv. Monitor and report on delivery of LNRS priorities
- 4.20 We will be setting up a cross-sector delivery partnership with democratic representation.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1.1 No other alternatives as we have a statutory duty to comply to deliver and a published LNRS for Dorset.

6. Legal considerations

- 6.1 Failure to publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) within the required timeframe (December 2025) poses a legal risk, as it would breach the statutory duty placed on Responsible Authorities under the Environment Act 2021 and associated regulations including the biodiversity duty

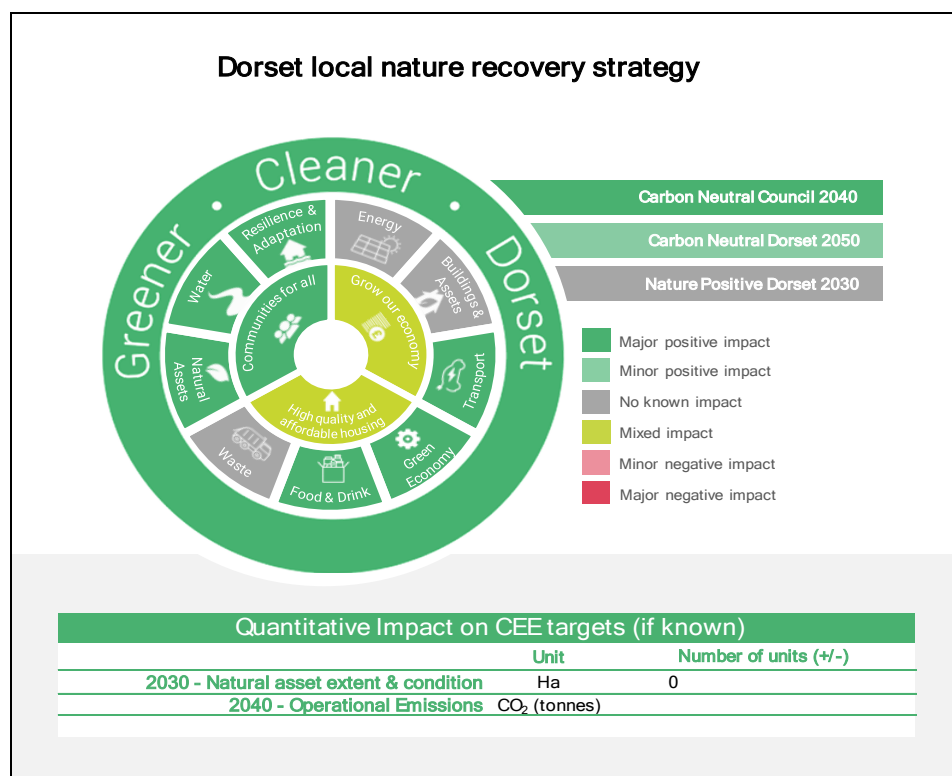
7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Dorset Council has received a budget from Defra to deliver the Dorset LNRS of £409,174 over three years. The LNRS Steering Group has overseen the expenditure.
- 7.2 Funding for the future delivery of the LNRS will happen through a variety of mechanisms including central government grant, developer contributions, landowner initiatives, grants and project funding

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 8.1 One of the key actions in Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023–2025 is to create a local nature recovery strategy, a commitment reinforced by the Council's declaration of a nature emergency in July 2024, placing nature's recovery at the heart of its plans.

- 8.2 Ensuring that the Dorset LNRS is implemented is critical to accomplishing the strategic natural environment ambitions of Dorset Council. Dorset Council's council plan has responding to the climate and nature crisis as one of its 4 key priorities. The LNRS presents a collaborative, widely supported plan to deliver significant improvements to Dorset's natural environment over the coming years.



9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications of this report. However, the impact of nature decline poses numerous health and wellbeing risks to the residents of Dorset. The strategy and its maps hope to ensure collective effort can achieve nature recovery and more people will have access to nature. Time spent in nature is known to improve mental and physical well-being and implementation of this strategy can therefore have benefits beyond the immediate remit of nature recovery.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 Failure to progress to cabinet would risk the delay to the timeframe for the LNRS to be published and therefore be a pressure to comply with the Defra mandate and cause reputational damage to the council.

11. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: High

Residual Risk: Low

- 11.2 There are no significant risks from approving the recommendations and the progression to cabinet. This will ensure that Dorset Council meets its timeframe to publish the Dorset LNRS and complies with Defra requirements

12. Equalities

- 12.1 The Dorset LNRS is a strategic, high-level strategy that will not positively or negatively impact on anyone's equality. EQIAs will be undertaken for specific work relating to the implementation of the strategy and for the public consultation exercise of the draft strategy.
- 12.2 Final documents and related materials shall meet accessibility requirements including plain text options. Through the public consultation the public have fed back the difficulty of understanding the mapping that accompanies the strategy. Maps will be available on a publicly accessible version of Dorset Explorer to view online and work will be done to support different users to become familiar with how they can use the maps and remove any unnecessary technical information.
- 12.3 The EqIA is available in appendix 4.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Dorset LNRS consultation analysis final report

Appendix 2: Response to the Dorset LNRS Consultation findings report

Appendix 3: Draft new wording for website on Nature recovery in planning and development v2 Nove 25

Appendix 4: Impact Assessment & Table of Recommendations for climate & nature

Appendix 5: Dorset Council Dorset LNRS EQIA

13. Background papers

- 13.1 The draft Dorset local nature strategy and supporting papers can be found at [Dorset's local nature recovery strategy - Dorset Council](#)

14. Report sign-off

- 14.1 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)

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Consultation response analysis report produced by the
Consultation and Engagement Team – Dorset Council



Photo credit: Susan Buckland

August 2025

Consultation Response Report

What was the consultation about?	People and organisations across Dorset came together to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the aim to help restore and protect nature in our county. The strategy sets 12 priorities for nature recovery in Dorset, supported by a list of potential activities and a local habitat map. This consultation gave people the opportunity to help shape the strategy and get involved in nature recovery.
Over what period did the consultation run?	The consultation ran from 07/05/25 to 30/07/25.
What consultation methods were used?	The consultation was available both online, in paper form via request, in 2 forms – the main version, and a youth version. There were also several drop-in sessions held across the county to raise awareness and support with general queries. The consultation was promoted widely through both the local press and social media. The consultation had a separate communications plan and consultation plan prepared beforehand.
How many responses were received overall?	Overall, there were 335 responses – 284 for the main survey, and 51 for the youth version.
How representative is the response to the wider population?	80.8% of responses were from individuals, which is slightly lower than typical consultations. Organisations, groups, or businesses were the remaining 19.2%. There were slightly more female respondents (49.1%) than male (42.7%). 84.7% of the respondents said their ethnic group was White British which is typical of the wider Dorset population. Responses from disabled people were quite high at 10.3% compared to an approximate Dorset figure of 4.6% based on those claiming either Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments or Attendance Allowance.
Where will the results be published?	Results will be published on the council's website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and on the council's consultation platform: https://consultation.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
How will the results be used?	Results from this survey will be used to inform the next steps of the process.
Who has produced this report?	Consultation and Engagement Team, Dorset Council, August 2025

Background

People and organisations across Dorset came together to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the aim to help restore and protect nature in our county. The strategy sets 12 priorities for nature recovery in Dorset, supported by a list of potential activities and a local habitat map.

From July 2023, a steering group and 5 advisory groups, with representatives from 42 different organisations, worked together to shape and input into the strategy. In addition to that, several other people took part in a range of events, workshops or online webinars, helping further refine the strategy and maps. The [Consultation and Engagement Report](#) provides more detail on the groups, engagement activities and data insights.

In May 2025, this public consultation was launched for 12 weeks to give more people the opportunity to help shape the strategy and get involved in nature recovery.

The Consultation

The consultation survey was aimed at all residents and groups across Dorset, providing an opportunity for everyone to share their views on the strategy. Feedback was gathered through two main forms:

- an online survey
- an online youth survey (aimed at young people under 18)

Both versions of the survey had paper versions to ensure they were accessible.

The Nature Recovery Officer at Dorset Council also ran various events and drop-in sessions throughout the consultation period.

Event	Number of attendees
Drop-in session at Weymouth Library : Tuesday 27th May, 10.30am to 3.30pm	7 people
Information stall at Open Farm Sunday at Home Farm, Sadborrow: Sunday 8th June, 10.00am to 4.00pm	1400 visitors at the event
Drop-in session at Blandford Library : Thursday 12th June, 10.00am to 4.30pm	6
Drop-in session at Bournemouth Library : Monday 16th June, 10.00am to 3.00pm	4
Drop-in session at Bridport Library : Wednesday 25th June, 10.00am to 3.00pm	8
Drop-in session at Dorchester Library : Tuesday 15th July, 10.00am to 4.00pm	12
Drop-in session at Poole Library : Wednesday 16th July, 10.00am to 3.00pm	5

Facebook LIVE session: Thursday 17th July, 6.00pm.	32 people live, 2.7k views on Facebook, 65 views on YouTube
Drop-in session at Ferndown Library : Wednesday 23rd July, 10.00am to 3.00pm	4
Drop-in session at Christchurch Library : Friday 25th July, 10.00am to 3.00pm	8

Other meetings and events presented at by the local nature recovery officer:

- National Farmers Union Dorset management meeting
- Dorset Catchment Partnerships delivery group meetings
- Country Land and Business Association Dorset committee meeting
- Dorset Association of Town and Parish Councils working together webinar
- Environmental Farmers Group Dorset steering committee meeting
- Dorset Downs farmer cluster
- High Stoy Conservation cluster

The consultation ran for 12 weeks, and the results will feed into the next steps of the process.

Analysis Method

Overall responses were examined, with specific responses of respondents being highlighted where appropriate.

Where open-text comments have been received, if there were 35 or more for a question, they have been coded and themed. For all under this, the comments are shown verbatim.

Note: some figures may not sum due to rounding.

Executive Summary

Across both the main and youth versions of the survey, the findings illustrate strong support for the strategy and its priorities.

The strategy generally

85.3% (238) agreed that the strategy helps explain what nature recovery is, with 76.9% (216) agreeing it helped them understand why nature recovery is needed. 92.9% (262) confirmed they understood the purpose of the strategy in addition to this.

The shared vision and joint mission statements also received broad endorsement, with 66.6% (187) and 85.7% (240) agreement respectively. Respondents identified increasing wildlife, connecting nature-rich spaces, and outdoor spaces to enjoy for health purposes as the most important benefits of nature recovery. The strategy was seen as a practical tool, with many participants indicating they would use it to identify activities, collaborate with others, and help deliver objectives in local areas.

However, there were some challenges identified for the mapping specifically, with some comments relating to:

- them being too complex, with multiple layers present
- instructions or guidance unclear, especially for first-time users
- creating barriers for engagement as they can be technically difficult to navigate

To improve the maps, there were references to providing clearer links between the mapped data and priorities and improving accessibility. This was especially important for those not already engaged in nature recovery work, so it can be a tool for all.

The priorities

Agreement levels were consistently high across all priorities. In particular, nature connection (96.2%), species abundance and diversity (95.8%), and priority species (97.0%) were the most strongly supported priorities.

1. Grasslands

- Agreement: 88.6% overall; 63.8% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 86.3% said improving grassy areas with wildflowers is important

2. Woodland

- Agreement: 93.7% overall; 64.9% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 96.1% said making woods better and bigger is important

3. Heathlands

- Agreement: 94.4% overall; 62.5% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 73.5% said heathlands are important

4. Rivers, Lakes and Wetlands

- Agreement: 93.1% overall; 66.7% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 98.0% said healthy rivers and wetlands are important

5. Coastal

- Agreement: 84.1% overall; 62.8% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 94.0% said coastal care is important

6. Urban

- Agreement: 92.9% overall; 61.2% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 88.0% said urban greening is important

7. Farming

- Agreement: 94.3% overall; 69.0% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 84.3% said balancing nature and resource use is important

8. Natural processes

- Agreement: 83.9% overall; 59.7% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 84.3% said letting nature take care of itself is important

9. Nature-based solutions

- Agreement: 96.1% overall; 69.7% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 96.1% said nature-based solutions are important

10. Nature connection

- Agreement: 96.2% overall; 68.4% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 84.0% said giving people ways to help nature is important

11. Species abundance and diversity

- Agreement: 95.8% overall; 65.6% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 94.1% said helping wildlife thrive is important

12. Priority species

- Agreement: 97% overall; 59.1% strongly agreed
- Youth support: 90.2% said helping wildlife in need is important

The data collected for this consultation will inform and help develop the final version of the strategy.

The respondents

Q. I am responding as:

(n-281)

Option	Total	Percent
An individual	227	80.8%

An organisation, group or business	54	19.2%

Q. Are you providing an official response for your organisation, group or business?

(n-55)

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	50	90.9%
No	5	9.1%

The organisations, groups, or business' submitting official responses are listed below:

Organisation/group name	Official response?
South West Lakes Trust	Yes
River Axe Landscape Recovery and The Magdalen Environmental Trust	Yes
North Dorset Trailway Network	Yes
Environment Bank	Yes
Hazelbury ABUZZ	Yes
Woodland Trust	Yes
Friends of Lodmoor Country Park	Yes
WH White - Canford Park SANG	Yes
Sherborne School	Yes
Branksome Triangle Committee	Yes
Blandford Forum Town Council	Yes
Salisbury & Wilton Swifts and North Wiltshire Swifts	Yes
Stinsford Parish Council	Yes
Swifts Local Network: Swifts & Planning Group	Yes
Charminster Parish Council	Yes
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Yes
Ewens Farm, West Chelborough	Yes
The Court Leet of the Island & Royal Manor of Portland	Yes
The Ramblers (Dorset Area)	Yes
Toller Porcorum Parish Council	Yes
National Trails UK	Yes
Kingston Maurward College	Yes
Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site	Yes
The Lesley Haskins Charitable Trust (known as The Erica Trust)	Yes
Lower Brimley Coombe Farm	Yes
Cranborne Chase National Landscape	Yes
Charmouth Parish Council	Yes
Lyme Regis Town Council	Yes

Dorset Catchment Partnerships	Yes
Portland Town Council	Yes
Dorset National Landscape	Yes
Trees for Wimborne which is part but independent of Wilding Wimborne	Yes
Timothy Bowden	Yes
Compton Abbas Parish Council	Yes
The Portland Association CIC	Yes
The Escarpment Cluster	Yes
Bournemouth Development Company (joint venture of BCP Council and Muse)	Yes
Richborough	Yes
Wessex Conservation Grazing	Yes
Coppet Hill LLP	Yes
River Char Community Project	Yes
Dorset Bird Club	Yes
British Lichen Society	Yes
Lewis Wyatt (Construction) Ltd. (trading as Wyatt Homes)	Yes
The British Association for Shooting and Conservation	Yes
Weymouth Town Council	Yes
Thornhackett Parish Council	Yes

Q. Please pick the option that best describes you/your group.

(n-278)

Option	Total	Percent
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (People who own and/or manage land. For example, farms, woodlands and estates)	28	10.1%
Communities and Individuals (Members of the public and local voluntary or community sector organisations)	169	60.8%
Business, Industry and Economy (Large and small businesses across all sectors. For example, utilities, manufacturing, retail, hospitality, building development)	5	1.8%
Public bodies (Local government, town and parish councils, regional government bodies and agencies, and public service providers. For example, healthcare)	19	6.8%
Nature and environment sector (Individuals and organisations with expertise or interest in nature, environmental issues or managing land for conservation purposes)	53	19.1%

Partnerships and connectors (Existing groups that work collaboratively across sectors or on specific issues)	4	1.4%

Q. Have you been involved in preparing the draft Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy?

(n-281)

Option	Total	Percent
I am a member of the steering group or one of the LNRS advisory groups	4	1.4%
I attended an event, workshop or meeting	24	8.5%
I have joined the Nature Recovery Dorset network	13	4.6%
I was asked to help with a specific task by one of the advisory group members	3	1.1%
I have not been involved	237	84.3%

Q. Do you live or work in Dorset?

(n-281)

Option	Total	Percent
I live in the DC area	182	64.8%
I live in the BCP Council area	77	27.4%
I work in Dorset (either DC or BCP) but am a resident elsewhere	13	4.6%
I am not a resident and do not work in the area	9	3.2%

Key

At various points throughout the report, we will be cross-referencing across 6 different respondent types. In certain tables it wasn't possible to list the full title, so a mixture of an image and number has been used to differentiate them. This order will be the same for all tables in the report. For example:

Number

Number representing group	Respondent type	Icon representing group
1	Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers	

2	Communities and individuals	
3	Public bodies	
4	Nature and environment sector	
5	Dorset Council residents	
6	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council residents	

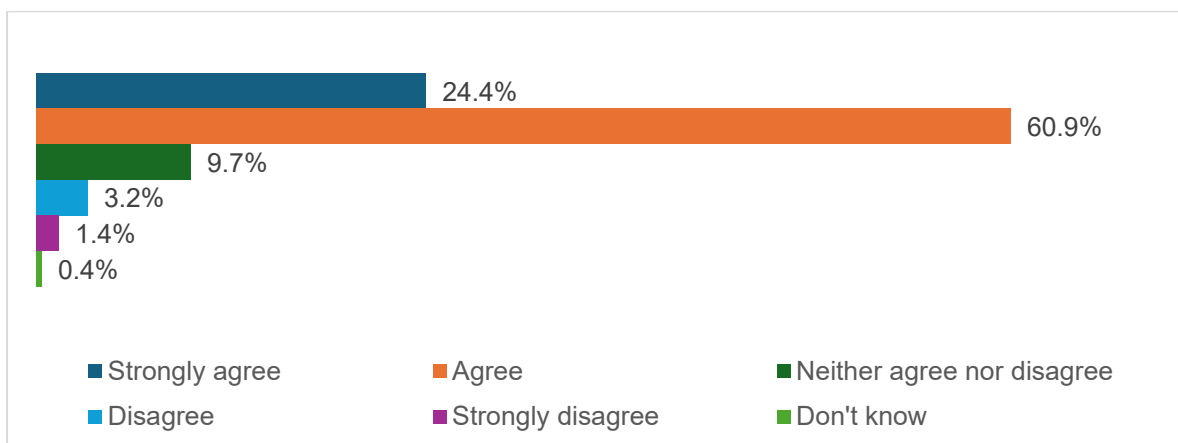
For Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council residents, we have used a shorthand in this report. So, they will be referenced as DC, and BCP.

The strategy itself

For the first questions in this section, respondents were asked to state how much they agreed or disagreed with 2 different statements.

Statement 1: “The strategy helps explain what nature recovery is”

(n-279)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	68	24.4%
Agree	170	60.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	27	9.7%

Disagree	9	3.2%
Strongly disagree	4	1.4%
Don't know	1	0.4%

Overall, the data underlines broad agreement for the statement 'The strategy helps explain what nature recovery is.' 85.3% (238) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed, with just 4.6% (13) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

9.7% (27) remained neutral, potentially showing some uncertainty, and 0.4% (1) did not know.

Looking across the stakeholder groups outlined in the introduction, there was a slight difference with the farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers group. Although the level of agreement was again high - 81.5% (22) agree - 11.1% (3) disagree, which is an increase from the overall figures.

Q. If you disagree, please let us know why.

11 respondents marked that they disagreed with statement 1, but there were 23 comments received for this question, which can be seen below verbatim. To help provide clearer context for the responses, each comment will be accompanied by the respondent's answer to the previous question.

Respondents who disagreed

Answer to previous question	Comment
Disagree	Well we would not need this if new housing was not placed on the green belts
Disagree	It needs to reflect the real loss of biodiversity and natural landscapes in Dorset
Disagree	In the shared vision and join mission section, it talks about the different components of nature recovery but does not ask the question 'this is what everyone can do for nature recovery' or provide a definition of nature recovery.
Disagree	The help is there, but hidden in so much work that it far too easy for me to have missed something.
Disagree	It does to an extent, but on narrow terms. At the moment the definitions and descriptions of nature and nature recovery largely omit or underrepresent geodiversity. The result is that the text of the strategy and even the questions in this survey implies and in some places explicitly states that nature, and therefore nature recovery, equates to biodiversity only. Geodiversity is a fundamental and significant component of nature and therefore

	essential to a complete and effective approach to nature recovery.
Disagree	No baseline of competent facts is provided. Improve from what to what? Many examples given are generic and irrelevant.
Disagree	Very wordy and complicated , needs simplifying and localizing to make it relevant at a community level encouraging local people to engage and hold organizations accountable .
Disagree	Nature recovery is a cultural re-engagement with our natural surroundings as well as a functional re-engagement. The "strategy" should give more weight to this cultural re-engagement. The biggest factor to bring about success will be we - the people of Dorset - changing our values, actions and lifestyles.
Disagree	To us, 'nature recovery' suggests regeneration and regenerative practices. But the document mainly refers to sustainability and sustainable practices. It does go far enough to explain 'recovery'. To us, this document is essentially a vision. To make it a strategy, it would need to have a detailed action plan.
Strongly disagree	It is not the responsibility of the council. Should not waste tax payers money in such a way
Strongly disagree	I don't think you are accurately identifying what some of the key causes of nature decline is in the UK. We can talk about conventional extractive farming, we can talk about the negative effects of pollution via transport (cars) chemical run off for example from farming; we can talk about cleaning up water systems and actually enforcing regulation around sewage and muck and slurry in water systems - but one thing that no-one will address is the incredible burden that domestic dogs and cats place on everything in this living landscape. Without a massive awareness raising campaign into the negative effect of dozens of spaniels a day working their way through the hedges either side of every public footpath in the country - we can't be really serious about supporting the non-human - the small animals that are continually bothered by dogs, and by cats. It's really mind blowing that this is not included in your strategy.

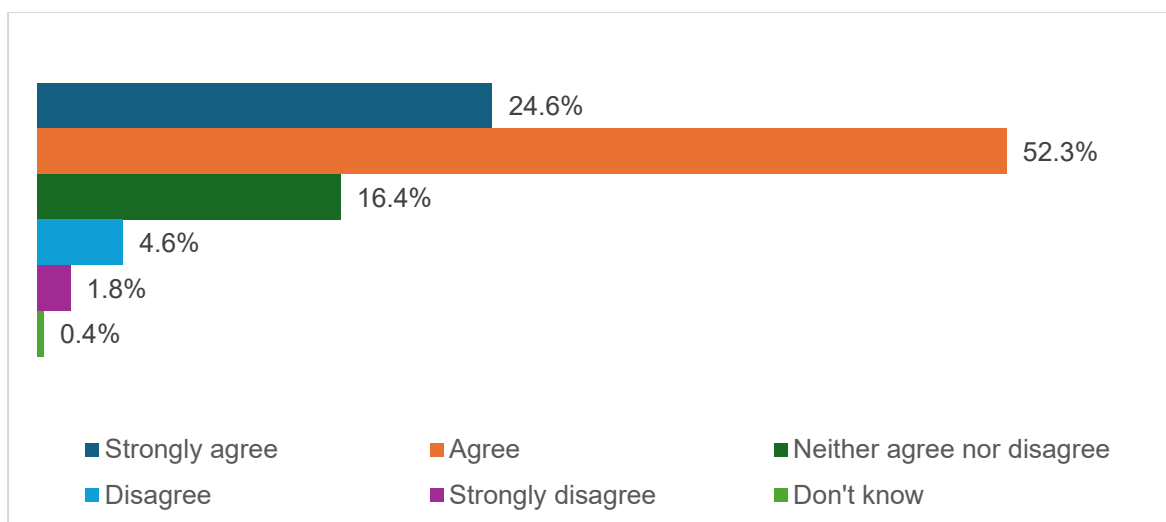
Other respondents who also answered this question

Answer to previous question	Comment
Strongly agree	Explanations are easy to understand and follow.
Strongly agree	I think overall the strategy is excellent. It is suitably broad and all-encompassing, and I think you should be proud of it.
Strongly agree	This is a really clear explanation.
Agree	I didn't watch the videos but just read the text and I didn;t get any sense of the urgency of why this was needed

Agree	The strategy does not include targets, which would be helpful in spelling out the challenge. These could be Dorset derived targets or could be sourced from Favourable Conservation Status documents produced for NE (e.g Favourable Conservation Status for Lowland Calcareous Grassland - which indicates a fourfold increase)
Agree	The Strategy sets out how to achieve the goal of "30 by 30".
Neither agree nor disagree	Dorset is unique in having a UNESCO Heritage Coast alongside East Devon. This is because of the geology that is what underpins nature throughout the county. Geology seems to have been completely ignored
Neither agree nor disagree	I don't think the strategy concludes what the desired end point is, or links to government policies and targets explicitly. It does not link specifically to how DC and BCP will manage landuse planning to contribute to it.
Neither agree nor disagree	The strategy is very basic and lacks ambition, but it is a step in the right direction.
Neither agree nor disagree	I do not have much time for such documents - having seen so many 'strategies' emerge from the council over decades with, disappointingly, so little real outcomes achieved.
Don't know	I couldn't get the strategy document to open but I do have an idea what nature recovery is due to volunteering with two charities involved in nature protection.
Not answered	Stop cutting hedges

Statement 2: "The strategy helped me understand why nature recovery is needed"

(n=281)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	69	24.6%

Agree	147	52.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	46	16.4%
Disagree	13	4.6%
Strongly disagree	5	1.8%
Don't know	1	0.4%

While the overall response is not quite as unanimous as the previous question, there was a very high level of respondents (76.9%) agreeing or strongly agreeing with statement 2.

16.4% (46) answered neutrally, neither agreeing or disagreeing, and 6.4% (18) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Once again, 1 respondent did not know.

There were some notable differences across the stakeholder groups in this case. Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers had lower levels of agreement (62.9% from 17 respondents), and in-turn, higher levels of disagreement (11.1% from 3 respondents).

In contrast, those from the nature and environment sector showed stronger support, with 80.8% (42) agreeing and none disagreeing. The remaining 19.2% (10) were neutral.

Public bodies also had higher levels of agreement at 84.3% (16), though they also a higher level of disagreement at 10.5% (2).

Q. If you disagree, please let us know why.

Similarly to before, although 18 respondents disagreed, there were 28 comments received for this question. They can be seen below verbatim, split into relevant tables.

Respondents who disagreed

Answer to previous question	Comment
Disagree	The strategy is so long that ordinary members of the public get fed up having read 5 or 6 pages of it. There needs to be a much shorter summary for ordinary members of the public to read. I only read a part of it before all the jargon and elaborate phrasing put me off reading the rest.
Disagree	I already know why it's needed.
Disagree	It doesn't talk about what the impact would be if we did nothing eg what wildlife or landscapes might we lose?
Disagree	It needs to provide more examples of the loss of biodiversity and natural landscapes

Disagree	The problem is that there is so much here that understanding is made more difficult. Reading at least three times did not really increase much except my confusion.
Disagree	it's not clearly written enough and everything is thrown in
Disagree	See above.
Disagree	The strategy is generic and non-specific with relation to Dorset. It should analyse the particular threats that Dorset faces. This could've been taken from any UK level document.
Disagree	Already know why
Disagree	Although the video was very engaging I don't think the average person who grasps why nature recovery is needed from it ?
Disagree	There is a variety of vies on the Council but the questions ask for MY views
Strongly disagree	No idea why this is a priority for the council when there are people struggling financially, and not enough private rental properties
Strongly disagree	I am already very well aware why nature recovery is desperately needed.
Strongly disagree	I have found dealing with self interest groups how little they actually know about country side.

Other respondents who also answered this question

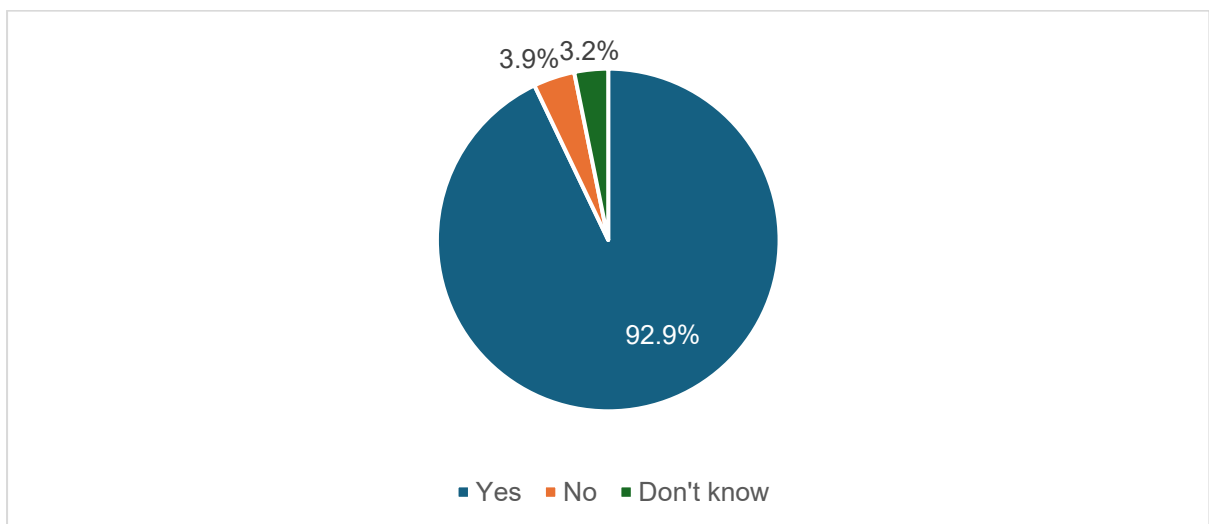
Answer to previous question	Comment
Strongly agree	It highlighted the current problems and the benefits of applying the strategy
Agree	More specific information/data would be useful.eg...species counts,, water pollution levels,
Agree	I think the 30by30 target would be helped with an explanation of why 30x30 is needed and what it is to do - providing a safe place for nature to thrive. It explains the what of 30x30 really well but not the 'so what'.
Agree	It does, but I found the Pdf more effective than the web pages. However, threats and opportunities relating to geodiversity are missing from that section of the strategy.
Agree	But I think more needs to be said about how it's the every day public making mistakes in their choice to tarmac their garden, put astroturf down, cut down large trees and grow non-native plants. Educate people about these things and you will give them a reason to think twice when they just tear down an oak tree
Neither agree nor disagree	At a detailed level it is clear on what changes are needed but at an overall level, less so.
Neither agree nor disagree	A strategy is not needed to spell out what is obvious! To most of us here it is our lived experience that BCP and wider Dorset areas have suffered significant decline in fauna and flora over many decades.

	Most of this is due to the encroachment on nature by building development of all types and, in recent years, the rush to make cycle paths that are hardly used. Again, council strategies and plans (and administrators' interpretation of these) have led to over development, loss of public amenities (eg seafront car parks, mature trees). A general loss of respect for keeping our public areas clear of litter and rough sleeping (ie holidaying/life-style camper vans and tents) means there are now vehicles parked on grass verges and human waste discharged onto the Overcliffe and in parks. Local councils have become notorious for tick-box consultation practices that are putting off residents from bothering to give their views! A strategy is not needed to spell out what is obvious! To most of us here it is our lived experience that BCP and wider Dorset areas have suffered significant decline in fauna and flora over many decades. Most of this is due to the encroachment on nature by building development of all types and, in recent years, the rush to make cycle paths that are hardly used. Again, council strategies and plans (and administrators' interpretation of these) have led to over development, loss of public amenities (eg seafront car parks, mature trees). A general loss of respect for keeping our public areas clear of litter and rough sleeping (ie holidaying/life-style camper vans and tents) means there are now vehicles parked on grass verges and human waste discharged onto the Overcliffe and in parks. Local councils have become notorious for tick-box consultation practices that are putting off residents from bothering to give their views!
Neither agree nor disagree	I already knew
Neither agree nor disagree	I was already aware
Neither agree nor disagree	Already aware.
Neither agree nor disagree	Not much background in the strategy but it is clear from other sources that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries and that increasing biodiversity and support for the environment is fundamental to tackling climate change.
Neither agree nor disagree	I am already aware of why nature recovery is needed.

Neither agree nor disagree	Bullet points on page 28 set out historic land use changes under a number of headings. Land use has changed continuously over centuries of human habitation albeit the changes are perhaps now more rapid than previously and this is largely due to a rapid increase in population. Post war UK population was in the order of 48 million individuals. It is currently in the order of 70 million. This increase in population adds new demands on food production, water treatment, housing and the built environment. Perhaps the demand on nature have less to do with how can we preserve or enhance nature and more to do with determining how big the population can become and remain sustainable.
Don't know	See above

Q. Do you understand what the strategy is for?

(n-282)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	262	92.9%
No	11	3.9%
Don't know	9	3.2%

The results for this question show a clear consensus: 92.9% of respondents (262) stated that they understood the purpose of the strategy. A small proportion, 3.9% (11), responded 'No', while 3.2% (9) said they didn't know.

Q. In the previous question you answered you did not have a clear understanding of what the strategy is for. Please tell us why.

There were 17 comments left for this question, which can be seen below verbatim.

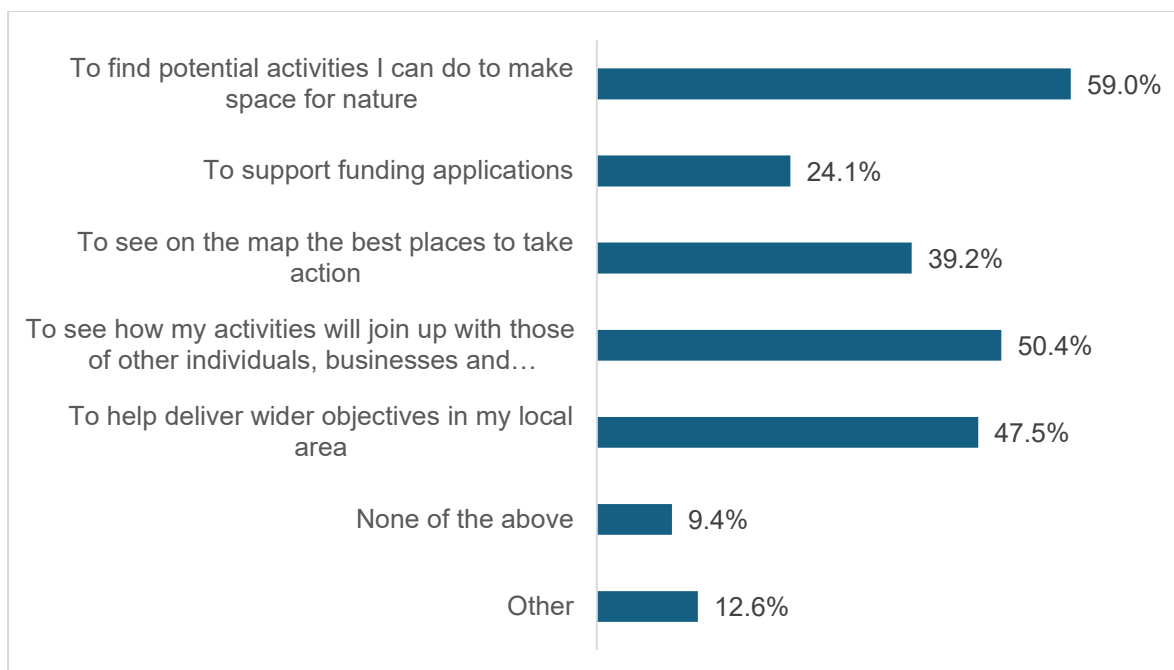
Stop cutting hedges and verges

The first I knew of this "strategy", was in an on-line newsletter from DC. I have read the information on line very quickly, but have not really had time to thoroughly examine the details and probably won't have the time during the future.
I haven't heard anything about this before
Don't agree with the strategy being a priority of the council
Only recently come across the links
It's not black and white in what you will be doing
I can see what some of the strategy is for, (eg delivering the gov 30x30 target for dorset) but it does not seem clear who is delivering it and how it will happen, especially the councils role in it.
I haven't yet read the strategy - It would be helpful to have a link to the strategy while in the survey
We appreciate and support the production of this document and the huge amount of work that much have been put into it. However despite the large volume of the document, (probably too much for many people to want to deal with) It is not clear how the information will be used. This is very worrying as inevitably with such an extensive area being covered there are many mistakes regarding what is the most suitable habitat to aim for. Some of these mistakes are understandable , some less so - (eg the grasslands of the Colehill Ridge which were the subject of much representation after the production of the draft Core Strategy in 2021. If the main purpose is to encourage all parties to do the most they can to aid nature recovery, then the guidance needs to be consistently firm for all habitats in all situations. We suggest in our response that the guidance relating to heathland restoration from 'woodland' ie conifer plantations is worryingly weaker than it should be.
You are not clear what it is for. You present it as if it was something nice to have, a wish list - in language designed for primary school children. What about saying to your community - we are nature, without it we will not survive, your children will not survive. simple. Nature is fundamental to our ability to live.
The deeper I delved into the Strategy the more confused I became on how it is going to be implemented, funded, monitored. I understand that there is a legal requirement for the Strategy and we clearly need something to replace the earlier Dorset Biodiversity Strategy and its refresh. However, the document appears to have attempted to cover pretty well everything so it becomes difficult for all but specialists to work through let alone understand how things will be prioritised and delivered. I would not be able to explain this to a neighbour for example. I have spoken to several members of the public who are completely lost with the whole thing and have given up trying to get their heads round it. I do not understand how I use the system to actually see what is likely to happen in the local area. Indeed the red star indicating my land is the only one for miles! So how do I link up other than by using my own initiative?

We have had strategies before. They have not stopped catastrophic ecological collapse. What is still unclear to me is why this one is any different. How will this plan be linked to legislation to ensure nature recovery actually happens?
Haven't got time to read it. This is one of 6 consultations BCP has sent out. Each has multiple pages of documents to read. Impossible!
Because it isn't especially clear , it was almost as if it had been created by a committee who still get paid whether the objectives are met or not so it was very vague and short on tangible deliverables ?
Richborough is promoting Land at North Townsend ('the Site') for c. 450 residential units through the BCP Local Plan process. While the majority of the site falls outside the identified 'high nature opportunity areas', Richborough wish to understand if this has been intentional, if so clarifications to the proposed built development boundary can be provided. It is acknowledged that there will be a legal requirement to achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through the planning process and that the Nature Recovery Strategy designations could assist this process. However, in the absence of further clarity at this time, it is important that any designations introduced through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy do not make the BNG requirement more onerous to achieve, or serve to fetter the development potential of a site. Regard should therefore be had to this when mapping 'priorities' for land.
Dorset has an extensive array of habitats and complex sites and unsure how one single strategy can complement all successfully without being over complicated.
I am unsure what level of recovery is being assumed or aimed for. Recovery to a 1940s post war Dorset? Post Napoleonic war Dorset? Tomas Hardy's Dorset? Recovery to a known Dorset population?

Q. How do you think you will be able to use the strategy and its maps?

(n-278)



Option	Total	Percent
To find potential activities I can do to make space for nature	164	59.0%
To support funding applications	67	24.1%
To see on the map the best places to take action	109	39.2%
To see how my activities will join up with those of other individuals, businesses and organisations	140	50.4%
To help deliver wider objectives in my local area	132	47.5%
None of the above	26	9.4%
Other	35	12.6%

Respondents were asked to pick ways they could use the strategy and its maps, which resulted in a variety of different responses. The most common across them all was 'To find potential activities I can do to make space for nature', which was picked by 59.0% (164) of respondents.

To see how activities join up with others and to deliver wider objectives were the next 2 significant reasons given, at 50.4% (140) and 47.5% (132) respectively.

39.2% (109) picked to see on the map the best places to take action, 24.1% (67) to support funding applications, 12.6% (35) other (of which responses can be seen after this question), and 9.4% none of the above.

This suggests that most respondents are interested in using the tool to identify steps for nature recovery and how to potentially collaborate and support others.

For questions throughout the report, where there are notable differences across different respondent groups, the data has been cross-referenced. In the table below, the numbers represent:

1. Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers
2. Communities and Individuals
3. Public bodies
4. Nature and environment sector
5. Live in DC
6. Live in BCP

Option	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 
To find potential activities I can do to make space for nature	44.4%	66.3%	63.2%	43.1%	57.2%	68.0%
To support funding applications	48.2%	15.1%	52.6%	25.5%	27.2%	12.0%
To see on the map the best places to take action	33.3%	36.1%	73.7%	43.1%	40.6%	34.7%
To see how my activities will join up with those of other individuals, businesses and organisations	74.1%	41.0%	52.6%	68.6%	58.9%	29.3%
To help deliver wider objectives in my local area	74.1%	39.8%	68.4%	49.0%	52.8%	33.3%
None of the above	7.4%	11.5%	5.3%	3.9%	7.2%	13.3%
Other	11.1%	9.6%	15.8%	19.6%	17.2%	2.7%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-27); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-166); 3 - Public bodies (n-19); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-51); 5 – Live in DC (n-180); 6 – Live in BCP (n-75)

Top choices by group

Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers:

- To see how my activities will join up with others (74.1%)
- To help deliver wider objectives in my local area (74.1%)

Communities and Individuals:

- To find potential activities (66.3%)

Public bodies:

- To see on the map the best places to take action (73.7%)

Nature and environment sector:

- To see how activities join up with others (68.6%)

Live in DC:

- To see how activities join up with others (58.9%)
- To find potential activities (57.2%)

Live in BCP:

- To find potential activities (68.0%)

Q. If other, please specify.

41 comments were received for this question which have been coded and themed. Some of the main themes were:

- lack of information in relation to the actual delivery of aims and objectives, including accountability
- how the strategy could support in embedding organisation goals
- issues with the maps being difficult to use and providing a barrier for use
- being able to help with action and identify places to support

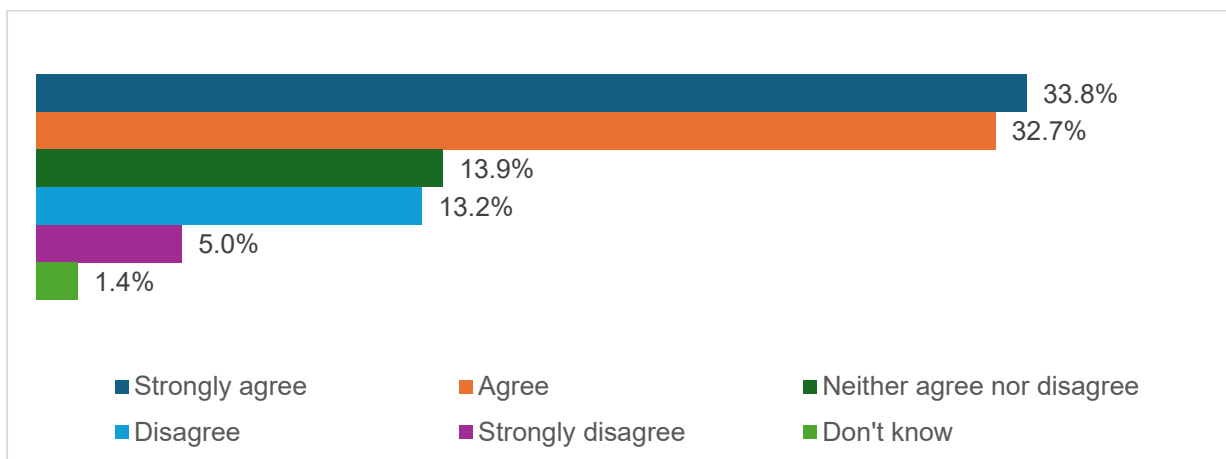
Comment/theme	Total
Lack of information in relation to the actual delivery of aims and objectives, including accountability	7
Other	6
Support embedding organisation goals/supporting documents	6
Maps difficult to use/interpret/provides tech barrier	5
To save our green places/help with action/identify more places	5
Comment on specific area	4
To guide and assist	3
Monitor locations	2
Geology has been ignored/better represent role of geodiversity in nature recovery	2
To see how activities impact other environments/wildlife/join up with others	2
Map inaccurate	2

Concerns for development and housing will result in loss of habitat/identify housebuilding sites bad for nature	2
Won't engage those not part of existing organisations	2

Shared vision and mission statement

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the shared vision?

(n-281)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	95	33.8%
Agree	92	32.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	39	13.9%
Disagree	37	13.2%
Strongly disagree	14	5.0%
Don't know	4	1.4%

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the shared vision for the strategy: **“Nature in Dorset is thriving, resilient, and connected across our landscapes. It is accessible to and celebrated by all.”**

Analysing the data, a clear majority (66.6%) broadly agreed with the vision, with 33.8% (95) strongly agreeing and 32.7% (92) agreeing.

Of the remaining responses, 13.9% (39) neither agreed or disagreed, 13.2% (37) disagreed and 5.0% (14) strongly disagreed. Lastly, 1.4% (4) did not know.

When considering the 6 aforementioned response types, there were some differences:

- respondents involved in nature and environmental projects had higher levels of agreement at 71.7% (38), but also higher levels of disagreement (22.7% (12)). 3.8% (2) remained neutral and 1.9% (1) did not know
- public bodies had higher levels of agreement at 73.7% (14), but also a slightly higher level of disagreement at 21.1% (4). The remaining respondent did not know
- farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers had lower levels of agreement at 61.5% (16). Similar levels of disagreement at 15.4% (4). Higher levels of respondents remaining neutral, though, with 23.1% (6) doing so
- respondents living in the BCP area had slightly lower levels of agreement at 62.3% (48), but also lower levels of disagreement at 13.0% (10). Interestingly, 23.4% (18) remained neutral, perhaps showing more uncertainty within this group

For those that disagreed, they were given the option to explain why, which have been analysed in the next question.

Q. If you disagree or strongly disagree, please tell us why.

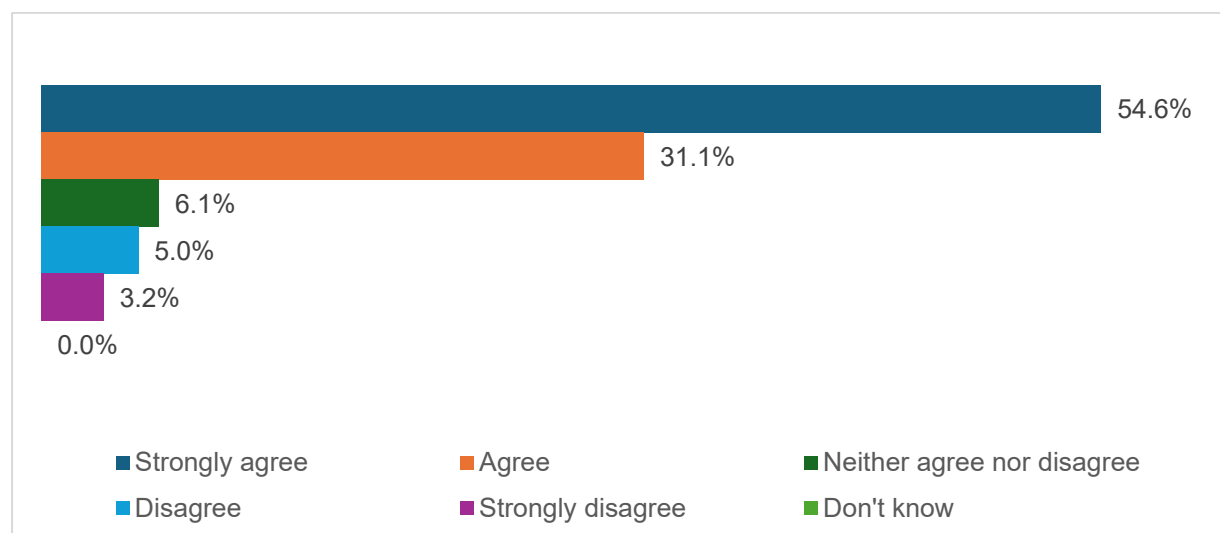
69 comments were received for this question, which have been coded and themed. Some of the main themes were:

- varying topics relating to accessibility and land management. Not all spaces to be open to the public, or more controls put in place to support
- general comments on environmental decline
- engaging and educating all on the importance of nature recovery
- either suggestions to improve the vision, or where more clarity is needed
- concerns new development sites are having on nature recovery

Comment/theme	Total
Accessibility and land management	17
Environmental decline	13
Other	13
Educating all on importance of nature recovery	11
Vision clarity and meaning	11
Concerns with new development and housing sites	10
Comment on specific site	6
Criticism of authorities	5
Connectivity	5
More done to ensure land is protected and celebrated	4
Need real action	4
Stop cutting hedges and verges/hedgerows crucial	3
For many it isn't a top concern	2
Community action and volunteering	2
Cut verges in residential areas	1

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the joint mission?

(n-280)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	153	54.6%
Agree	87	31.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	17	6.1%
Disagree	14	5.0%
Strongly disagree	9	3.2%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Joint mission: “Collectively work together to meet the urgent need and ambition to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery.”

Compared to the joint vision, the overall agreement rate for the joint mission is notably higher, with 85.7% (240) agreeing overall. Of that figure, 54.6% (153) strongly agreed, exemplifying the strength of opinion.

8.2% (23) disagreed or strongly disagreed and 6.1% (17) remained neutral.

Overall, the high levels of agreement indicate that the joint mission statement resonated with more respondents across different groups than the vision.

Looking across the 6 different respondent types, levels of agreement were broadly similar to the overall. However, those in the nature and environment sector had an overall agreement of 94.3% (50), which is higher than average, and the highest across all groups. This suggests people working in relevant fields particularly value the mission statement.

Q. If you disagree or strongly disagree, please tell us why.

39 comments were received for this question, which have been coded and themed. 'Other' is the theme with the highest total as several comments were unrelated to the mission statement and the respondents' level of agreement. Some of the main themes were:

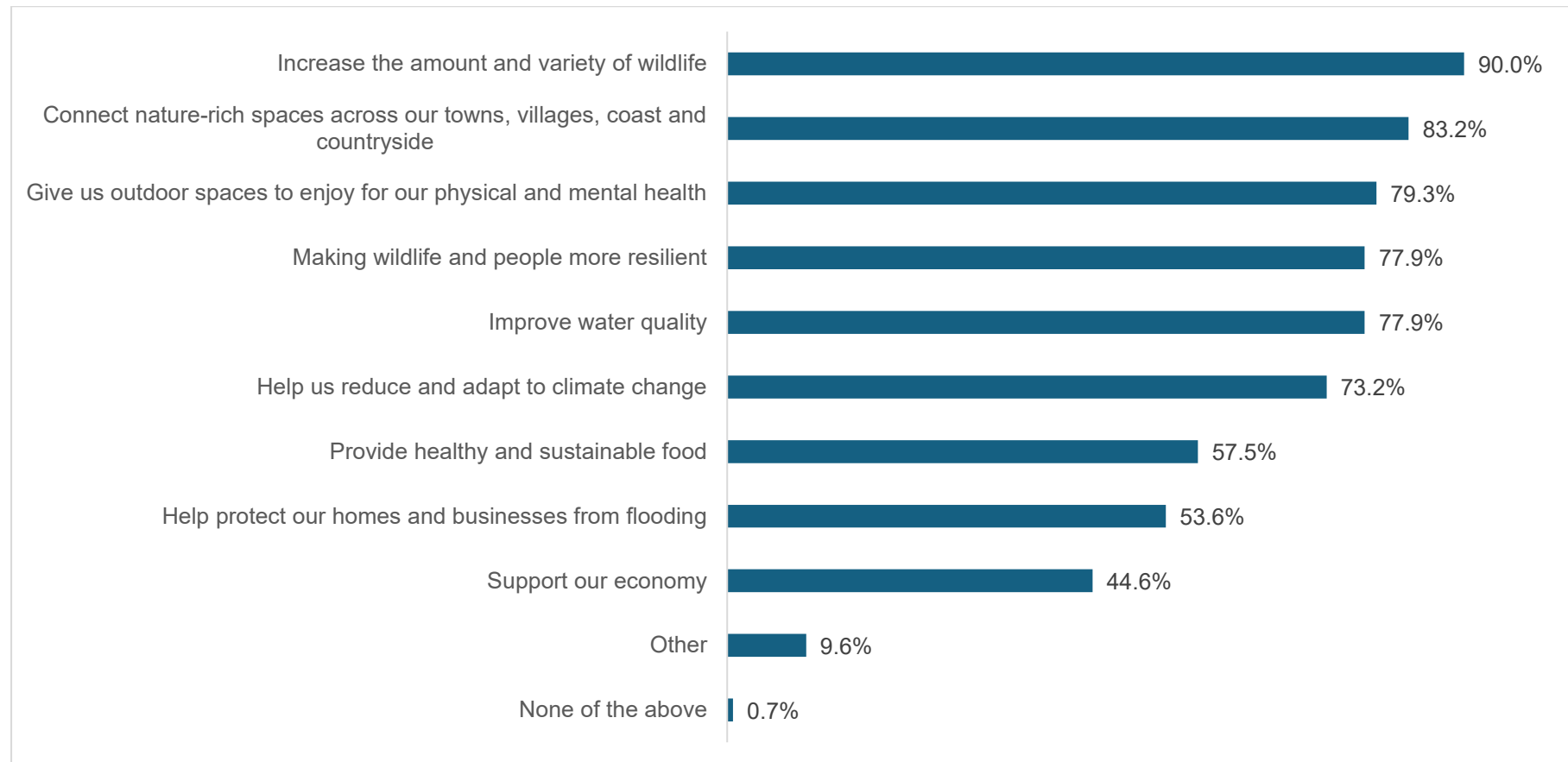
- there being no real action or targets
- more urgency being needed to show why nature recovery needs attention
- suggestions for the language used
- collaboration will be needed with all groups. Linked to that, there was criticism that the Council is difficult to work with

Comment/theme	Total
Other	14
No real action/targets	6
More urgency/needs attention (why it is important work starts now)	5
Suggestion to change the language used	5
Council difficult to work with/do not listen	4
Need agreement from other organisations/collaboration with all stakeholders	4
No climate emergency	3
Too expensive/who will pay for it?	2
More ambition (needs to go further)	2
More information needed/need to make people aware of the situation (more clarity needed)	2
Focus should be elsewhere	2

Most important benefits of nature recovery

Q. What do you think are the most important benefits of nature recovery?

(n-280)



Option	Total	Percent
Increase the amount and variety of wildlife	252	90.0%
Connect nature-rich spaces across our towns, villages, coast and countryside	233	83.2%
Give us outdoor spaces to enjoy for our physical and mental health	222	79.3%
Making wildlife and people more resilient	218	77.9%
Improve water quality	218	77.9%
Help us reduce and adapt to climate change	205	73.2%
Provide healthy and sustainable food	161	57.5%
Help protect our homes and businesses from flooding	150	53.6%
Support our economy	125	44.6%
Other	27	9.6%
None of the above	2	0.7%

Looking at the data above, the respondents consider the most important benefits of nature recovery to be wildlife, nature connectivity, and health benefits, with strong support also for climate resilience and water quality.

The top 2 options picked were 'Increase the amount and variety of wildlife', which was chosen by 90.0% (252) of respondents and 'Connect nature-rich spaces across our towns, villages, coast and countryside', which was picked by 83.2% (233) of those answering this question.

Other most supported options:

- 79.3% (222) chose 'Give us outdoor spaces to enjoy for our physical and mental health'
- 77.9% (218) chose 'Make wildlife and people more resilient'
- 77.9% (218) said 'Improve water quality'

Climate and sustainability

- 73.2% (205) chose 'Help us reduce and adapt to climate change'
- 57.5% (161) said 'Provide healthy and sustainable food'

Protection and economic development

- 53.6% (150) chose Help protect our homes and businesses from flooding
- 44.6% (125) picked Support our economy

Looking across them all, 'Support our economy', aside from 'Other', was the only option picked by fewer than half the respondents. This could suggest the link between the economy and nature recovery is unclear, or that the other areas should take more emphasis.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
Increase the amount and variety of wildlife	92.6%	89.8%	89.5%	90.6%	92.1%	85.7%
Connect nature-rich spaces across our towns, villages, coast and countryside	81.5%	83.8%	84.2%	86.8%	86.5%	76.6%
Making wildlife and people more resilient	81.5%	77.3%	84.2%	83.0%	83.7%	63.6%
Improve water quality	88.9%	76.1%	79.0%	83.0%	81.5%	71.4%
Help us reduce and adapt to climate change	88.9%	71.9%	79.0%	71.7%	78.1%	62.3%
Help protect our homes and businesses from flooding	70.4%	52.1%	68.4%	43.4%	59.6%	37.7%
Provide healthy and sustainable food	77.8%	55.1%	63.2%	54.7%	65.7%	40.3%
Give us outdoor spaces to enjoy for our physical and mental health	77.8%	82.6%	84.2%	69.8%	80.3%	79.2%
Support our economy	55.6%	41.9%	57.9%	43.4%	49.4%	32.5%
Other	14.8%	7.8%	0.0%	13.2%	11.8%	2.6%
None of the above	3.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%

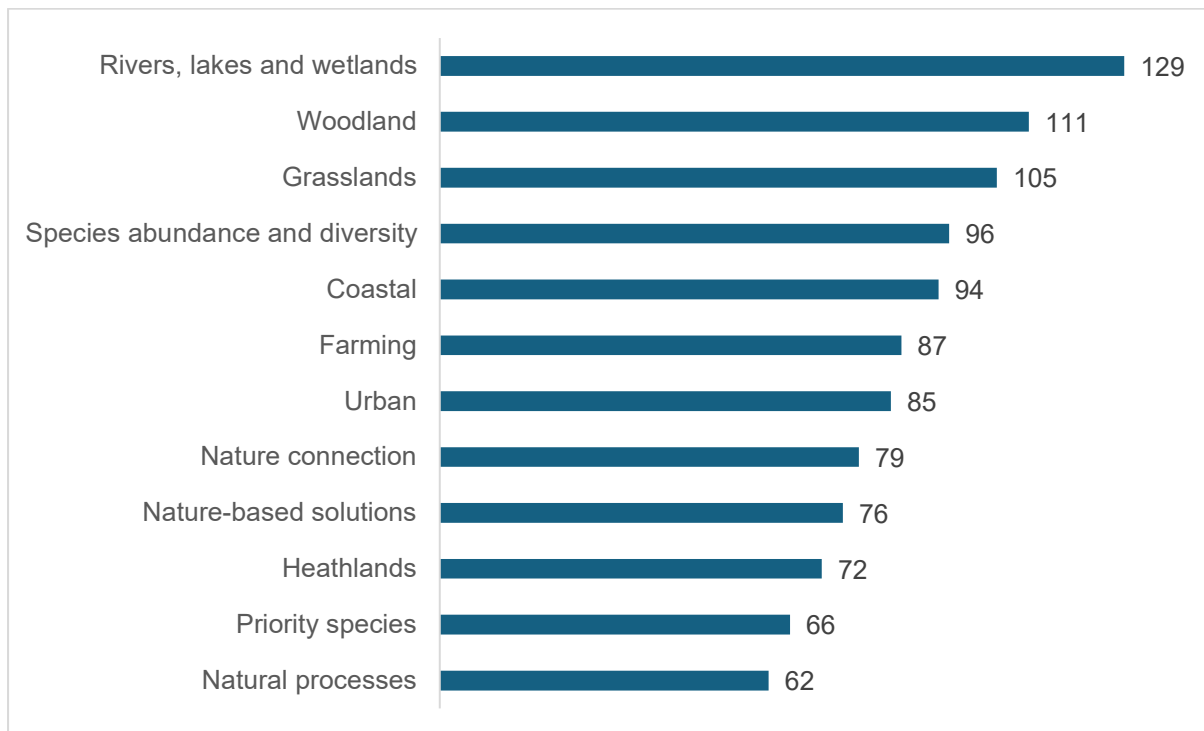
Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-27); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-167); 3 - Public bodies (n-19); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-53); 5 – Live in DC (n-178); 6 – Live in BCP (n-77)

Conditional formatting has been used to identify patterns of key differences across the 6 groups. There were 5 options that had more than a 20% variation between stakeholders, which were:

- Provide healthy and sustainable food has a 37.5% difference between farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers versus BCP residents
- Help protect our homes and businesses from flooding had a 32.7% variation between the same 2 groups
- Help us reduce and adapt to climate change has a 26.6% difference between the same groups again
- Support our economy has a difference of 25.4% between public bodies vs residents in BCP
- Making wildlife and people more resilient has a 20.6% difference between public bodies and residents in BCP

Priorities

(n-1062)



The table and chart highlight how many respondents answered a question on each priority, not the level of agreement with each priority.

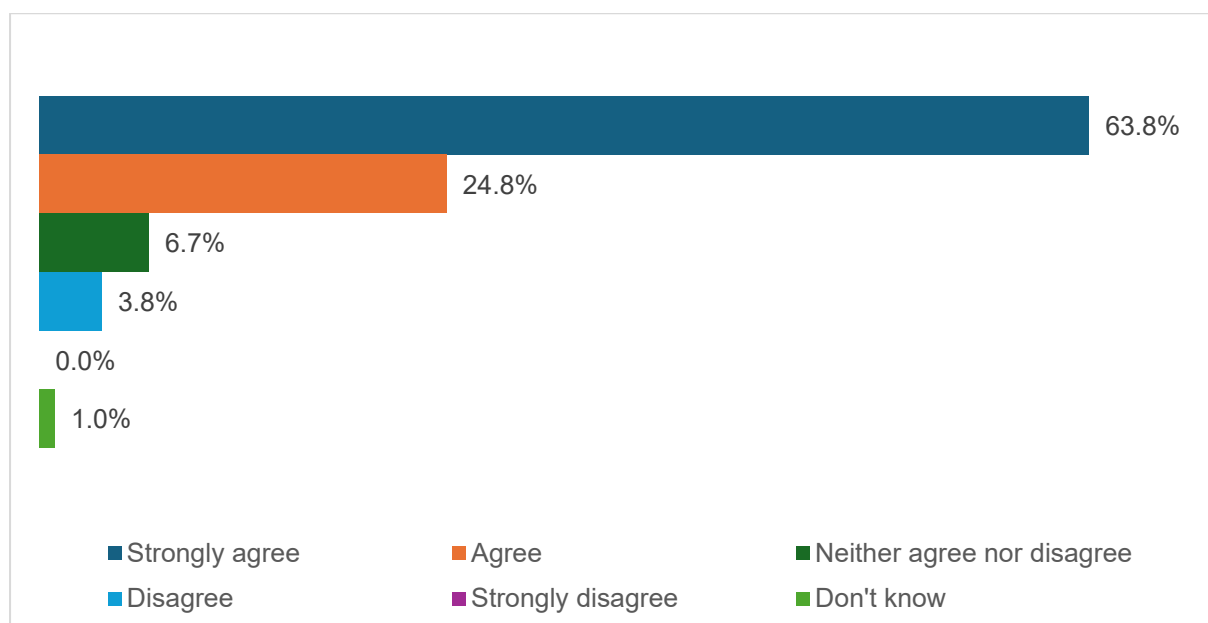
Priority	Total	Percentage
Rivers, lakes and wetlands	129	45.4%
Woodland	111	39.1%
Grasslands	105	37.0%
Species abundance and diversity	96	33.8%
Coastal	94	33.1%
Farming	87	30.6%
Urban	85	29.9%
Nature connection	79	27.8%
Nature-based solutions	76	26.8%
Heathlands	72	25.4%
Priority species	66	23.2%
Natural processes	62	21.8%

Priority 1 - Grasslands

Increase and enhance grassland across Dorset by creating more species-rich, larger, better-managed, and interconnected areas.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n=105)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	67	63.8%
Agree	26	24.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	6.7%
Disagree	4	3.8%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	1	1.0%

Overall, there was a high level of agreement with the grasslands priority. 88.6% (93) agreed, with 63.8% of those responding strongly agreeing. Of the remaining responses, 6.7% (7) neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting some uncertainty or ambivalence. 3.8% (4) disagreed and 1.0% (1) did not know.

Looking across the different responding stakeholders (labelled in the table on the next page), overall agreement continues to be unified. Nature and environment sector respondents, alongside those living in the DC area, had the highest levels of agreement at 95.0% (19) and 93.0% (66) respectively.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement

Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	88.9%	5.6%
Communities and Individuals	88.0%	4.0%
Public bodies	81.8%	0.0%
Nature and environment sector	95.0%	5.0%
Live in DC	93.0%	1.4%
Live in BCP	81.0%	4.8%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-18); Communities and individuals (n-50); Public bodies (n-11); Nature and environment sector (n-20); Live in DC (n-71); Live in BCP (n-21)

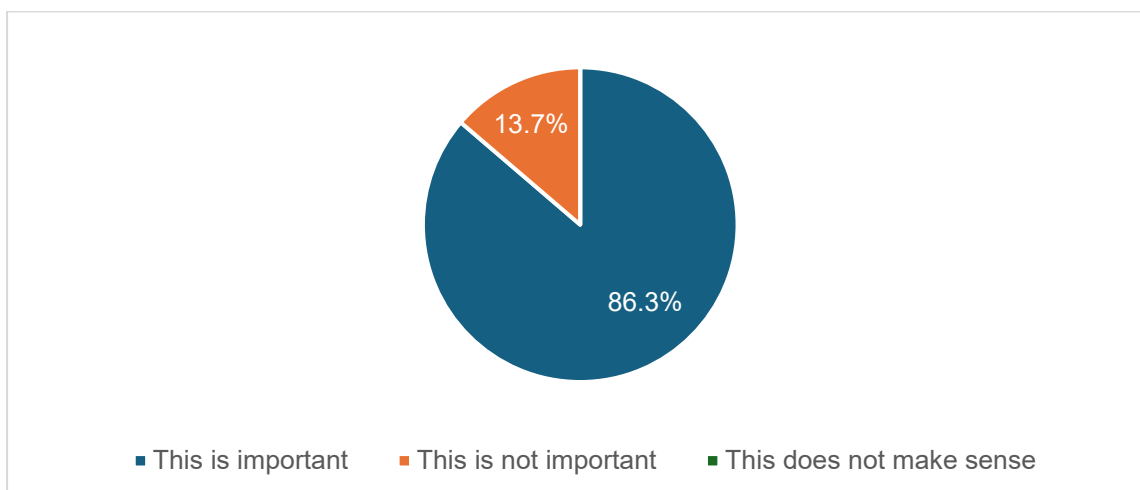
Although still high, respondents living in the BCP area and public bodies had the lowest levels of overall agreement at 81.0% (17) and 81.8% (9). Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers had the highest disagreement at 5.6% (1).

Youth survey response

In the youth survey, respondents were asked a simplified version of the priority questions, allowing them to share their opinion on an idea for each. These will be added in for each of the sections. They were given a set of statements and then asked if they thought they were important or not.

Q. “Make our grassy areas better with more wildflowers”

(n-51)



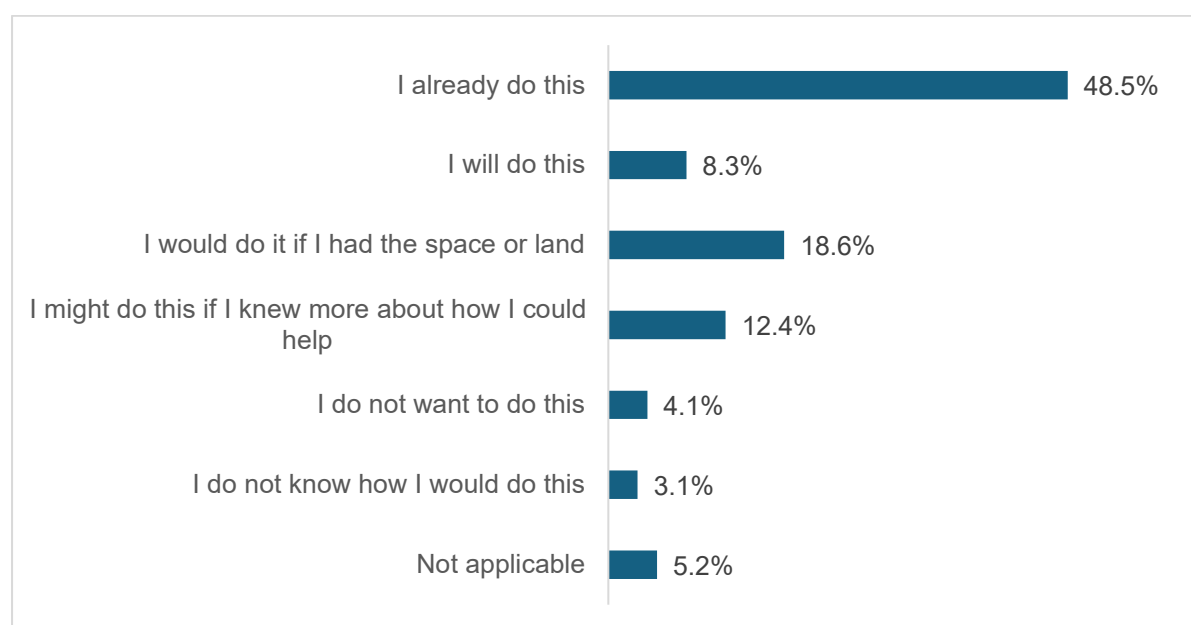
Option	Total	Percent
This is important	44	86.3%
This is not important	7	13.7%
This does not make sense	0	0.0%

Continuing the trend from the main survey, youth respondents thought that the grasslands part of the survey was important, with 86.3% (44) stating so. 13.7% (7) said that this priority was not important.

This suggests that across both versions of the survey, grasslands is a valued priority across a range of different stakeholders.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the grassland priority?

(n-97)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	47	48.5%
I will do this	8	8.3%
I would do it if I had the space or land	18	18.6%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	12	12.4%
I do not want to do this	4	4.1%
I do not know how I would do this	3	3.1%
Not applicable	5	5.2%

The activity responses were mixed with just under half of the respondents (48.5%, equating to 47 people) already performing grassland-based activities. From the remaining responses, there is a willingness to do more, but it is not currently possible due to land or lack of information and guidance. 18.6% (18) would do more if they had the space or land, and 12.4% (12) might do some activities if they knew more about them. 8.3% (8) will do more in the future, 5.2% (5) were not applicable, 4.1% (4) do not want to participate in grassland activities, and 3.1% (3) do not know how to participate.

Option	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 
I already do this	81.3%	39.6%	27.3%	52.9%	53.0%	28.6%
I will do this	12.5%	6.3%	18.2%	5.9%	6.1%	9.5%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	25.0%	36.4%	11.8%	24.2%	9.5%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	6.3%	16.7%	9.1%	5.9%	10.6%	23.8%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	19.1%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	5.9%	1.5%	9.5%
Not applicable	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	17.7%	4.6%	0.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-16); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-48); 3 - Public bodies (n-11); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-17); 5 – Live in DC (n-66); 6 – Live in BCP (n-21)

As might be expected, 81.3% of the farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers that responded already commit to grassland-based activities. A further 12.5% indicated plans to increase their involvement in the future, suggesting potential for further participation growth.

Just over half DC residents and nature and environment sector respondents also already partake in activities at 53.0% and 52.9%. Building on this, 24.2% of DC residents would commit to more activities if they had the space or land.

Contrastingly, just over a quarter of BCP residents (28.6%) and public bodies (27.3%) currently participate in activities. However, the reasoning for potentially committing to activities could be different. For public bodies, 36.4% (4) would do more if they had the space or land. 23.8% of BCP residents might do more if they knew more about how they could help – pointing to a case of more information and guidance being needed to allow them to take part. BCP residents did also have the highest number of respondents across these categories that did not want to take part in activities at 19.1%.

If you have any comments about the grasslands priority, let us know here.

54 responses were received for this question, which have been coded and themed. Some of the main themes discussed were:

- grassland management, with emphasis also on landowner engagement and incentives
- new activity/strategy ideas related to grasslands and beyond
- some issues in terms of the definitions within the priority, and how people can actually support

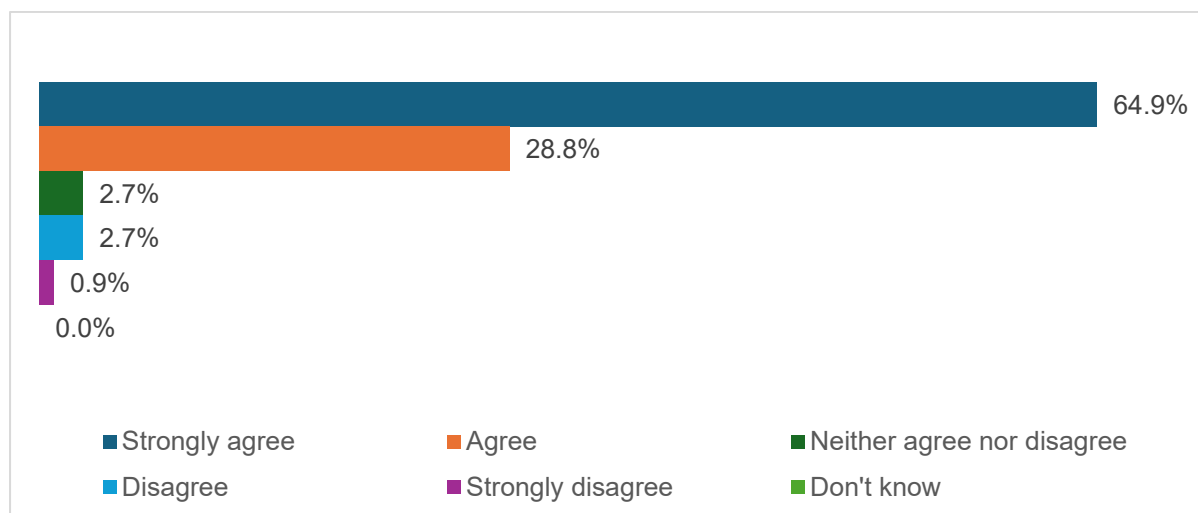
Comment/theme	Total
Grassland management	16
Other	7
Landowner engagement and incentives	7
New activity/strategy idea	7
Comment on specific area	6
Not clear in terms of general clarity and definitions, or for individuals how to support	5
Wildflowers able to grow (via meadows, verges)	4
Grasslands reinstated to benefit wildlife	4
Protection/preservation key in some areas	3
No direction for delivery	3
It's an important/beneficial habitat	3
Social enjoyment	2
Access to support and equipment	2
Benefits made more clear	2
Comment on specific changes to strategy	2
Issue with maps/general content and figures not accurate	2

Priority 2 – Woodland

Dorset's woodland habitats of broadleaved, mixed, wet woodland, and scrub are sustainably managed, resilient, expanded, and better connected.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-111)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	72	64.9%
Agree	32	28.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	2.7%
Disagree	3	2.7%
Strongly disagree	1	0.9%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Similarly to the grassland proposal, overall, there is a very strong level of support for the priority. 93.7% (104) agreed, with 64.9% (72) of that figure strongly agreeing.

Of the remaining responses, 3.6% (4) either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 2.7% (3) were neutral.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	100.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	93.3%	5.0%
Public bodies	80.0%	10.0%
Nature and environment sector	100.0%	0.0%
Live in DC	95.7%	2.9%
Live in BCP	89.7%	6.9%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-11); Communities and individuals (n-60); Public bodies (n-10); Nature and environment sector (n-24); Live in DC (n-69); Live in BCP (n-29)

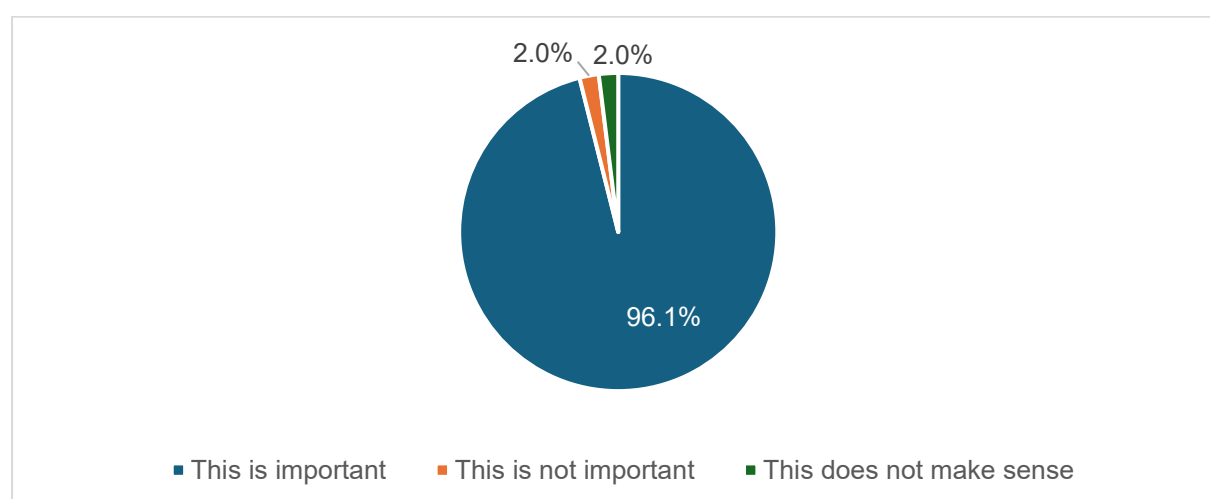
Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers and respondents in the nature and environment sector, both agreed with the proposals at 100%. It is worth noting however, that especially for the former, there is a smaller sample size to draw from, so caution should be taken when looking at the results in isolation. This could suggest that woodland is a top priority for those that manage or farm appropriate land, or those that work in the field.

All other groups had a majority agreement too, responding with an overall agreement rate of 80% or more.

Youth survey response

Q. “Make our woods better and bigger with lots more trees”

(n-51)

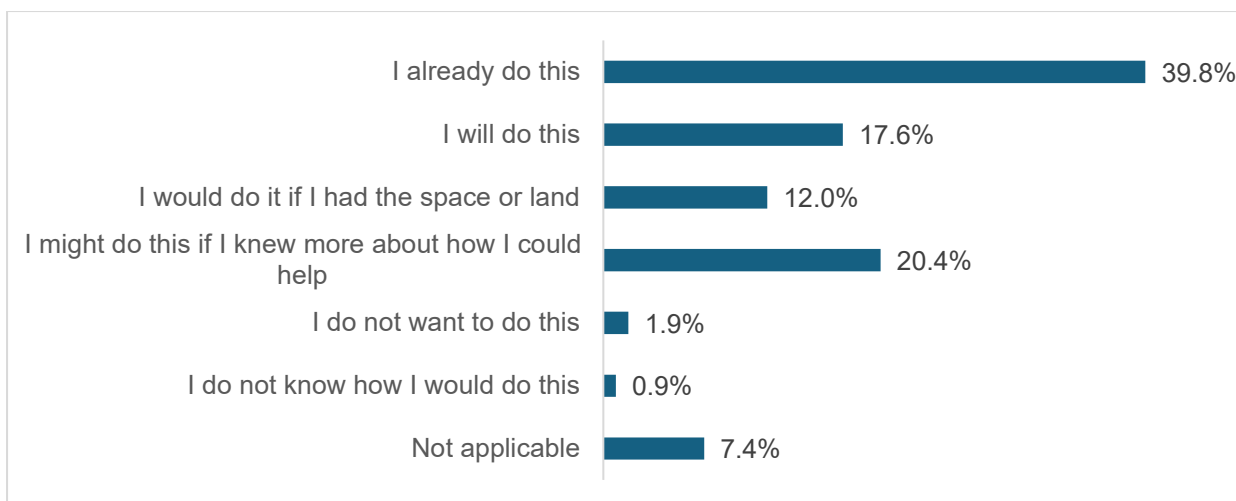


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	49	96.1%
This is not important	1	2.0%
This does not make sense	1	2.0%

Although framed differently for the audience, the youth response further exemplifies the support for the priority. 96.1% (49) of the respondents said that making our woods better was important. 2.0% (1) thought it was not, and 2.0% (1) thought the priority did not make sense.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the woodland priority?

(n-108)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	43	39.8%
I will do this	19	17.6%
I would do it if I had the space or land	13	12.0%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	22	20.4%
I do not want to do this	2	1.9%
I do not know how I would do this	1	0.9%
Not applicable	8	7.4%

Compared to the previous priority, there was a slight decline in the number of respondents already engaged in activities, with 39.8% (43 respondents) confirming their support for woodland-based actions. 20.4% (22) would consider doing more if they knew how to, 17.6% (19) will commit to more actions, and 12.0% (13) would do more if they had the space available.

7.4% (8) responded this was not applicable and 0.9% (1) do not know how they would do this. Interestingly, just 1.9% (2) did not want to take part in woodland activities.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	72.7%	23.7%	30.0%	65.2%	41.8%	28.6%
I will do this	27.3%	17.0%	30.0%	13.0%	14.9%	21.4%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	20.3%	10.0%	0.0%	14.9%	10.7%

I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	28.8%	20.0%	8.7%	23.9%	21.4%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
Not applicable	0.0%	5.1%	10.0%	13.0%	3.0%	10.7%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-11); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-59); 3 - Public bodies (n-10); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-23); 5 – Live in DC (n-67); 6 – Live in BCP (n-28)

As before, farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers either already engage in woodland-based actions (72.7%) or will do them (27.3%). This suggests that the activities are important for those that are responsible for appropriate land, albeit a small sample size.

Unlike the grassland priority, however, 65.2% of those in the nature and environment sector said they take part in woodland activities. In addition, 13% responded that they will do more, showing potential participation growth.

A slight disparity is evident between DC and BCP residents. 41.8% of people that live in DC already take part in woodland actions, compared to 28.6% of respondents in BCP. There is a similar pattern across the 2 groups, though, with 23.9% of DC residents and 21.4% of BCP residents potentially doing more if they knew how to. This, coupled with the 28.8% of communities and individuals that identified the same, shows that there's a potential area to explore in supporting individuals get more involved. It could be that currently individuals feel unclear about how to participate, or that information is not readily available to them.

Q. If you have any comments about the woodland priority, let us know here.

53 responses were received for this question, which have been coded and themed. Some of the main themes discussed were:

- new or different activity and strategy ideas
- comments on specific places to be considered
- that trees are important, and this should be given an elevated status
- comments on suggestions to wording within the priority

Comment/theme	Total
Activity/strategy idea	16
Comment on specific place/area	10
Should be given elevated status/trees are important	7
Comment on the wording	7
Other	7

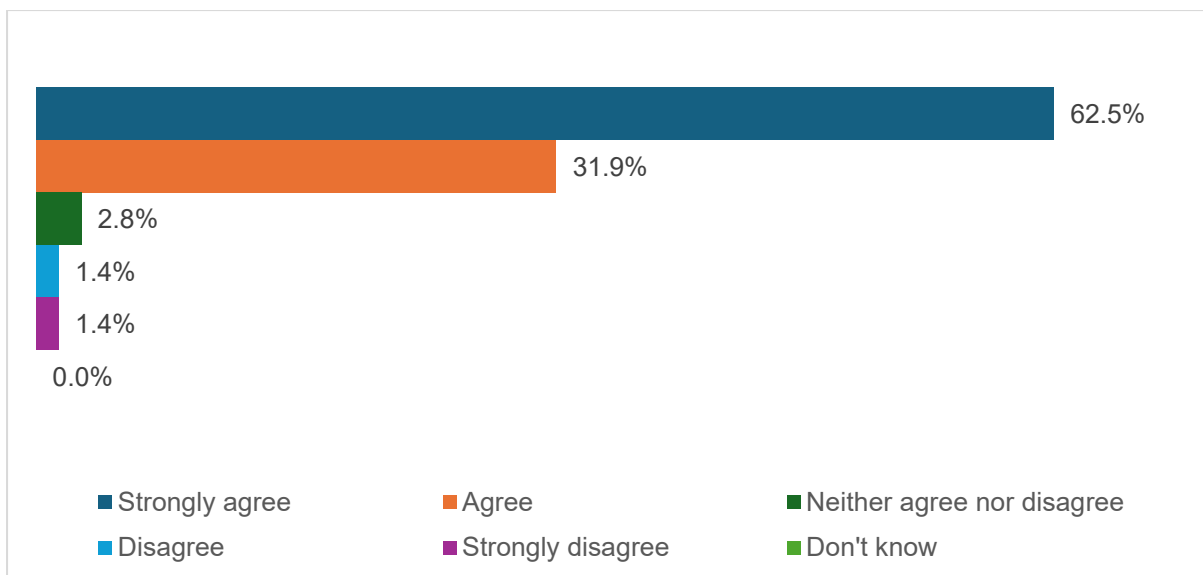
Other means that are important (hedges, Copses)	6
Landowner/developer engagement and incentives	5
Positive comment on the priority	3
Concern for development/protections under planning guidance	3
Not the highest priority/not highest where other options make more sense	2
Better prevention and enforcement to prevent tree felling	2
Engagement with schools	2
More areas returned to woodland	2
Native trees	2
Too much restricts public access/controlled public access	2
Named organisation that could help	1

Priority 3 – Heathlands

Heathland habitats are better, bigger, and connected, and where there are gaps, more wildlife habitat is created.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n=72)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	45	62.5%
Agree	23	31.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.8%
Disagree	1	1.4%

Strongly disagree	1	1.4%
Don't know	0	0.0%

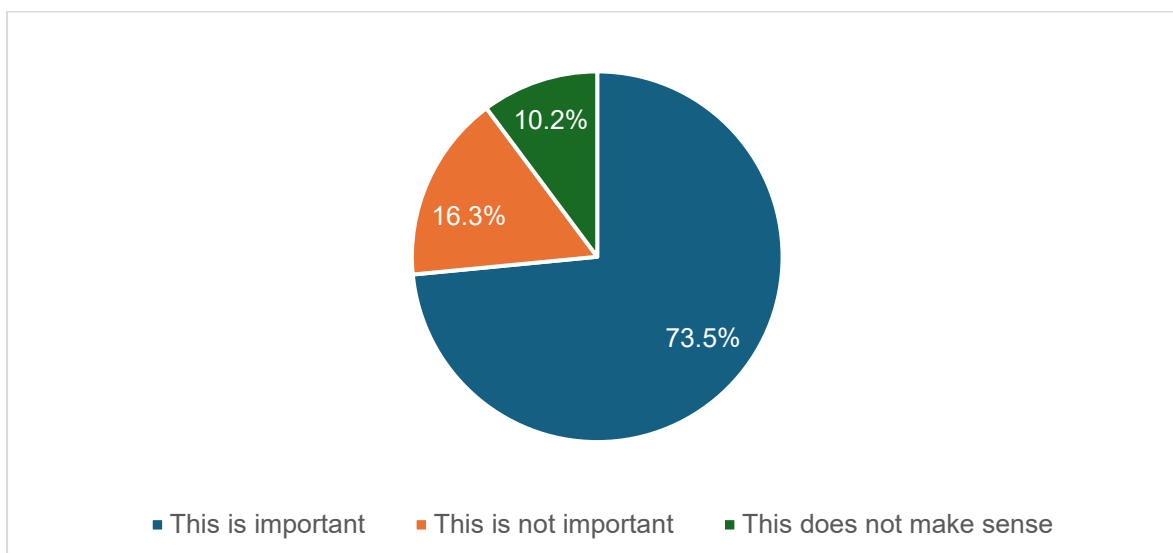
The heathland priority had an almost unanimous level of support for the proposal, with 94.4% (68) agreeing or strongly agreeing. 2.8% (2) were neutral, and 2.8% (2) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Considering the 6 different respondent types, comparing across all of them for this priority is not possible due to farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers and public bodies having very small sample sizes (4 each). Across the other 4, the level of support was in-line with the overall.

Youth survey response

Q. "Take care of our heathlands and make them bigger"

(n-49)

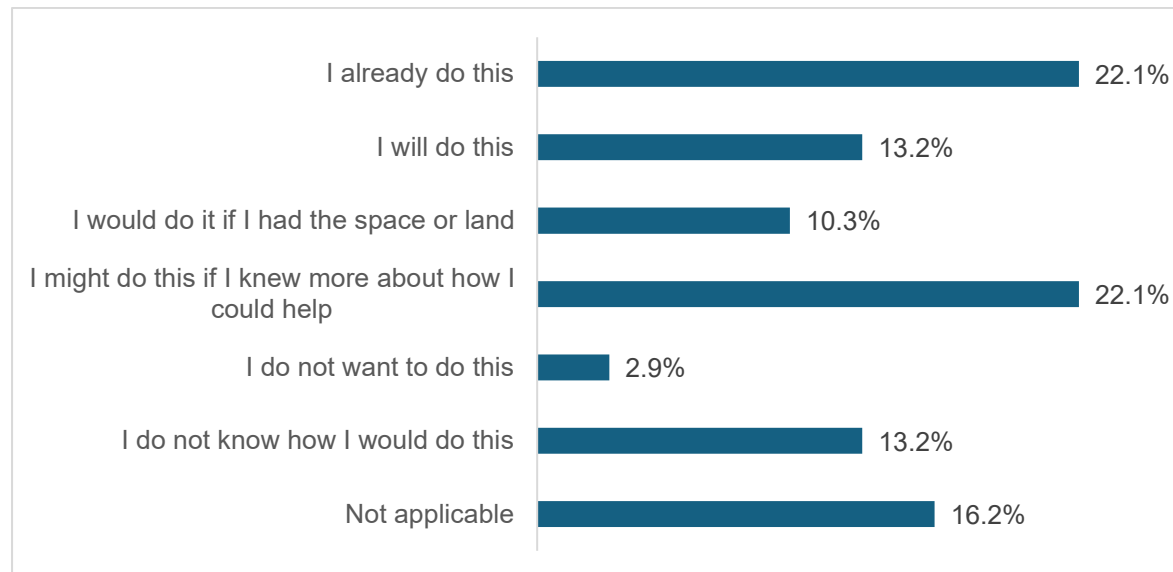


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	36	73.5%
This is not important	8	16.3%
This does not make sense	5	10.2%

Unlike the first 2 priorities, this is the first time there has been a difference between the youth response and the main survey response. 73.5% (36) think this is important, compared to 16.3% (8) who do not, and 10.2% (5) who thought it does not make sense. So, although there is a high number of youth respondents identifying the priority as important, there could be scope for more educational engagement relating to heathlands. This could help improve understanding and ensure more informed participation.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the heathlands priority?

(n-68)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	15	22.1%
I will do this	9	13.2%
I would do it if I had the space or land	7	10.3%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	15	22.1%
I do not want to do this	2	2.9%
I do not know how I would do this	9	13.2%
Not applicable	11	16.2%

Responses for this priority are more varied than previously, with just 22.1% (15) already involved in heathland-based activities. The same number of respondents also said they might do this if they knew more, potentially suggesting there is more uncertainty around how to support heathlands. 13.2% (9) said they will do more and do not know how they would get involved respectively. Lastly, 10.3% (7) would do it if they had the space or land, and 2.9% (2) do not want to.

Interestingly, 16.2% (11) respondents selected 'Not applicable' so further exploration could be useful to determine why this is higher than for other priorities.

The breakdown of responses potentially helps to better paint the picture here:

Option	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 
I already do this	50.0%	14.6%	0.0%	38.5%	30.0%	8.7%
I will do this	0.0%	22.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	21.7%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	7.3%	25.0%	23.1%	15.0%	4.4%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	26.8%	25.0%	7.7%	20.0%	30.4%
I do not want to do this	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	4.4%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	19.5%	0.0%	7.7%	12.5%	17.4%
Not applicable	25.0%	9.8%	50.0%	23.1%	10.0%	13.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n=4); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n=41); 3 - Public bodies (n=4); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n=13); 5 – Live in DC (n=40); 6 – Live in BCP (n=23)

There were fewer farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers responding than previous priorities which is likely to have had an impact. For the others, there does appear to be an appetite to support, but again, there is uncertainty about how they would do so.

Looking at communities and individuals, the highest split of respondents is 26.8%, saying they might do more if they knew how to help. A further 19.5% do not know how they would involve themselves in the heathland priority activities. Conversely, 22% said they will do activities, suggesting that more awareness being spread throughout the strategy has alleviated some of the confusion.

For DC and BCP residents, there is again a split in responses. 30.0% (12) of DC residents are already involved in activities, compared to 8.7% (2) in BCP. However, 21.7% (5) in BCP will do more activities, which is higher than DC at 10.0% (4). Continuing the trend of communities and individuals, residents in both areas share some confusion as to how they would support activities. 30.4% (7) in BCP and 20.0% (8) in DC might do more if they knew more about how they could help. A further 17.4% (4) in BCP and 12.5% (5) in DC also stated they do not know how to take part.

More engagement with individuals on heathlands could be beneficial.

Q. If you have any comments about the heathland priority, let us know here.

22 respondents answered this question, and their responses can be seen verbatim.

There is a tendency to enlarge heathland at the expense of broadleaved (mainly birch) woodland but this too has its merits. There's only so much land...
Visits to local schools showing the wildlife and risks of (deliberate) fires
Natural England are doing a fantastic job locally and deserve everyone's support. 400mtr no building except nursing home is to be commended for future generations to enjoy and thrive in 5hdse sacred areas.
Vital to have better systems to prevent fires and block people from barbecues or fires in these areas
Leave Hatchard loan nature does a very good job on her own
Urbanisation and Farming has degraded the countryside in Dorset to a point where it is just a monoculture of various grasses all of which are devoid of nature. The Wildlife Trust and Local Authorities need to stop congratulating themselves on a biodiverse county when 90% of the land is under intensive farming and urbanisation particularly in the South East conurbation. High quality Greenspace must be reinstated to benefit wildlife and people alike. Urbanisation has broken up the wildlife rich areas into small patches which require reconnection with greenways.
maybe there should be some specific action around not using bbq on heathland (rather than raise awareness) also something about keeping dogs on leads in ground nesting bird season, and volunteering at country parks etc.
Expansion of habitat and connectivity is vital. More habitat means greater dispersal of human activity on it. The impacts of intensive farming also needs to be taken into account.
Priority 3 is an aspiration. Does this mean it's on the back burner?
It undoubtably has some beautiful heathland habitat but it also needs to have more trees to provide habitat for more species, help to reduce/improve flood risk & capture carbon. Trees & woodlands are also beneficial for wellbeing. I would not be in support of creating more heathland if it involved removing woodland / scrub habitat.
Who will be in charge of managing the priorities? Will there be a large executive? How many people on the ground will be paid to carry out the work?
I have heard a lot about volunteering with local parks, but I have not heard of any opportunities to spend time in, take care of or learn about our heathland. I don't think people would know how to enjoy time spent in heathland, and subsequently are not inclined to care for it, leaving rubbish and dog mess, allowing invasive plants to

escape from adjoining properties or even intentionally encroach directly onto the heathland, and allowing or causing wildfires. Heathland just isn't glamorous and doesn't offer as many recreation activities as beaches, rivers and parks and in fact can seem quite scary as it is home to snakes. Is there any way to try and change the reputation and foster more awareness and passion for heathland as part of the strategy? I don't see that there's much I can do as an individual, and I'd like to change that.

The Strategy informs us that huge areas of heathland were affected by the overplanting with conifers (into a category which the document now includes as woodland). The removal of these exceptionally low productivity conifers is, without a doubt, the most effective and cost efficient way of restoring heathland. However the Strategy strangely fails to sufficiently recognise and address this critical opportunity.

Firstly the various policies which relate to heathland within conifer plantations seem to imply targets linked just to mire restoration and linkage. We suggest that a simpler but more embracing guidance is first clearly stated such as 'restore and link heathland from conifer overplanting' This could be followed by suggestions for the most effective targets by adding 'paying particular attention to opportunities to -
expand existing heathland beyond the woodland
link heathland beyond and within the woodland
restore the natural catchment of valley mires within the woodland
embrace areas known to be important for key heathland species'

Secondly the Project maps blank out all the areas owned and/or managed by Forestry England. Yet Forestry England is by far the largest controller of potential heathland under conifers in the county. We do not understand why this has been done - it is not being done in Hampshire. Withholding presentation of the extent to which FE intends to contribute to nature recovery, when this information is presented in their Forest Design Plans, seems at best unhelpful and at worst misleading. Not to present that information, so that its intended contribution can be clearly assessed, makes the strategy fundamentally flawed and unsound. FE should be a key player in openly showing how and where it intends to contribute to the Strategy, not hiding its intended contribution in blanked out plantation blocks. We cannot help but link this lack of divulgence with the fact that, with the exception of Purbeck Forest (where what can relatively easily be achieved has been so positively demonstrated) far too little heathland restoration is done by FE despite conservation bodies consistently asking them to do more. The recent East Dorset Forest Design Plan for example shows barely any new heathland restoration and the comments on the draft from NGOs and NE alike totally ignored in the final plan. Forestry England clearly needs to be included in the guidance and the Projects map, not be exempted from it.

Although most coniferised heathland is controlled by FE a substantial area is in the

hands of private owners. They also need simple and clear direction regarding restoring areas of heathland as suggested above. Yet even if convinced to do heathland restoration, they are prevented from doing so by the Forestry Commission who will usually refuse to grant a Felling License for the operation unless either damage to an adjoining heathland SSSI can be demonstrated or alternative land is given up for woodland creation. As an example the FC refused to allow a significant portion of our own conifer plantation over former heathland to be restored to heathland unless we could provide land for replacement woodland - which we were not in a position to do. I cannot tick any of the above boxes because there is not one which says "I would do this if the FC would let me, but they will not". We understand that this Strategy cannot direct FC to change its internal policy. However it is essential that the Forestry Commission needs to see a clear and strong guidance in this Strategy allowing them to see that its own internal policies will be preventing private landowners from carrying out heathland restoration and thus be thwarting the aims of the Strategy. Please do take this point on board. I have long experience of heathland conservation dating from the 1980s and I am in no doubt that (despite some progress) FE with their management limitations and FC with their felling license restrictions are the main stumbling blocks to heathland restoration in Dorset. This Strategy should at least be doing what it can to address this.

Finally the strategy maps show the potential for heathland restoration from grassland as being too extensive covering areas which are unsuitable by virtue of being naturally too rich, too long subject to improvement or having their own interest as grassland. This leads the viewer to think that is is not of any great concern if not much heathland from conifer plantation is being promoted. They will believe there will be huge opportunity from grassland. There will not. Nor can heathland be reliably established on mineral workings.

It would be advisable to more carefully examine the map produced by the RSPB showing areas for potential heathland restoration when revising the maps accompanying this Strategy.

Also please note that unimproved acid grassland is a rarer habitat than lowland heath. It is not then appropriate to suggest that such acid grassland should be encouraged to progress to heathland as a means of increasing interest. Acid grassland is a habitat which should be promoted to be restored and maintained in its own right.

The working example and the artwork features pigs. Use of pigs on heathland for conservation purposes

is a recent activity and its value has yet to be evaluated. In any event it involves a landowner input over and above that even required for cattle and pony grazing. We were concerned that landowners may get the impression that heathland restoration has a follow on expectation that they may be unwilling or unable to give.

"Expand and connect current and potential heathland sites so they are big enough to protect from external pressures"

Within East Dorset the main barrier to this is Forestry England who have failed to deliver commitments made in 2009 and show little interest in the easy win of restoring the heathland/acid grassland rides. Instead they have been allowed to be invaded by birch and gorse in particular so further reducing opportunities of creating even wooded heath because of copious seed production that remains in the seed bank for decades.

"Manage some open areas in forests..."

New coniferous planting over heathland following clear felling of coupes should be discouraged and natural regeneration on these areas reduced so that at least wooded heath results. The failure by FE to deliver their Open Habitats policy is unacceptable.

"Restore dry and wet heath habitats to improve ecosystem function, ... "

This is feasible even on small sites.

I strongly support the excellent work of the Dorset Heaths Partnership.

Restore heathland habitat on former minerals and waste sites. NO! It is now recognised that the long claimed restoration potential is wrong because the substrate contains high proportions of silt and clay (so is unsuitable for reptiles) and the seed bank of any retained top soil will contain far too much gorse that will outcompete other heathland species. See RSPB research and evidence submitted by RSPB, ARC and EDEP to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Partial Update EiP February 2025. HCC were unable to identify any successful heathland restoration over minerals in the UK. Please stop perpetuating this myth!

Money needs to be found through grant funding or from the council to reduce the amount of volatile species, such as Rhododendron and Pine, to save our heathlands from scrubbing up and to reduce the risk and severity of the growing threat of wildfires. A strategy to identify these species on heathland boarding properties and funding to remove them would reduce the amount of complaints and risk to residents whilst saving some of our rarest habitats.

With regards to human activities on heathlands it would be beneficial to ground nesting birds and the reptiles to limit or discourage dog walking on heathland, either through more promotion of SANGs or through making it compulsory to have dogs on leads at all times on heathlands. There are many, many places to dog walk without disturbing wildlife but vanishingly few heathlands with healthy populations of ground nesting birds and of reptiles.

Dorset Peat Partnership (DPP) is a subgroup of the Dorset Catchment Partnerships. The DPP partners have restored 15 peatland sites with another aiming for completion

later this year. This work is helping to store water in catchments, slow the flow, improve water quality and provide habitat for species.

Heathland management and restoration are highly skilled and technical activities so it is unclear how this can be done by individuals or voluntary conservation. This work should be carried out by DC and NGOs including working with Natural England

Conifer plantations occupy roughly the same area of original heathland in Dorset as the surviving open heaths. Far and away the easiest and most certain way to extend the area of heathland will be to remove conifer plantations on former heathland sites; an action that seems to have been missed in the LNRS!

By contrast, acid grasslands - also a rare and restricted habitat - are suggested for heathland expansion. This may happen naturally and gradually but should not be accelerated by the NRS.

The Dorset National Landscape team convenes the Purbeck Heaths NNR partnership and will continue to support its management and expansion, as well as maximising its influence on nature recovery practice beyond its boundaries.

Heathland is not a natural environment. It is man made. It would be much better for the climate if trees are planted and allowed to grow in these areas, because trees sequester more carbon.

Heathland in Dorset is incredibly important as we have all 5 UK reptile species living on our heathlands and it is a rare habitat.

A pity that the case study in the document for this topic shows Mangalita pigs which are a Hungarian breed rather than one or more of the native British Breeds of pig. There are benefits from heathland but it does need to be managed. 'The Return of the Native' written in the 1870s shows that 150 years ago heathland was an important part of rural life.

I suppose that the interconnection between areas of heathland have some proximal measure of what is viable and presumably this does not suggest interconnection with the woodlands in priority 3.

Fully support restoring habitats on former minerals and waste sites.

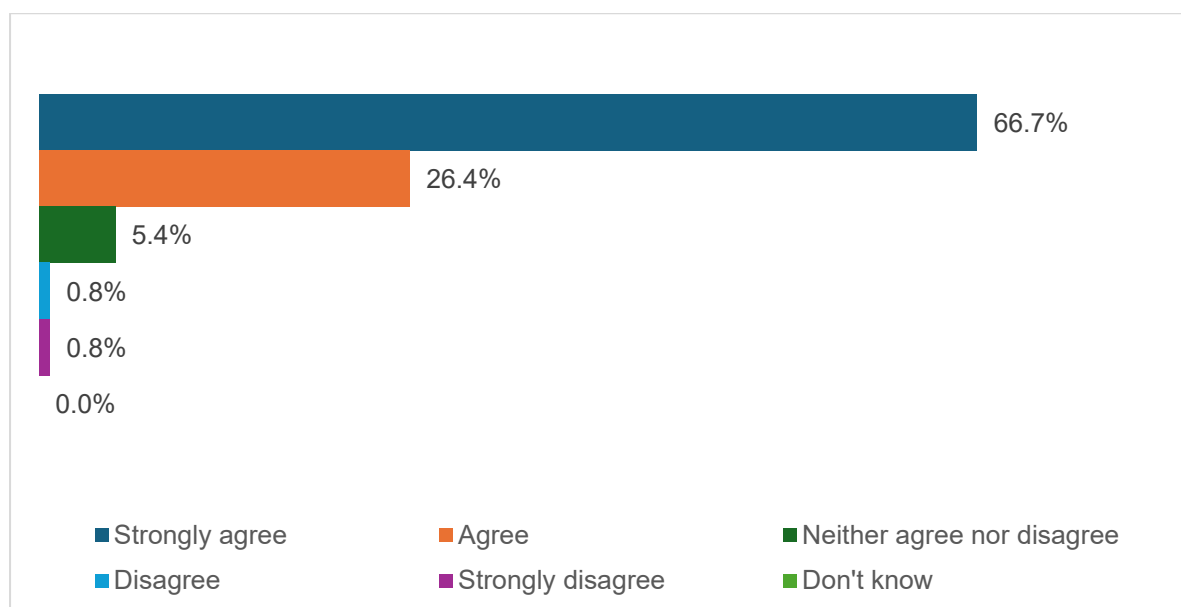
There are no heathlands in our Parish area.

Priority 4 – Rivers, lakes and wetlands

Rivers and lakes are naturally functioning, and wetland habitats are better, bigger, and connected to support wildlife and provide clean water and flood protection.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n=129)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	86	66.7%
Agree	34	26.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	5.4%
Disagree	1	0.8%
Strongly disagree	1	0.8%
Don't know	0	0.0%

The majority showed a strong level of agreement with the rivers, lakes and wetlands priority, with 93.1% (120) of respondents expressing agreement. Of these, 66.7% (86) strongly agreed, indicating a high level of support. A small proportion, 5.4% (7), neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting some uncertainty or neutrality. Only 1.6% (2) expressed disagreement, split evenly between 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. This reflects a broadly unified response in favour of the priority.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement

Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	100.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	93.2%	1.4%
Public bodies	81.8%	0.0%
Nature and environment sector	95.8%	4.2%
Live in DC	94.2%	2.3%
Live in BCP	90.6%	0.0%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-13); Communities and individuals (n-73); Public bodies (n-11); Nature and environment sector (n-24); Live in DC (n-86); Live in BCP (n-32)

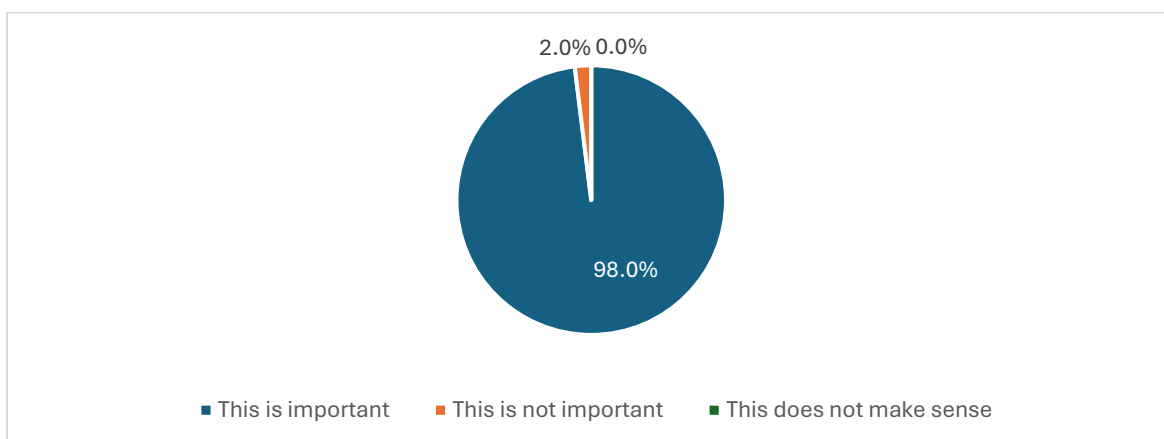
Overall, the data reflects a high level of consensus across the groups. Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers showed unanimous support for the priority, with 100% agreement. This suggests strong alignment with the priority among those directly involved in land management. The nature and environment sector also showed very high levels of agreement at 95.8%, with a small proportion (4.2%) expressing disagreement indicating broad support from those working in environmental fields.

All other groups demonstrated strong overall agreement, with communities and individuals at 93.2%, respondents living in the BCP area showed 90.6% agreement and residents in the DC area at 94.2%, reinforcing the widespread support across geographic areas. Public bodies had the lowest agreement rate at 81.8%.

Youth survey response

Q. “Make our rivers healthy and have more wetland areas for wildlife that need patches of water covered land”

(n-51)



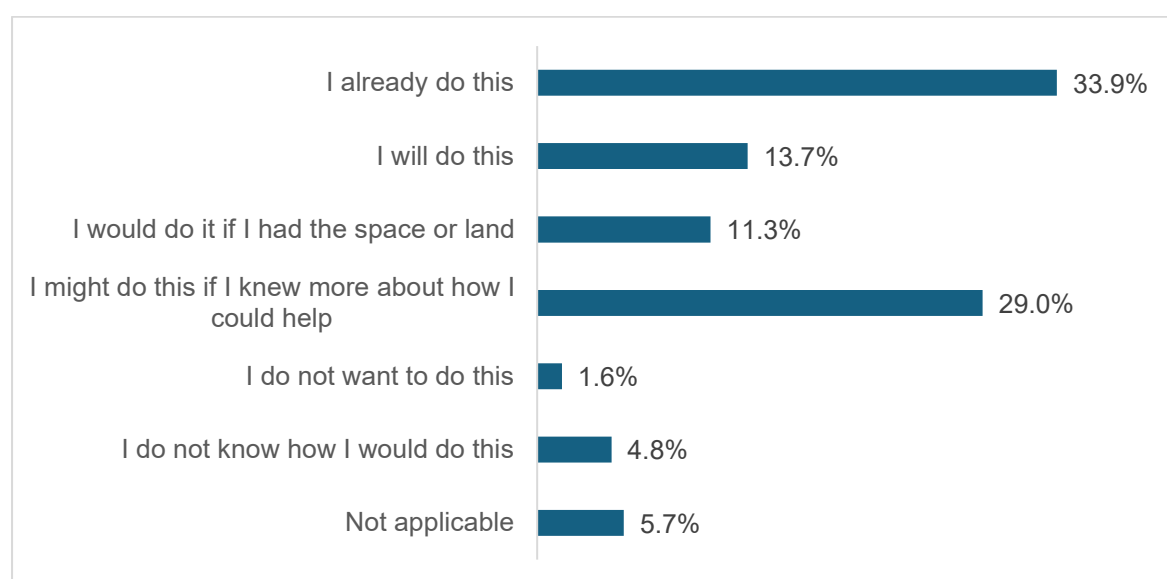
Option	Total	Percent
This is important	50	98.0%
This is not important	1	2.0%

This does not make sense	0	0.0%

Responses from the youth survey show overwhelming support for ‘make our rivers healthy and have more wetland areas for wildlife’ with 98% (50) saying this is important, with only 2% (1) stating it is not important. No respondents indicated confusion or lack of understanding. This suggests that young people clearly value healthy rivers and wetland habitats.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the rivers, lakes and wetlands priority?

(n-124)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	42	33.9%
I will do this	17	13.7%
I would do it if I had the space or land	14	11.3%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	36	29.0%
I do not want to do this	2	1.6%
I do not know how I would do this	6	4.8%
Not applicable	7	5.7%

The data suggests a strong willingness to support the rivers, lakes, and wetlands priority, with 33.9% (42) indicating they already take action, showing a strong base of active engagement and a further 13.7% (17) said they will do this, suggesting potential for growth in participation.

However, nearly 29% (36) are open to participating but need more information selecting ‘I might do this if I knew more about how I could help’. 11.3% (14) would

support the priority if they had the space or land, highlighting a practical barrier for some. Only 1.6% (2) expressed that they do not want to participate, and 4.8% (6) said they don't know how, showing very low resistance but some uncertainty.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	46.2%	21.7%	36.4%	54.2%	34.9%	20.0%
I will do this	46.2%	10.1%	18.2%	8.3%	14.5%	16.7%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	15.9%	0.0%	12.5%	15.7%	3.3%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	7.7%	39.1%	36.4%	8.3%	27.7%	43.3%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	4.2%	1.2%	3.3%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	10.0%
Not applicable	0.0%	2.9%	9.1%	12.5%	3.6%	3.3%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-13); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-69); 3 - Public bodies (n-11); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-24); 5 – Live in DC (n-83); 6 – Live in BCP (n-30)

As noted in the previous priorities, farmers, foresters, landowners, and land managers (46.2%) are already actively involved, with the nature and environment sector showing the highest level of current engagement (54.2%). Communities and individuals, along with public bodies, also demonstrate interest, but a lack of knowledge emerges as a key barrier, reflected in 39.1% and 36.4% respectively selecting 'I might do this if I knew more.' Additionally, space constraints are acknowledged by 15.9% of communities and individuals and 12.5% of the nature and environment sector. The barrier of limited understanding is further reinforced by 8.7% of communities and individuals stating, 'I do not know how I would do this.'

Residents in DC show higher levels of current engagement, with 34.9% stating 'I already do this,' compared to 20% in BCP. In contrast, BCP residents express greater interest in participating if they had more knowledge, with 43.3% selecting 'I might do this if I knew more,' versus 27.7% in DC. Space constraints are slightly

more of a concern in DC (15.7%) than in BCP (3.3%), while uncertainty about how to get involved is more prevalent in BCP (10.0%) than DC (2.4%).

If you have any comments about the rivers, lakes and wetlands priority, let us know here.

55 responses were received for this question, which have been coded and themed. Some of the main themes discussed were:

- general comments on the challenges with water quality, pollution and water companies
- comments looking at land use and elements linked to that, such as tree/hedge planting
- comments on specific geographical areas
- flooding and flood plains

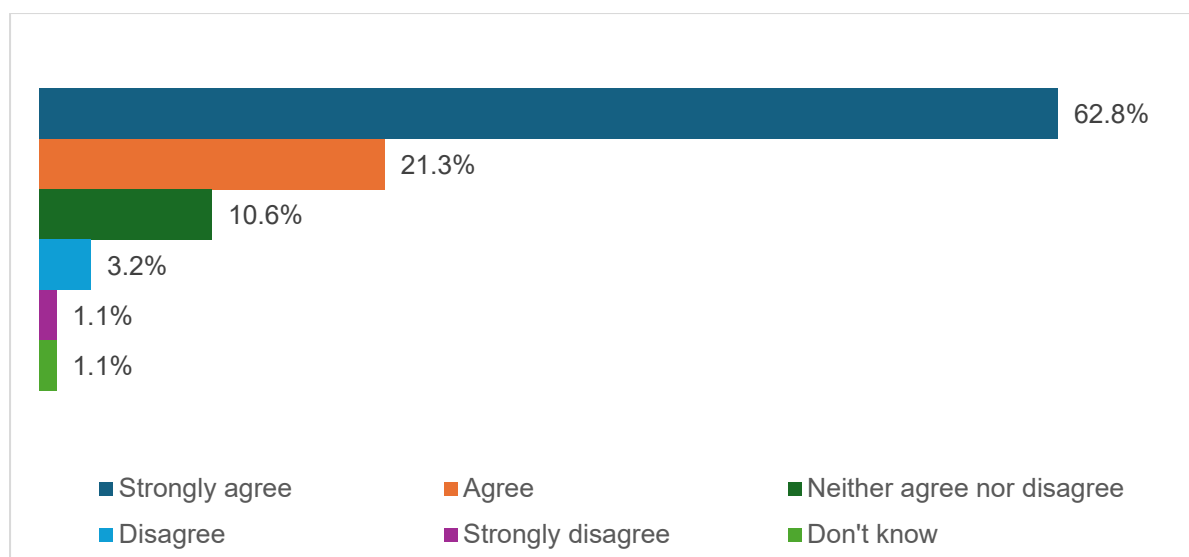
Comment/theme	Total
Water quality / Challenges re pollution from water companies / land owners / use of pesticides etc	18
Other	13
Land use comments - tree/hedge planting	12
Comment on specific geographical area	11
Flooding / flood plains	9
Omissions in / improvements for the strategy	8
Organisations mentioned in narrative	7
Mention of particular species / animal	6
Negative comments	3
Comments re map issues	3
Positive comments	2

Priority 5 - Coastal

The coastal strip is enhanced and restored to safeguard key habitats that protect rare and vulnerable species and space is created for coastal retreat as habitat is lost to erosion and sea level rise.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-94)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	59	62.8%
Agree	20	21.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	10	10.6%
Disagree	3	3.2%
Strongly disagree	1	1.1%
Don't know	1	1.1%

Overall, there was a high level of agreement with the Coastal priority, with 84.1% (79) showing support. Of these, 62.8% (59) strongly agreed, indicating a strong sense of importance placed on coastal issues. A smaller proportion, 10.6% (10), neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting some uncertainty or ambivalence. Only 4.3% (4) disagreed, and 1.1% (1) selected “don’t know,” showing that opposition or confusion was minimal. These results suggest that the Coastal priority is well understood and largely supported by respondents, with a clear majority recognising its value.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	100.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	88.3%	5.0%
Public bodies	50.0%	12.5%
Nature and environment sector	81.3%	0.0%
Live in DC	84.6%	5.8%
Live in BCP	83.9%	3.2%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-4); Communities and individuals (n-60); Public bodies (n-8); Nature and environment sector (n-16); Live in DC (n-52); Live in BCP (n-31)

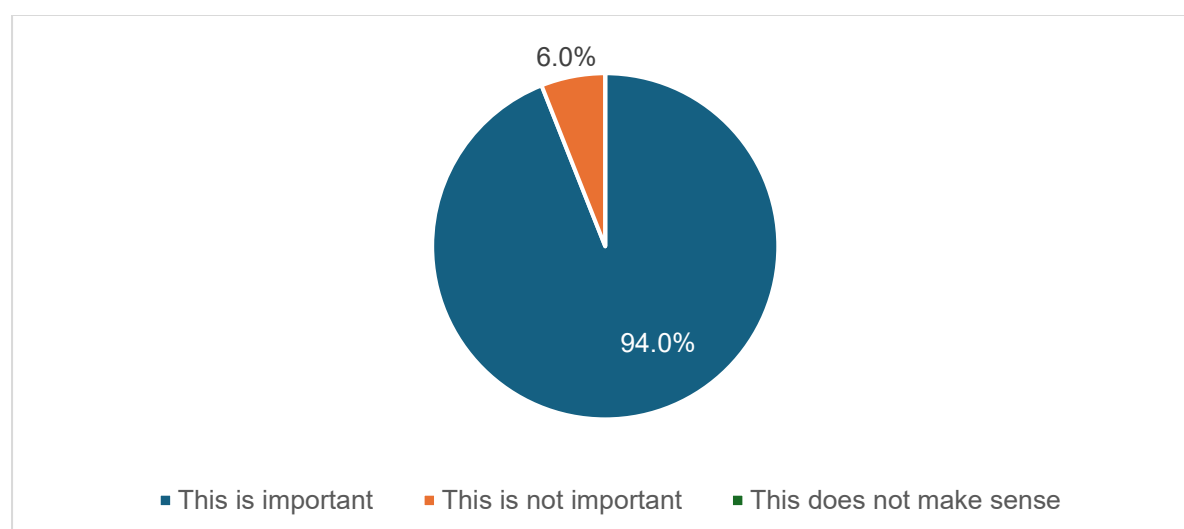
The majority of respondents showed a strong level of agreement with the priority, with 100% of farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers and 81.3% of those in the nature and environment sector expressing support, and no disagreement recorded in either group. Communities and individuals also showed high agreement at 88.3%, with a small proportion (5%) disagreeing.

Public bodies showed the lowest level of overall agreement at 50%, with 12.5% expressing disagreement, suggesting a more cautious or mixed view. Geographically, support was strong among those living in the DC area (84.6%) and BCP area (83.9%), with relatively low levels of disagreement (5.8% and 3.2% respectively).

Youth survey response

Q. “Take care of our beaches, cliffs and rocks along the coast”

(n-50)

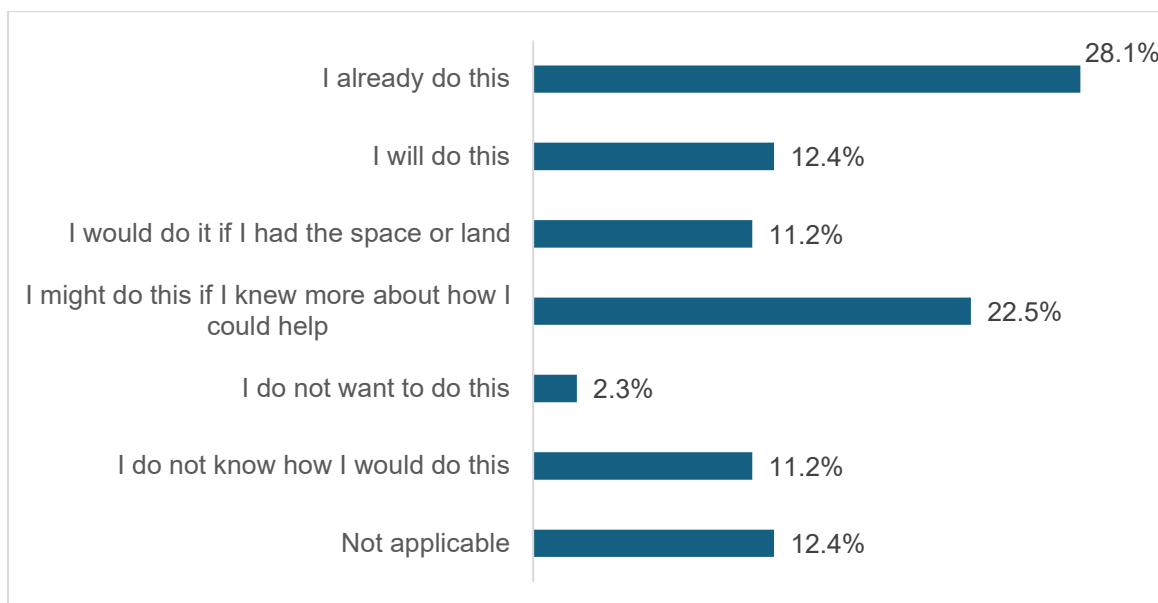


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	47	94.0%
This is not important	3	6.0%
This does not make sense	0	0.0%

Youth survey responses show very strong support for the coastal priority to “take care of our beaches, cliffs and rocks along the coast.” 94% (47) said this is important, while only 6% (3) felt it was not. No respondents showing confusion or lack of understanding. This suggests that young people clearly recognise the value of protecting coastal environments and see it as a meaningful and relevant priority.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the coastal priority?

(n-89)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	25	28.1%
I will do this	11	12.4%
I would do it if I had the space or land	10	11.2%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	20	22.5%
I do not want to do this	2	2.3%
I do not know how I would do this	10	11.2%
Not applicable	11	12.4%

Responses for this priority show a generally positive attitude, with 28.1% (25) already involved in coastal-related activities. 22.5% (20) said they might do this if they knew more, suggesting that increased awareness could encourage further engagement. 12.4% (11) responded that they 'will do this', showing potential for increased participation. 11.2% (10) said they would get involved 'if they had the space or land', highlighting a practical barrier for some and another 11.2% (10) said they 'do not know how I would do this' indicating a potential need for clearer guidance. Lastly, 2.3% (2) said they 'do not want to do this', indicating very low resistance to the priority.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	75.0%	19.3%	37.5%	33.3%	30.6%	13.8%

I will do this	25.0%	15.8%	0.0%	6.7%	8.2%	24.1%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	10.5%	25.0%	13.3%	18.4%	3.5%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	29.8%	12.5%	13.3%	22.5%	31.0%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	14.0%	0.0%	13.3%	10.2%	13.8%
Not applicable	0.0%	7.0%	25.0%	20.0%	10.2%	6.9%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-4); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-57); 3 - Public bodies (n-8); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-15); 5 – Live in DC (n-49); 6 – Live in BCP (n-29)

It is important to note some group sizes have a small size.

Farmers, foresters, landowners, and land managers show strong current engagement, with 75% stating 'I already do this'. Communities and individuals express high interest in learning more, with 29.8% selecting 'I might do this if I knew more about how I could help' and 10.5% citing space constraints. Public bodies show moderate engagement, with 37.5% already involved and 25% indicating the activity is not applicable.

Residents in DC demonstrate higher current engagement (30.6% 'I already do this') compared to BCP residents (13.8%). In contrast, BCP residents are more open to future involvement if better informed, with 31% selecting 'I might do this if I knew more,' versus 22.5% in DC. Space constraints are a more noticeable issue in DC (18.4%) than in BCP (3.5%), while uncertainty about how to participate is more common in BCP (13.8%) than DC (10.2%).

Q. If you have any comments about the coastal priority, let us know here.

There were 42 responses to this question which have been coded and themed. Some of the main topics were:

- as with other priorities, comments relating to a specific geography
- the strategy/priority omitting important content, such as geology in this case
- protection of wildlife and marine life

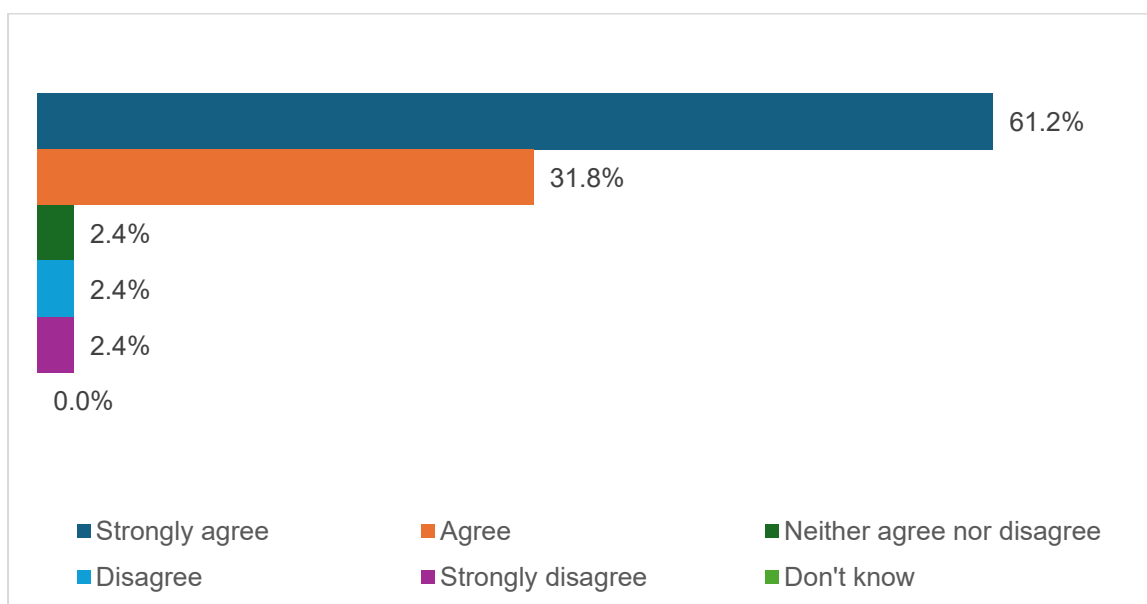
Comment/theme	Total
Specific geographic area mentioned	12
Omissions in the strategy e.g. geology	10
Protection of wildlife / marine life	9
Sea Defences / harbours / coastal erosion	8
Sewage / water pollution / water quality / silt	8
Other	8
More education needed	5
Specific species / animals mentioned in commentary	5
Negative - survey	4
Technical and specialist comments	4
Comments re tourism	4
Plastic / waste on beaches e.g. Rubbish/recycling	4
Comments re fishing industry	3
Specific organisation mentioned	3

Priority 6 – Urban

Our towns and villages have increased nature-rich spaces, so wildlife can travel between buildings, roads, parks, gardens and the wider countryside.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n=85)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	52	61.2%

Agree	27	31.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.4%
Disagree	2	2.4%
Strongly disagree	2	2.4%
Don't know	0	0.0%

The majority showed a strong level of support for the priority, with 92.9% (79) expressing overall agreement, and 61.2% (52) of those strongly agreeing. The remaining responses were split, with 2.4% (2) neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 2.4% disagreeing and a further 2.4% (2) strongly disagreeing. Overall, there was a strong consensus among the respondents.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	80.0%	20.0%
Communities and Individuals	95.7%	2.1%
Public bodies	80.0%	10.0%
Nature and environment sector	100.0%	0.0%
Live in DC	91.2%	7.0%
Live in BCP	95.2%	0.0%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-5); Communities and individuals (n-47); Public bodies (n-10); Nature and environment sector (n-16); Live in DC (n-57); Live in BCP (n-21)

There is a broad level of high agreement between the different respondent types. 100% of those in the nature and environment sector agreed with the priority, showing strong support from environmental fields.

This high level of overall agreement was present in communities and individuals too. 95.7% (45) of communities and individuals showed overall agreement, alongside 95.2% (20) and 91.2% (52) from residents in BCP and DC respectively.

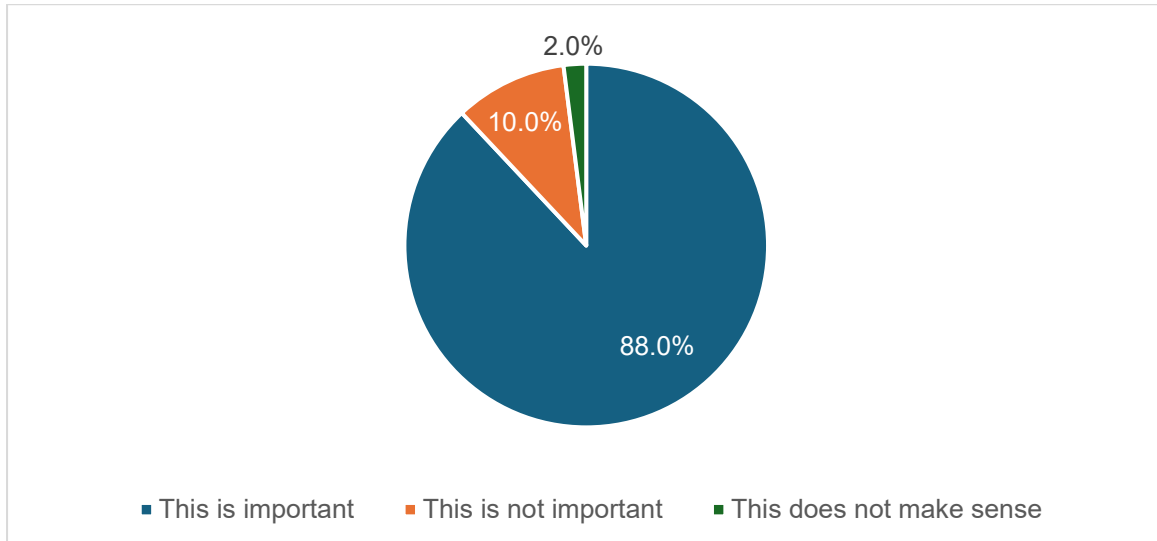
The high level of broad agreement from residents in BCP is particularly important as they are more likely to be living in urban areas and the audience for this priority.

Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers, coupled with public bodies, still had high levels of agreement at 80% each, but there was some general disagreement between these 2 groups.

Youth survey response

Q. “Create more wildlife-friendly spaces in our parks, gardens, along roads and on buildings”

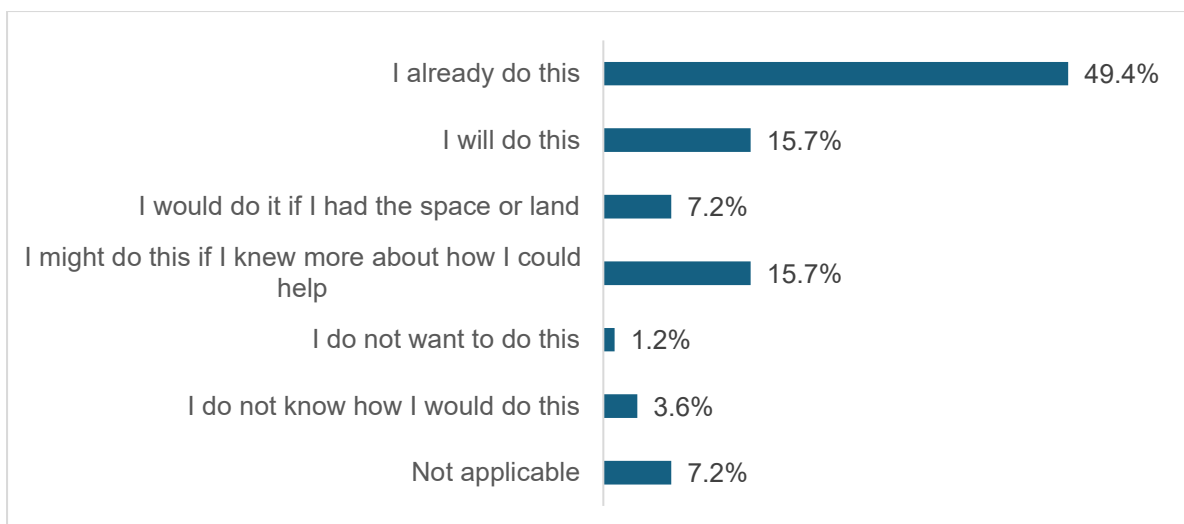
(n-50)



The statement “Create more wildlife-friendly spaces in our parks, gardens, along roads and on building’ was once again important for the young people that responded to the survey. 88% (44) stated so, showing a strong consensus. 10% (5) said that it was not, and 2% (1) thought it did not make sense. The urban priority is clearly of value to the young people that participated.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the urban priority?

(n-83)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	41	49.4%
I will do this	13	15.7%
I would do it if I had the space or land	6	7.2%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	13	15.7%
I do not want to do this	1	1.2%
I do not know how I would do this	3	3.6%
Not applicable	6	7.2%

The results highlight good levels of current participation, with potential for growth with some barriers removed. 49.4% (41) already take part in urban-based activities and a further 15.7% (13) will do so having completed the survey.

As with other priorities, some of the same barriers are present. 15.7% (13) might support this if they knew more about how they could help, and 7.2% (6) would do if they had the space or land. So, more general information and guidance would be helpful and allow more participation, and space issues continue to act as a current limitation.

For 7.2% (6) this question was not applicable, and lastly, 1.2% (1) did not want to take part.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	33.3%	52.2%	40.0%	57.1%	57.1%	33.3%

I will do this	33.3%	13.0%	20.0%	14.3%	12.5%	28.6%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	6.5%	10.0%	7.1%	7.1%	9.5%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	23.9%	10.0%	7.1%	12.5%	28.6%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	16.7%	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%
Not applicable	16.7%	0.0%	10.0%	14.3%	3.6%	0.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-6); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-46); 3 - Public bodies (n-10); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-14); 5 – Live in DC (n-56); 6 – Live in BCP (n-21)

Certain groups had higher levels of current participation than the overall data, showing that it appears to be an accessible priority for communities and individuals, in addition to more specialist groups.

57.1% of respondents in the nature and environment sector already participate in activities, with 14.3% stating they will do so, potentially showing some potential for growth.

This sentiment is similar across the communities and individual respondents too. 52.2% already commit to activities and 13% suggested they will do moving forwards.

Interestingly, 57.1% of DC residents are currently involved in activities, compared to 33.3% of respondents in BCP. Due to the priority being focused on urban-based projects, there is an expectation this would be the other way round. However, one potential reason could have been limitations or barriers to participation. 28.6% of BCP respondents said they will partake in activities moving forwards, and a further 28.6% might do more if they knew more about how they could.

Public bodies showed moderate levels of participation with 40% currently involved in projects, with 20% stating they will take part in activities in the future.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers have lower levels of participation for this urban based priority at 33.3%, though this is based on a very small sample size. 33.3% also said they will do so in the future.

Q. If you have any comments about the urban priority, let us know here.

There were 50 responses to this question which have been coded and themed.
Some of the main topics were:

- encouraging and educating communities both to get involved but also on environmentally friendly practices
- protecting and maintaining green spaces
- the Council having conflicting priorities
- urban tree planting
- wildlife friendly features

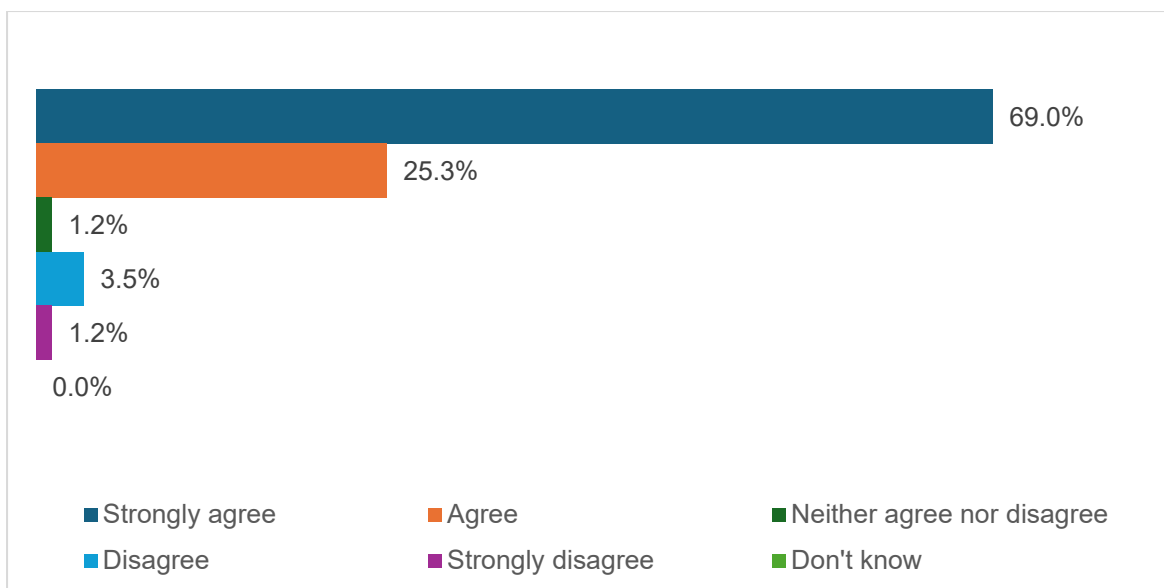
Theme	Number of times mentioned
Encourage and educate communities to get involved	13
Protecting/maintaining green spaces	12
Encourage/educate residents on environmentally friendly practices	7
Conflicting Council priorities	7
Urban tree planting	7
Wildlife friendly features	6
Other	6
Encourage animals into urban green spaces	5
Rewilding	4
Reduce light pollution	4
Mental health and nature	3
Car pollution	3
Use of pesticides	3
Barriers for community groups to work on greenspaces to develop	2
Climate friendly energy	2
Sustainability action plans	2
New developments working alongside nature recovery	2

Priority 7 – Farming

Sustainable farming practices are widely adopted to produce good quality food in harmony with nature.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-87)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	60	69.0%
Agree	22	25.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.2%
Disagree	3	3.5%
Strongly disagree	1	1.2%
Don't know	0	0.0%

The data is unanimous for the farming priority, with an overall agreement of 94.3% (82). Of that figure, 69% (60) strongly agreed too, further underlining the level of support.

3.5% (3) disagreed and 1.2% (1) strongly disagreed. 1.2% (1) also remained neutral.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	94.1%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	97.4%	2.6%
Public bodies	80.0%	20.0%
Nature and environment sector	100.0%	0.0%
Live in DC	93.1%	5.6%
Live in BCP	100.0%	0.0%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-17); Communities and individuals (n-39); Public bodies (n-10); Nature and environment sector (n-14); Live in DC (n-72); Live in BCP (n-8)

Across the 6 respondent types, there was again a very strong level of overall agreement for the priority. This will be an especially important priority for farmers and

landowners and notably, in this case, is that farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers agreed at a rate of 94.1%, with no disagreement.

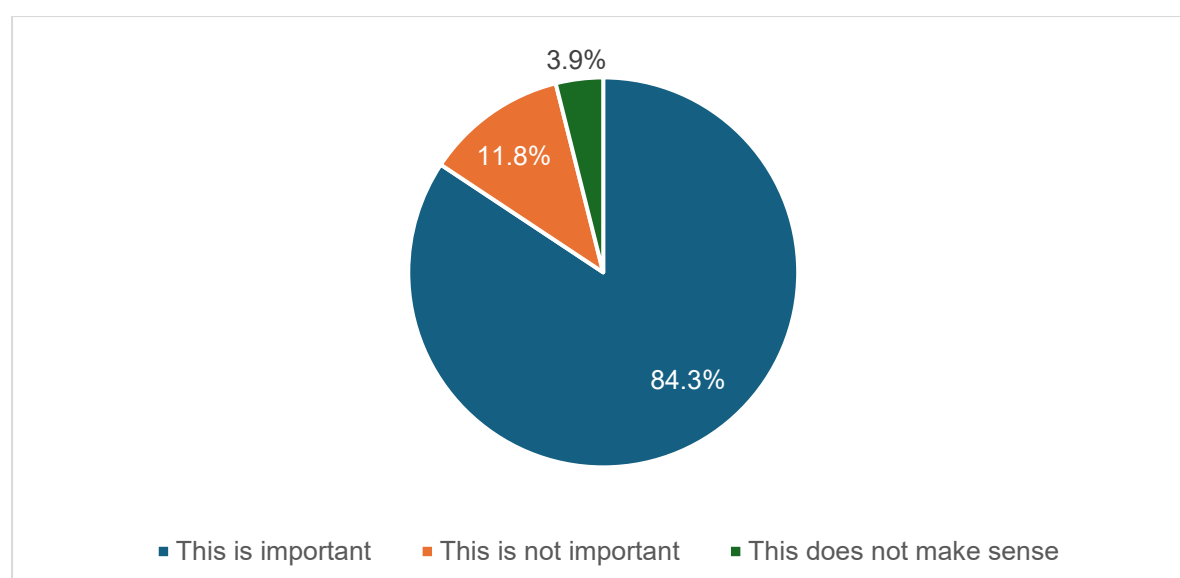
Continuing the trend, both respondents in the nature and environment sector and those in BCP had an agreement rate of 100%. Communities and individuals also had a unanimous agreement rate of 97.4%.

Public bodies – though with a small sample size – had the lowest overall agreement at 80%, with 20% disagreeing.

Youth survey response

Q. “Take care of nature as we take the things we need from it, like food and wood”

(n-51)

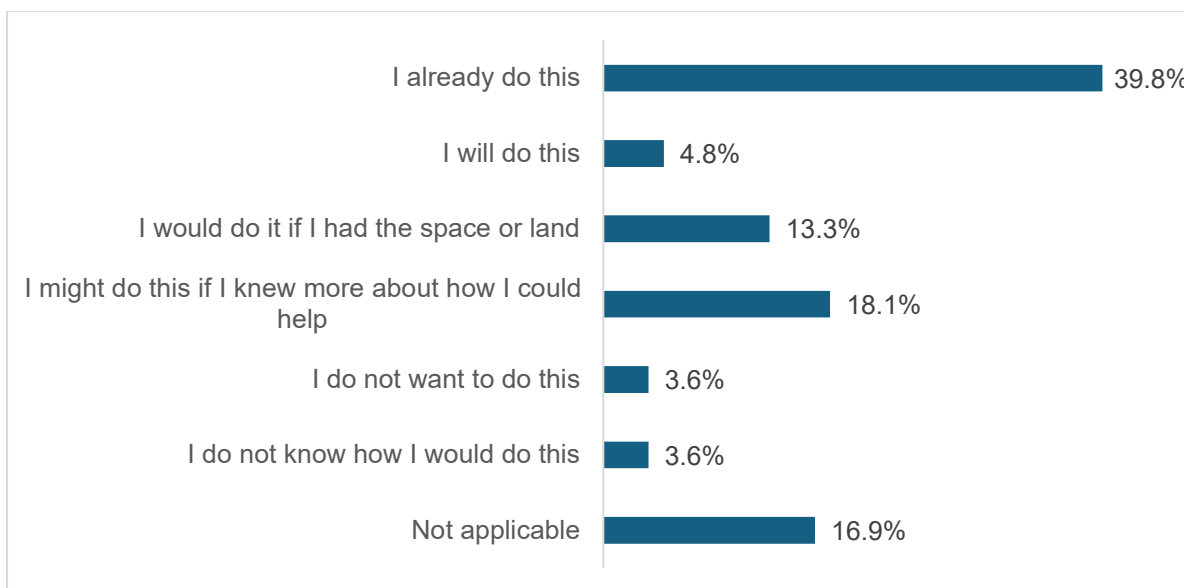


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	43	84.3%
This is not important	6	11.8%
This does not make sense	2	3.9%

Although framed differently, a high proportion of the youth respondents indicated the statement for farming was important. 84.3% (43) answered so, which is a clear majority. 11.8% (6) said it was not important and 3.9% (2) thought it did not make sense.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the farming priority?

(n-83)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	33	39.8%
I will do this	4	4.8%
I would do it if I had the space or land	11	13.3%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	15	18.1%
I do not want to do this	3	3.6%
I do not know how I would do this	3	3.6%
Not applicable	14	16.9%

Overall, there is a moderate level of current action with 39.8% (33) already participating in farming-based activities. Potential participation levels could be lower compared to other priorities, however.

18.1% (15) might do more if they knew how to support, and 13.3% (11) have physical limitations in terms of space or land. Just 4.8% (4) said they will do this in the future.

For 16.9% (14) of respondents the activities were not applicable and 3.6% either did not know how they would support, or did not want to.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	88.2%	19.4%	20.0%	35.7%	38.2%	12.5%
I will do this	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	7.1%	2.9%	25.0%

I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	19.4%	10.0%	21.4%	14.7%	12.5%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	25.0%	30.0%	14.3%	19.1%	25.0%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	5.6%	10.0%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	5.9%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Not applicable	5.9%	16.7%	30.0%	21.4%	16.2%	25.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-17); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-36); 3 - Public bodies (n-10); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-14); 5 – Live in DC (n-68); 6 – Live in BCP (n-8)

Unsurprisingly, farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers almost all already do farming activities, with 88.2% responding so.

Across the other groups, respondents in the DC area (38.2%) currently partake in activities, with nature and environment sector specialists also doing so at a similar level (35.7%).

Communities and individuals (19.4%) – including those in BCP (12.5%) – and public bodies (20%) currently have fewer respondents involved in farming actions, which could be linked to land being inaccessible and privately managed.

On the other hand, there could be opportunities for future participation across these groups. Public bodies (30%), communities and individuals (25%), nature and environment sector groups (14.3%), DC residents (19.1%) and BCP residents (25%) might do more if they knew more about how they could help.

Q. If you have any comments about the farming priority, let us know here.

There were 50 responses to this question which have been coded and themed. Some of the main topics were:

- farming practices, both generally and specifically (like intensive farming)
- positive comments showing support for farmers
- commenting on food production and farmers markets (including a separate theme on organic farming and production)

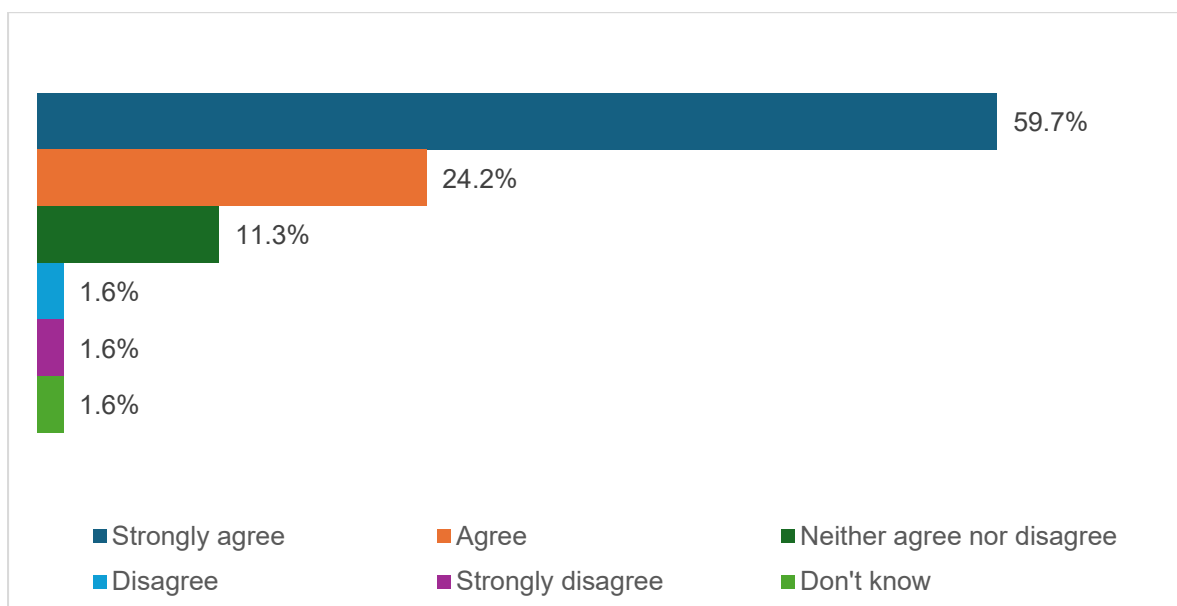
Theme/comment	Total
Farming practices - general comments	15
Farming practices - very specific / technical e.g. intensive farming	14
Positive - Support for farmers and farming	10
Food production / farmers markets	9
Organisations mentioned in narrative	9
Hedgerows	7
Technical and specialist comments	5
Organic farming and production	5
Agricultural pollution - pesticides etc	5
Other	4
Rewilding	3
Negative - general	2
Mention of specific species / animal	2
Comment on specific geographical area	2
Grazing	1

Priority 8 – Natural processes

Natural process-led conservation approaches are used more widely to support functioning ecosystems and shape an ever-changing landscape.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n=62)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	37	59.7%
Agree	15	24.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	11.3%
Disagree	1	1.6%
Strongly disagree	1	1.6%
Don't know	1	1.6%

The Natural Processes priority had the fewest number of responses overall compared to the others, but that still translated to a high level of total agreement from respondents. 83.9% (52) broadly agreed, with 59.7% (37) of that total strongly agreeing, highlighting a definitive majority.

A further 11.3% (7) responded neutrally, and 1.6% (1) disagreeing, strongly disagreeing and not knowing respectively.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	80.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	84.6%	3.9%
Public bodies	87.5%	0.0%
Nature and environment sector	85.7%	7.1%
Live in DC	84.4%	2.2%
Live in BCP	75.0%	12.5%

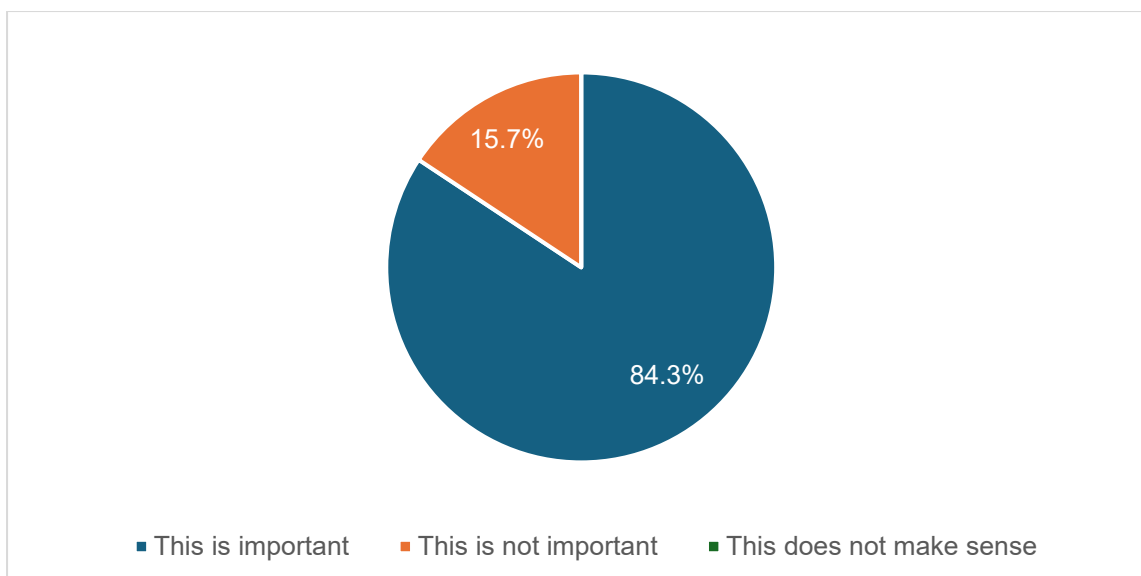
Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-10); Communities and individuals (n-26); Public bodies (n-8); Nature and environment sector (n-14); Live in DC (n-45); Live in BCP (n-8)

Across the 6 different respondent types, they are all generally in alignment with the overall data. One potential noticeable difference, which should be considered with caution due to a very small sample size, is that BCP respondents had lower levels of agreement (75%). In turn, it resulted in a higher level of overall disagreement (12.5%) when compared to the other groups and overall, too.

Youth survey response

Q. “In some places, leave nature to take care of itself. For example, let wildflowers grow and let rivers flow in a wiggly path across our land”

(n-51)



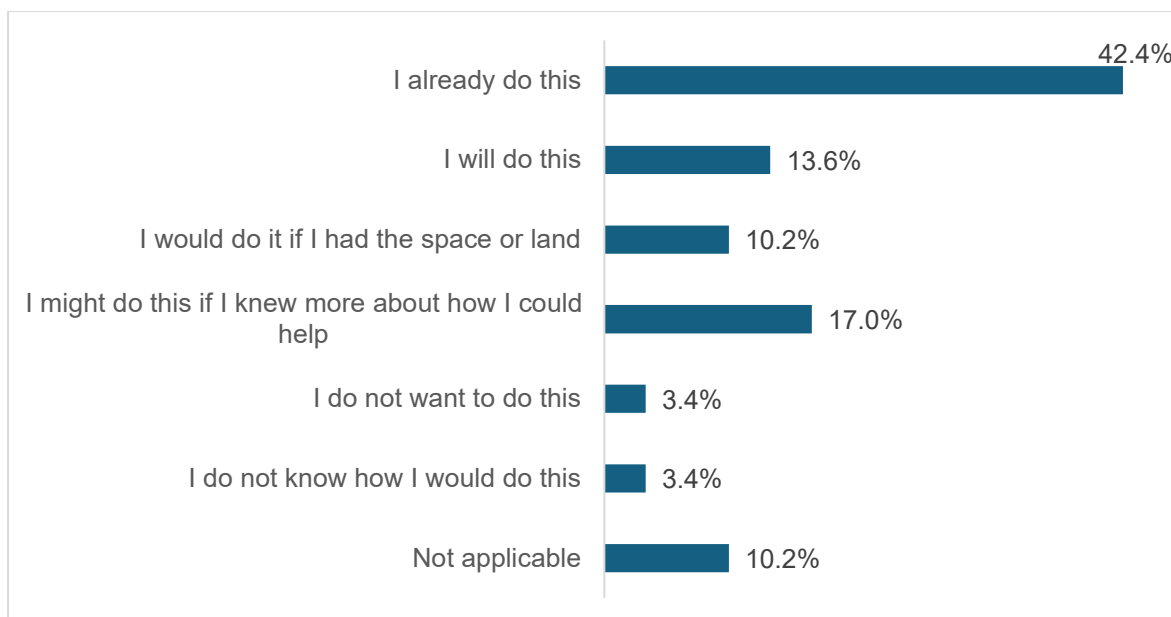
Option	Total	Percent
This is important	43	84.3%
This is not important	8	15.7%
This does not make sense	0	0.0%

Of the 51 responses from the youth survey, 84.3% (43) thought that more natural processes were important for nature recovery. This indicates that the priority is seen as valuable amongst younger people in Dorset.

The remaining 15.7% (8) thought that it was not important.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the natural processes priority?

(n=59)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	25	42.4%
I will do this	8	13.6%
I would do it if I had the space or land	6	10.2%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	10	17.0%
I do not want to do this	2	3.4%
I do not know how I would do this	2	3.4%
Not applicable	6	10.2%

The natural processes priority has moderate levels of current activity, with 42.4% (25) respondents already involved in activities. Participation could also grow in this area, with 13.6% (8) saying they will in the future, and a further 17% (10) stating they might do some if they knew more about how they could help. Like with the other priorities, there is an appetite for support, but potentially a gap in information being readily available to allow people to do so.

10.2% (6) had physical limitations but would do so without those barriers, and 3.4% (2) either did not want to take part in activities, or do not know how they would.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	50.0%	29.2%	50.0%	53.9%	40.5%	25.0%
I will do this	30.0%	16.7%	0.0%	7.7%	14.3%	12.5%
I would do it if I had the	0.0%	12.5%	25.0%	7.7%	11.9%	12.5%

space or land						
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	20.0%	8.3%	25.0%	15.4%	19.1%	12.5%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	7.7%	2.4%	12.5%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	12.5%
Not applicable	0.0%	20.8%	0.0%	7.7%	9.5%	12.5%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-10); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-24); 3 - Public bodies (n-8); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-13); 5 – Live in DC (n-42); 6 – Live in BCP (n-8)

Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (50%), public bodies (50%), and those in the nature and environment sector (53.9%) already substantially take part in natural process activities. Interestingly, though, is that 30.0% of the farmers and land management group said they would partake in activities in the future, with the remaining 20% saying they might do more if they knew how to. This indicates a strong willingness from this group to further their participation.

The data indicates similar for public bodies too, with 25% currently restricted due to physical limitations, and a further 25% potentially doing more with more information available.

Once again, communities and individuals and residents of BCP have lower levels of current participation at 29.2% and 25% respectively.

Q. If you have any comments about the natural processes priority, let us know here.

21 responses were received for this question, which can be seen verbatim below.

I have created a pollinator friendly garden and formed a group with like minded people in my local community
I can't reconcile in my mind the concept and ambition of boundary-less 'dynamic habitats' requiring larger areas with the fixed boundaries of private land ownership and local government jurisdiction (e.g. Dorset into Devon, Somerset, Hampshire). Furthermore, and in relation to private land ownership, when private land is developed by private land developers (this is the dominant model), both have to adhere to planning rules but planning rules, by definition almost, are biased to building things for humans. Planning rules increasingly have rules for biodiversity

but, presumably particularly in urban developments, developers have the option of biodiversity credits which allows them to compensate for biodiversity impacts, with biodiversity gain credits in other areas. So the planning system feels like a major potentially disruptive mechanism that can cut right across the ambition of encouraging dynamic habitats over large areas, especially when they span urban, semi-urban and rural as they would do in Weymouth for example.

there seems to be a conflict of interest between the DC Recovery Strategy, the Bridport Town Council and the Environment Agency. Asker Meadows Local Nature Reserve for example is a prime location for all the activities that fall under this section, including formation of wetlands and scrapes, enhancing raparian edges for Water Voles, planting winter bird food crops etc but the EA insist on moving water as fast as possible, destroying banks in the process and Bridport Town Council are too worried about upsetting dog walkers to undertake anything constrictive to enhance wildlife.

This priority seems less clearly defined or described than others, although this is potentially the point!

promote natural process led conservation as a member of friends of radipole park and gardens

One of the geology groups I'm in is struggling to conserve the regionally important geological sites inland in Dorset. We are all retired and need younger, fitter volunteers to help. If there is more joined up thinking in voluntary organisations this could be more easily achieved

More beavers would be the best way to improve the natural processes of rivers and wetlands.

Ensuring that farmers and landowners leave at least 20 meters either side of rivers to scrub up as wild places for nature.

Restore oyster, muscles and other shellfish beds on a masive scale both inside and outside Poole Harbour. Restore sea grass and natural creatures to Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch bays.

The kaleidoscope model is laudable. But on the scale it can work in Dorset it might as well be called the Patchwork model.

One measure by which you can compare a 150 acres of traditional farmland with 150 acres of kaleidoscope land would be the ratio between the amount of CO2 captured and the amount of food produced. Another measure would be: which is more aethetically pleasing? Value could be judged on how much mental health benefits are provided. Arguments can be made using other measures.

I think a Permaculture approach might help. This can be applied at all scales but is particularly good at the smaller scales that occur in Dorset. The large estates can club together and get HMG funding.

It mentions wet woodland in the overview of the priority, but I cannot find wet woodlands mentioned in what the different audiences could do. Is there any advice we can point the audience to for wet woodland creation? e.g. planting trees which favour wet conditions such as alder, willow and aspen in wetter areas.

Natural processes often lead to areas which some find "untidy and neglected". Explaining to the public may be difficult but essential.

This priority is a prime candidate to help expand and improve on how the LNRS incorporates geodiversity. Natural processes will largely be driven and dictated by the underlying geodiversity of a given area, so mapping geodiversity characteristics and features is crucial to understanding what kind of natural processes will be active in a given area. Again, climate change is a key factor here too. This could greatly help landowners and farmers in particular know what the opportunities are on the land that they manage. For example, recreating wet areas based on drainage could have an affect on land stability, which itself could create new complex habitat types in the event of mass movement (many inland valley slopes in Dorset include relic landslides that may reactivate or become more mobile under the right conditions). In the case where man made rock exposures exist, allowing them to degrade naturally over time rather than be buried as part of restoration would also help retain varied habitats.

Maybe an email update from the council on this - in your mailouts - about why this is important what you are doing. I would read it and appreciate it.

There isn't enough detail in the description about what this policy will entail in practice. To what extent will your end goal of 'restoring natural processes' overrule other stakeholders' land use plans, who may have legitimate beliefs and aims which are different from your own? You are in effect seeking to make yourself the sole arbiter of what landscape changes are acceptable and what means are to be used to achieve it, with a single objective of 'restoring natural processes' as opposed to a more balanced model which takes into account other considerations.

Ownership and management responsibilities need to be clear and agreed

DCP is working with partners and stakeholders to restore natural processes along rivers. The work includes re-connecting rivers to floodplains, ditch blocking, stage 0 restoration, installing large woody debris, re-introduction of beavers and removing artificial barriers etc.

I'd like to see (more of) the rotation of pigs, cattle & horses into appropriate areas to encourage wildlife. Also the protection for them from people's aggressive dogs.

The Dorset National Landscape team:

- facilitates the Purbeck Heaths NNR partnership and supports its joint intent to restore ecosystem function, led by natural processes
- leads the Brit catchment Natural Flood Management initiative
- supports a wide range of NFM measures

A concern is that recognising natural processes as a priority is that it could compromise other priorities i.e. A problem on many calcareous grassland areas is the encroachment of scrub and secondary woodland from successional processes to the detriment of the grassland which is often far more valuable. An ongoing theme through many of the priorities is the need to recognise areas where other priorities may not be appropriate or desired - I don't really get this from the mapping either (but see late comments)

[redacted] working carefully with the scrub on the hill where the ancient monument of smacam down is. clearing the scrub that is on the settlement but allowing it to flourish in certain areas around the edge of the fields. but making sure there is still access to the trees themselves for the animals (sheep and horses) to get shelter and shade

Nature having the space to follow natural processes, with all the ecological niches this provides is important. In this section we noted the following points.

- Allow trees and woodlands to establish through natural colonisation where seed sources are present or through succession, rather than planting

- Ensure the grazing pressures of endemic deer and introduced livestock are balanced, delivering the ecological improvement of woodland, scrub and open habitats

To achieve this, there is an element of wildlife management needed. Deer, wild boar and grey squirrel populations are all thought to be increasing from the best available data. A range of non-lethal and lethal interventions are required to achieve the desired ecological balance for native deer and boar and to minimise the impacts of the non-native deer species and grey squirrel.

The shooting community are a critical part of both the lethal and non-lethal measures. Much of this is unpaid or costs the person shooting to lease shooting rights. Moreover, they assist farmers in delivering deer and grey squirrel management funded under countryside stewardship.

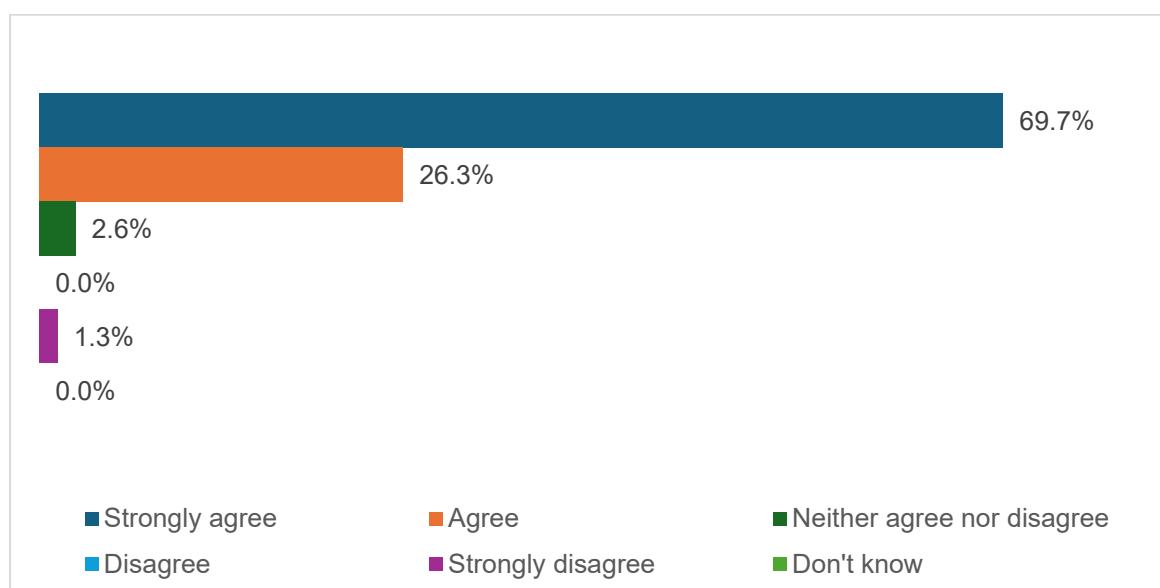
It should be noted that such activities may often carry an opportunity cost of other ecosystem services such as food provision. So the selection and design of sites needs to consider such an important trade-off.

Priority 9 – Nature-based solutions

Nature-based solutions are used as the first choice to address wider environmental issues, such as flooding, climate change and pollution.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-76)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	53	69.7%

Agree	20	26.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.6%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	1.3%
Don't know	0	0.0%

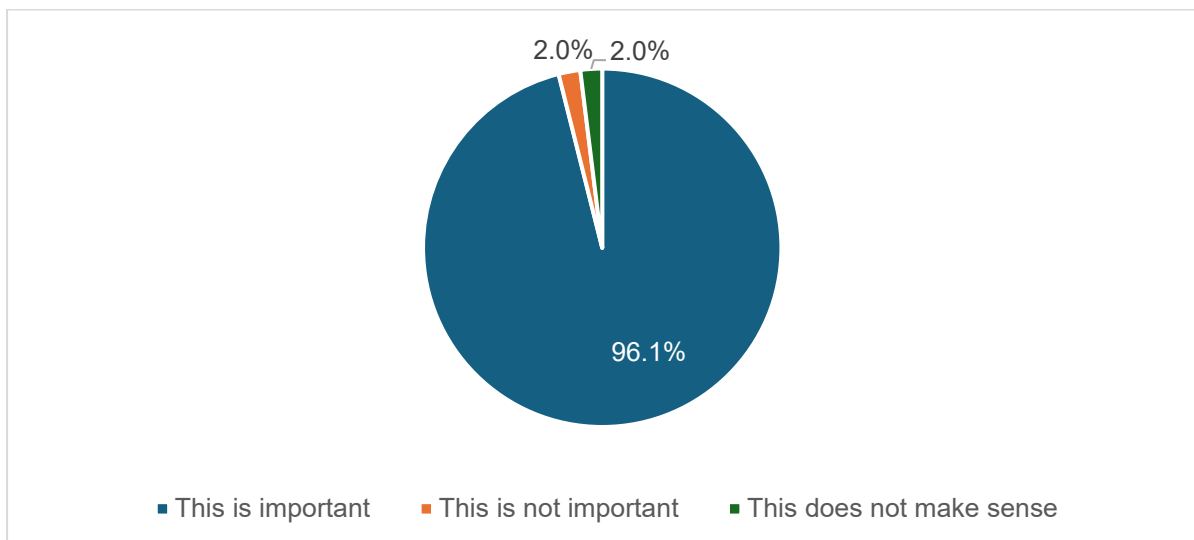
As evidenced by the data, the nature-based solutions priority has a unanimous level of overall agreement. 96% (73) agreed, with a high proportion of that figure (69.7%) strong agreeing.

2.6% (2) were neutral in their response and 1.3% (1) strongly disagreed. This indicates a majority support for nature-based solutions.

Youth survey response

Q. “Use nature to help people. For example, plant trees to help clean our air and fight climate change”

(n-51)



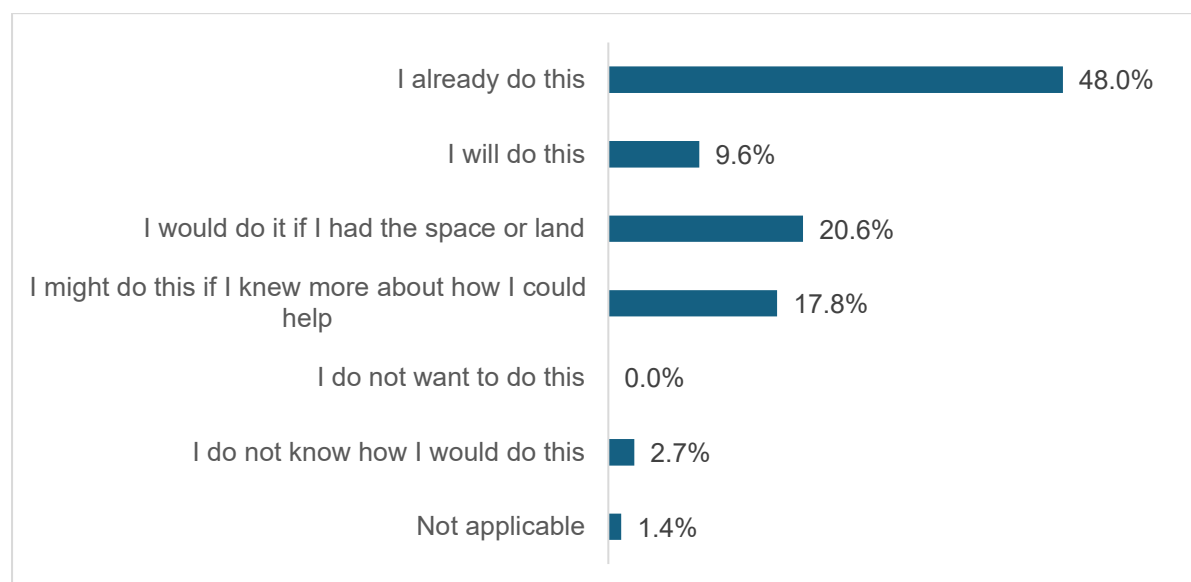
Option	Total	Percent
This is important	49	96.1%
This is not important	1	2.0%
This does not make sense	1	2.0%

The youth response for this priority almost exactly mirrors that of the main survey. 96.1% (49) thought the above statement is important, highlighting this as significant to the young people that took part.

The remaining 4% (2) was divided equally between this is not important (2%) and this does not make sense (2%).

Q. Would you do any activities to support the nature-based solutions priority?

(n-73)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	35	48.0%
I will do this	7	9.6%
I would do it if I had the space or land	15	20.6%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	13	17.8%
I do not want to do this	0	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	2	2.7%
Not applicable	1	1.4%

As with the natural processes priority, just under half (48%, equating to 35 respondents) are already committing to actions meeting a nature-based solution. There is scope to increase participation once again with 17.8% (13) saying they might do more if they knew about how they could help and a further 9.6% (7) stating they will do moving forwards.

What is slightly different is the increase in respondents having physical limitations acting as barriers. 20.6% (15) would do activities if they have the space or land.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Option						

I already do this	85.7%	45.0%	14.3%	35.7%	44.7%	38.9%
I will do this	14.3%	10.0%	28.6%	0.0%	8.5%	16.7%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	27.5%	28.6%	14.3%	21.3%	27.8%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	0.0%	12.5%	28.6%	42.9%	25.5%	5.6%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%
Not applicable	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-7); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-40); 3 - Public bodies (n-7); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-14); 5 – Live in DC (n-47); 6 – Live in BCP (n-18)

The responses across the 6 groups also have some noteworthy differences compared to the overall, but also other priorities, too. Communities and individuals (45%), people living in DC (44.7%) and respondents living in BCP (38.9%) all currently do activities related to the priority. This is higher than both public bodies (14.3%) and those in the nature and environment sector (35.7%).

The responses potentially indicate that this is a priority with activities that are accessible and realistic for individuals, resulting in an increase in participation, both now and in the future.

Interestingly, 42.9% of those in the nature and environment sector said they would do more if they knew more about how they could help. This highlights that there are gaps of information and support even for those involved in nature and with a vested interest.

Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers already overwhelmingly took part in activities, with 85.7% confirming so.

Q. If you have any comments about the nature-based solutions priority, let us know here.

32 comments were received for this question and then can be seen verbatim below.

Priority planting on flood plains rather than building on them.
Has the strategy included Dorset Wildlife Trust in the consultation? I haven't as yet seen any reference to the Trust. They do an enormous amount of work and own quite a lot of land. Their mission seems to me to equate exactly with the strategy.
An easy solution which seems to falter each year is mowing of verges and destruction of habitats when the council sends contractors out to knock back vegetation at the time of year species are thriving and young birds and mammals are needing the cover. Twice in the past fortnight I've seen verges being decimated by heavy duty equipment and it's May!!! This should not happen. Whatever people might moan that it looks untidy - we should have a firm policy of no mowing or hedge cutting between April to August. Let wild flowers flourish, grasses provide seed for wildlife. People need to go along with wilder vegetation in Spring and Summer. Being tidy is killing insects, butterflies, birds and mammals.
improving radipole lake, park and gardens can help bring money to the town even though beach has lost a water quality star
Build this more strongly into local planning and bylaws and policies.
Natural green spaces in the urban environment are imperative. These green spaces act as lungs within urban environments helping to control climate risks. If we lose these environments we will just accelerate towards climate catastrophe. They urban nature spaces need to be enhanced and protected.
Essential but must be taken seriously to bring about sustainable change
Nature-based solutions should not be used to provide nitrogen offset allowing damage to nature elsewhere.
I am 100% in favour of Nature Based Solutions. I disagree that they should be the 'first choice.' That means Every Time. And that is ideological. Or axiomatic. Each case should be judged on its merits. That would be a cop-out. [redacted] a volunteer in the Brit Valley Project. I approve of its aims. This includes nature based solutions to flooding and soil loss. And I am more than willing to join in constructing leaky dams. I am slightly concerned at the prices that contractors will charge for their services. I quite like the idea of beavers doing it for free. They will also be a reason for people to leave their TV screens to watch wildlife. But I have qualms about unintended consequences.

But in other places it might be an idea to build dams that can store water in the upper catchment to be used for irrigation in the summers to come, and to slow down the run-off in the expected storms of winters to come

Local authorities and infrastructure companies such as water companies and national grid, could look to put in place frameworks so that when they identify a problem, they look at whether nature based solutions could be used first to ensure that they are considered in the round against other grey and hard engineering solutions. This can be for traffic calming, rain water capture, noise alleviation and would improve neighbourhoods.

The use of natural stone as a resource has a much lower carbon footprint than importing or using synthetic materials like concrete. Should we be advocating for the use of local stone where possible, which supports jobs associated with quarrying in places like Purbeck and creates various opportunities such as bare rock habitats and connectivity to geodiversity features?

Nature needs to form the foundation of every single priority of the strategy

we are already planting trees in our garden, we have ripped up the previous owners all-concrete driveway, replaced it with block paving and a border with plants, shrubs and a tree. We are growing 2 trees in the back garden. We would do more

Kindly explain to the public how tarmacing over the verges to make cycle lanes which no-one asked for, which haven't been risk-assessed, which don't go anywhere and which increase the urban heat island effect is compatible with this policy.

Statutory Agencies and LPA support is essential for this. Nutrient mitigation, BNG, Landscape Recovery Schemes and other voluntary and statutory funding are currently the main facilitation mechanisms for this, which therefore needs full support.

Stop using fossil fuels. Stop supporting leaders who carry on carbonating. Stop pretending this is all manageable. For 50 plus years the King has fought for a habitable planet. I'm his age and have done the same thing. People are not listening. Crimes against humanity are being perpetrated by big corporations, complicit politics and media. If we don't wake up we're toast.

we support this, but more information and resources are required

The Partnerships champion using nature-based solutions within established constraints to improve hydrological and ecological connectivity within the catchments. This includes supporting partners to develop work which provides rivers capacity to behave naturally, improve water quality, habitats and support species biodiversity and reduce flood impacts on downstream communities.

I am outraged you have used Wessex water as an example as Wessex water is actively polluting our rivers and seas. DC should be holding polluters to account rather than facilitating the greenwashing of their polluting activities.

Again, this policy seems to be about what others are doing and not DC. What are DCs plans? What are its targets? What is the timetable?

Why isn't the expansion of seagrass beds in Poole Harbour listed in this section given their capacity to sequester carbon ? Rather than focus on seahorses in Studland look at the benefits in the harbour , seagrass can not only sequester carbon but improve water quality and maybe mitigate the impact of the eutrophication caused by the sewage and the nitrates etc from farming ? We are getting a bigger and bigger issue with algal mats , where else could seagrass be planted before it's too late and the algae takes over ? Maybe charge a seagrass levy on every mooring in the harbour and allocate areas for restoration ?

We have installed solar panels and have an electric car and to date, we generate more electricity than we use. We have installed a large tank to collect water from our waste water system which we use to water the garden. We do use mains water to supply the house.

The Dorset National Landscape team:

- leads the Brit Catchment NFM programme and a wider range of NFM interventions
- is developing the Dorset Nature Buddies network to facilitate green prescribing

Nature-based solutions should include our diets and the food system - as well as this obviously being linked to the farming priority. Changing our diets must be a major part of nature recovery. As well as health and wellbeing (it will save Dorset NHS £millions). Food choice is one of the few things in which the vast majority of Dorset people can engage. It is also a powerful, largely untapped, vehicle for re-connecting us with nature on a daily basis and for expanding the county's food system with the bonus of more jobs. A better food system is by definition a nature-based one.

as a medical herbalist I have always turned to nature for solutions and help

Please plant hedges to avoid flooding and stop farm run off. Trees are needed to reverse climate change. Also some non natural solutions are needed - sustainable energy production with solar and wind power. Please give permission for wind turbines.

1) Could there be a stand alone section on Hedges please - an essential part of nature recovery, and projects such as the Great Big Dorset Hedge plus free resources from the Woodland Trust could be highlighted.

<https://www.dorsetcan.org/hedge/>

(https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=PPC&utm_campaign=CTP24&utm_content=CTP2&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=17300783008&gclid=Cj0KCQjw4qHEBhCDARIsALYKFNO-EDyCEjOiEz6E8INPs0_JGd_E9cBwv4mi3Pk1kuui7UN61AlkWM4aAh1-EALw_wcB)

2) Rainwater harvesting systems for community and residential use should be a priority please, and a Council led initiative and funding support toward installing IBC systems into all relevant Council managed land (e.g. parks & nurseries, allotments, community food grow spaces), as well as for residential users (water butts) would be welcome.

It is unclear exactly what will be done to achieve this priority

Nature based solutions are essential to help tackle the nature and climate crises. The maintenance and funding of such schemes is vital if they are to continue to function as intended. This is particularly the case for urban sustainable drainage schemes, where long term ownership for their management needs to be agreed before allowing the development to be built.

There are many benefits provided by the shooting community in the woodland and wetland sections that connect to potential actions in this section. Therefore, what I want to focus on here is the health and wellbeing benefits that shooting brings.

At the start of the document, I described our Natural Capital benefits account and that it estimated that at the England scale shooting is saving the NHS and local authority budgets over £22 million a year in avoided care costs. This is because someone who participates in shooting is more physically active and more socially connected than the average person. Much of that activity is based around being engaged and active in the natural environment.

Therefore, when developing work under the potential action of maintain and increase green social prescribing, supporting people to take part in nature-based activities that can help improve health and wellbeing, it is essential that shooting are included in the suite of activities people can benefit from.

Through our Greenspaces team and CEE working group we will look to develop projects where we have opportunity to do this.

Mostly supportive of the activities but very concerned that we could be considering using wetlands to treat discharges of untreated sewage. This would create large area of open raw sewage which could be considered an major health hazard. This would be particularly acute in hot dry summers where the flow of water would restrict the bacterial activity needed to break down sewage.

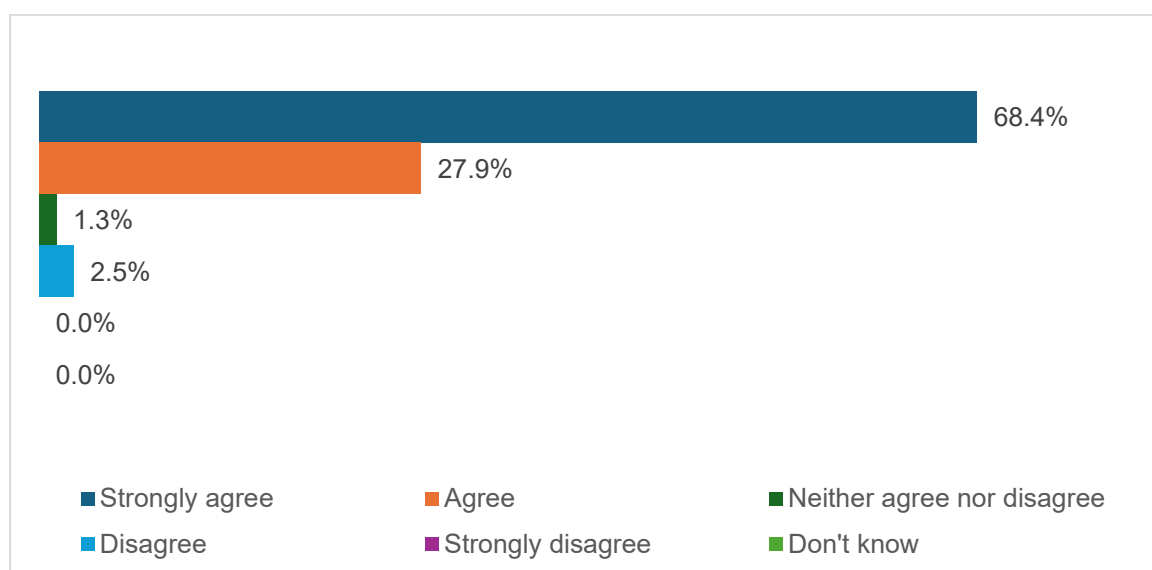
It's just not going to be enough. although commendable where it is happening. Again, hedges are a useful solution, but not mentioned (in the video)

Priority 10 – Nature connection

More people are informed on nature recovery in Dorset and are actively doing something to make space for nature.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-79)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	54	68.4%
Agree	22	27.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.3%
Disagree	2	2.5%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

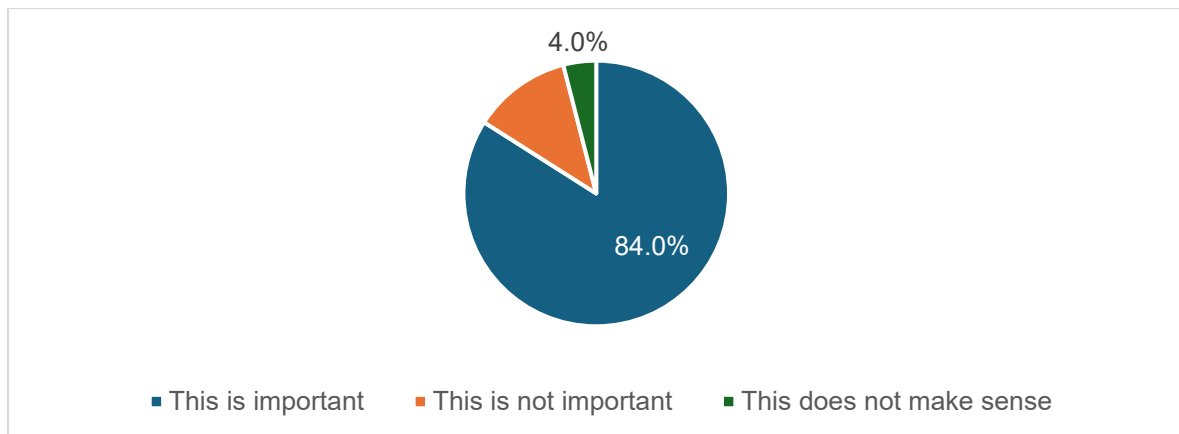
Across all 12 priorities, nature connection has the second highest overall agreement. 96.3% (76) agreed overall, with 68.4% (54) strongly agreeing, further exemplifying the level of support amongst respondents.

2.5% (2) disagreed and 1.3% (1) remained neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Youth survey response

Q. “Give people more ways to help nature”

(n-50)

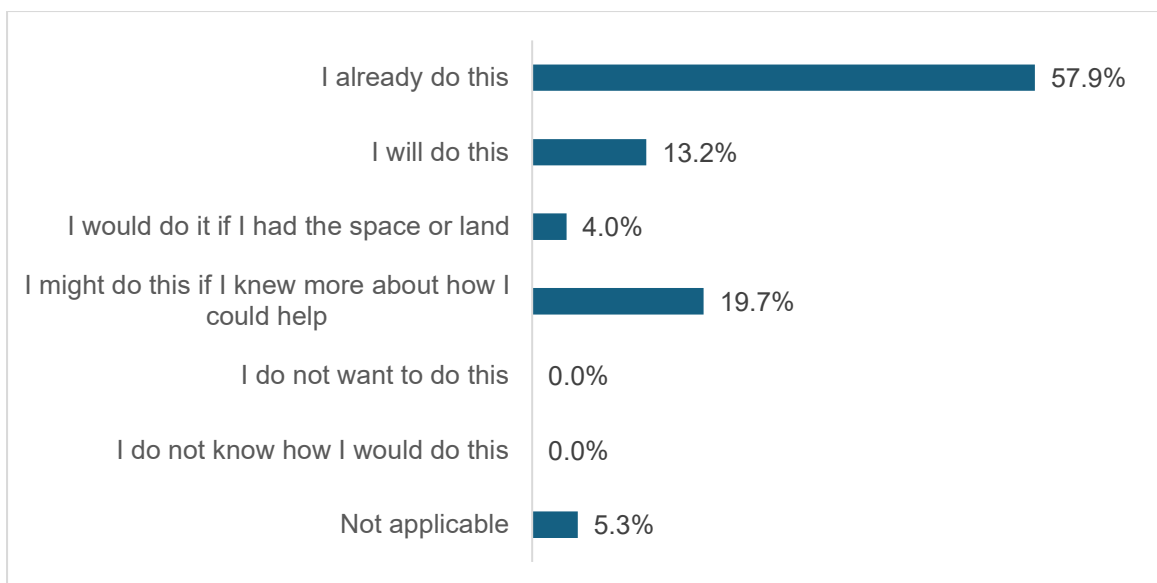


The youth response to this priority shows that a vast majority think giving people more ways to help nature is important. 84.0% (42) responded so, which is lower than the main survey response, but still highlights that young people consider it a valuable proposition.

12.0% (6) thought this idea was not important and 4.0% (2) thought it did not make sense.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the nature connection priority?

(n-76)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	44	57.9%
I will do this	10	13.2%
I would do it if I had the space or land	3	4.0%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	15	19.7%
I do not want to do this	0	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0	0.0%
Not applicable	4	5.3%

Building on the previous priority, nature connection appears to either be more accessible to respondents, or that – as shown by the agreement for the priority – it is a popular part of nature recovery.

57.9% (44) of respondents are already actively involved in nature connection-based activities, which is the second highest current participation level across all the priorities. 13.2% (10) responded that they will take an active role in the future, and a further 19.7% (15) might do so if they had more information and guidance.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	76.9%	52.8%	36.4%	66.7%	59.3%	35.7%
I will do this	7.7%	13.9%	27.3%	8.3%	14.8%	14.3%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	2.8%	9.1%	8.3%	1.9%	14.3%

I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	7.7%	27.8%	18.2%	8.3%	20.4%	28.6%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not applicable	7.7%	2.8%	9.1%	8.3%	3.7%	7.1%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-13); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-36); 3 - Public bodies (n-11); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-12); 5 – Live in DC (n-54); 6 – Live in BCP (n-14)

Continuing the trend across most priorities, farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers have the highest levels of current participation, with 76.9% stating they already commit to activities.

Public bodies (36.4%) and respondents in BCP (35.7%) have the lowest levels of current engagement with the priority activities when compared to the other groups and the overall data. However, 27.3% of public bodies that responded said they will play a more active role in activities moving forward, and 28.6% of those living in BCP also said that they might do more if they knew more about how they could help. So, although the current levels of participation are lower for these groups, through the other answer options, there does appear to be an inclination for future involvement.

27.8% of communities and individuals also responded that they might do more if they knew about how they could help, which is higher than the overall average, and in-line with the pattern across most priorities that there appears to be uncertainty in how people can support.

If you have any comments about the nature connection priority, let us know here

There were 33 responses to this question, which can be seen below verbatim.

Planting new hedgerows
We already make sure there are 'wilder' places in our garden but joining the pockets of habitat together is very important to wildlife and ourselves.
The more people are involved in community nature activities, the more they care about the topic. It would be a great start if people stopped using herbicides and

pesticides. Also understanding why the council has left more areas for nature on verges.
neighbour having different ideas on gardening in shared space
Connecting People with nature is key to nature recovery as this leads to them to take action.
I don't think a lot of people are informed on the subject of nature initiatives such as this one. Normally nature spaces are lost due to development and people only react when it is too late. Unfortunately there appears to be a lot of apathy in the community. It is important that such initiatives are more widely promoted and nature projects are implemented, providing volunteering opportunities to members of the local community.
Urbanisation and Farming has degraded the countryside in Dorset to a point where it is just a monoculture of various grasses all of which are devoid of nature. The Wildlife Trust and Local Authorities need to stop congratulating themselves on a biodiverse county when 90% of the land is under intensive farming and urbanisation particularly in the South East conurbation. High quality Greenspace must be reinstated to benefit wildlife and people alike. Urbanisation has broken up the wildlife rich areas into small patches which require reconnection with greenways.
As someone who monitors butterflies, river health and birds in my garden I strongly agree with the need to collaborate with citizen scientists to provide the data necessary to measure progress in achieving these priorities. If the strategy is to be a success I think there should be a big drive to encourage more people to take part.
Town and parish councils as the level of local government closest to residents need to be involved in this.
Whilst people are aware of our resources in the parish, we need to publicise much more widely and effectively.
In finalising the strategy please don't forget that having access to nature helps people connect with, and care for the natural environment, with nature disconnect a key driver of biodiversity loss. Walking in nature delivers multiple benefits, contributing towards numerous policy objectives and several of central government's missions. NHS England could save £2.1bn a year in treatment costs if everyone had access to green space. Spending by visitors accessing the outdoors is significant, particularly in rural areas, e.g. £17bn in 2015. The 'nature connectivity' priority is therefore crucial to the nature recovery strategy. If people can access the natural environment they will understand and appreciate it and help to protect it. Walking is a key means of accessing nature. The public rights of way network, areas of open access land and country parks are all means of doing this so signage and information are important.

This section is weak and is always the after thought. more drive and means of delivery is needed. If people are not deeply connected to the purpose, then it will always be an uphill struggle

National Trails UK requests the mention of the South West Coast Path and King Charles III England Coast path (and associated coastal margin) in their ability as National Trails to support people's connection with nature. In addition we would engage engaging with the Coastal Wildbelt national initiative to gain inspiration and best practice solutions for amplifying opportunities for people to meaningful engage with nature/balance positive opportunities for both people and nature, together.

My Nature priorities are:

1. Ecological
2. Human health (mental and physical) benefits
3. Aesthetic

They are all good.

I agree with this priority but with the caveat that the definition of nature must encompass geodiversity in order for this to be complete and effective. For example, advocating for natural processes, soil health, river restoration and many other activities outlined in the plan involves an understanding of geomorphology and geology. Or, put another way, we want to encourage people to 'do the right thing in the right place', and both 'the right place' and 'the right thing' are intimately connected to and influenced by geodiversity. Coastal change is a particular hot topic where geodiversity is fundamental to both action for and connection with nature.

In addition I would highlight the work of groups such as Dorset Important Geological Sites group, who are very active in managing and conserving local geological sites as well as providing interpretation at some sites. Dorset Geologists' Association Group is also very active in the community and runs events and produces engagement resources celebrating Dorset's geodiversity.

Museums are another key asset here, not only as hubs for public engagement around nature in Dorset but as holding collections that record and demonstrate change across time to habitats, biodiversity, land use and cultural connections to nature. They can operate in a truly cross-cutting way for nature recovery if supported to do so, potentially running collections based community research projects about Dorset's nature and supporting other organisations pursuing nature recovery as a means to promote and engage people with their work.

I cannot see an action plan here to generate engagement among those not already involved in one of your examples. If the desired outcome is 25% public involvement I am not sure how describing potential activities delivers people doing them.

Existing conservation bodies will continue to do their good works, hopefully even better connected, but how are those outside the influence of these to see, or more importantly be motivated, to become actively involved?

One avenue outside the conservation silos is possible by engaging with Town And Parish Councils with incentives rather than suggestions of possible activities.

Engagement and motivation is always the key. People can find out information, and your strategy provides plenty in careful detail but only when motivated.

It would be really helpful to ensure decision makers (County, Town and Parish Councillors) get to grips with the principles and detail of what is needed. The work of Community Partnerships helped with this but expertise shared at the time has been lost because people do not stay in their roles for long and do not pass it on to those that take over.

The LA needs to support, empower and enable schools to offer and deliver on and off site nature based educational activities.
Educational establishments need to adopt a 'nature first' approach to teaching, where the abundant natural and nature based resources in Dorset underpin educational programmes.

Connecting with the community can be quite difficult for the Parish council with scarce staff resources and an elderly population.

I would like to engage more people in activities on understanding about nature.

...and we'd like to do more

Citizen Science / volunteer activities in the DCP area include Water Guardians and Riverfly Monitoring. There is a great deal of community engagement and volunteering happening in the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams catchment.

Other DCP partnership projects that are shovel-ready for delivery have the potential to increase citizen science and volunteering activities to connect people to nature, raise awareness of the issues and provide information and opportunities to take personal responsibility adopt more environmentally friendly life choices. A key issue is resourcing to support volunteers.

Dorset's catchments are living landscapes where people need space to live, work, travel and play alongside and within natural spaces including river corridors and floodplains. To achieve the best outcome for wildlife, this human need must be factored in and a catchment-scale solution found that will support both together. The balance of benefits in a given location may tip in favour of either people or wildlife, and will be constrained in some locations by legal obligations and planning policy.

People need to be told their actions are causing problems, and need to re-think how they view nature.

The emphasis in this section feels like it's about people getting actively engaged in nature recovery. While this is entirely laudable, it could have a bit more on simply connecting with nature - for the health and wellbeing benefits as well as its likelihood to increase pro-environmental behaviour.

1) Nature Connection is by far the most important priority and should come first. It is profoundly important to the success of the county's ambition. It will unleash the immense assets, skills, experiences and enthusiasm of individuals, communities and organisations.

2) A more sophisticated approach and process are needed. For example, "Informing" needs to be accompanied by creating opportunities for change; expanding cultural support for these changes; and deploying solutions. These 4 steps - joining together in an ongoing and repeated circular process - offer a wide range of opportunities for people with different skillsets to make the most of their unique potential to contribute.

2) The above 4-step process will be substantially informed by understanding what LNRS success will look like. In particular, who will be doing what across Dorset society in 1 /3/5/10 years? How do you make those numbers happen? This is a culture x logistics challenge. It needs a structured, ongoing and agile plan.

3) Achieving success will require a more imaginative and bolder effort to inspire and organise the number of people needed (this is way beyond just "informing"). Scale is vital. AFC Bournemouth have 1m followers on facebook. That is the ambition and challenge which the county's Nature Recovery should rise to and strive for. Dorset is high in nature's Premier League, isn't it? Take on that status, be a bold front-runner.

I lead herb walks and nature walks on the hill (smacam down) for different groups of people. the walks bring connectedness and grounding to the participants. people find them healing and heart opening. I would be happy to do more of these

We need to learn to appreciate and love the natural world, and know that we are a part of it.

DC needs to get organised stop saying and start doing

DC needs to empower others to get to work on these shared visions

At the community farm we grow food but also encourage people to be aware of the wildlife supported on our plot

We were pleased to see the support for farmers and land managers in their request to government to support sustainable farming and forestry practices. The promotion of

citizen science is also most welcome. BASC runs it's our own schemes in association with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and international partners, for example: on disease monitoring in waterfowl; gathering data on waterfowl age and sex profiles to better understand productivity; to improve and record the breeding success of mallard. We also promote engagement with other citizen science schemes run by other organisations such as the BTO. BASC is also a longstanding member of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime and led the Poaching Priority Delivery Group for many years.

We will aim to develop ways in Weymouth to try and do this engaging, educating and bring people together to take actions locally.

We welcome the intention to "support local farmers, landowners and land managers in their asks to government regarding support for sustainable farming or forestry practices"; linking through to the response to question 38, conveying concerns about current government direction.

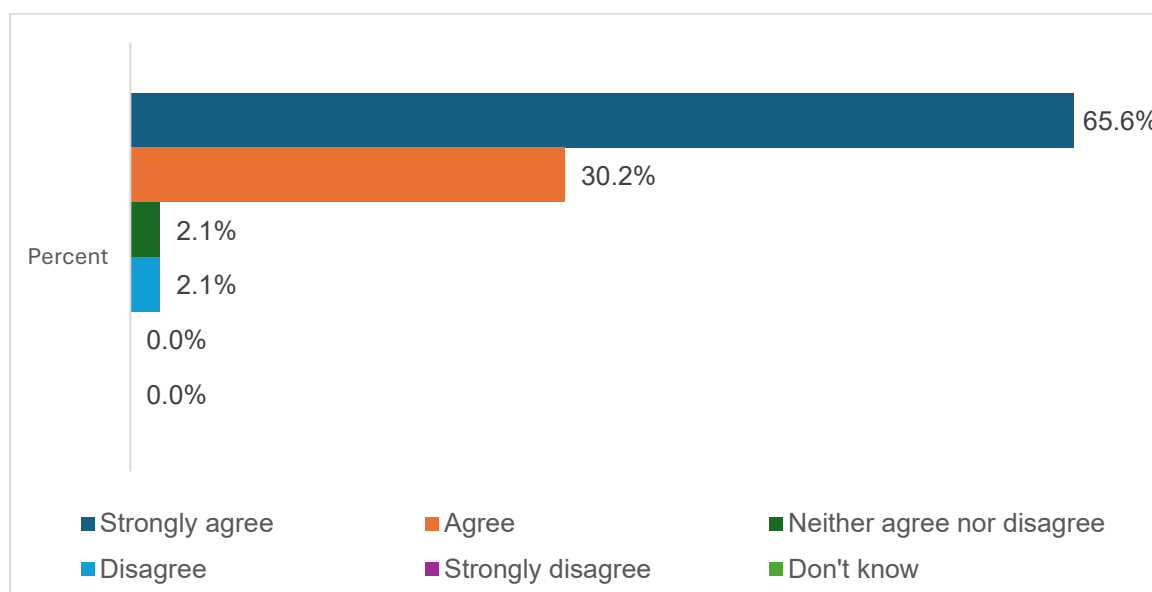
As a Parish Council we would try to influence residents' behaviour to encourage this

Priority 11 – Species abundance and diversity

Abundance and diversity of local species increases so that sustainable populations are reached and maintained, while invasive non-native species are controlled.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-96)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	63	65.6%

Agree	29	30.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.1%
Disagree	2	2.1%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Most respondents showed a strong level of agreement with the species abundance and diversity priority, with 95.8% (92) expressing support. Of these, 65.6% (63) strongly agreed, indicating a high level of enthusiasm for protecting and enhancing biodiversity. A small proportion, 2.1% (2), neither agreed nor disagreed, and the same number expressed disagreement. No respondents selected 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know,' suggesting the priority was clearly understood and widely supported. This reflects a broadly unified response in favour of the priority.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	100.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	91.7%	4.2%
Public bodies	100.0%	0.0%
Nature and environment sector	100.0%	0.0%
Live in DC	95.5%	3.0%
Live in BCP	95.0%	0.0%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-13); Communities and individuals (n-48); Public bodies (n-11); Nature and environment sector (n-20); Live in DC (n-67); Live in BCP (n-20)

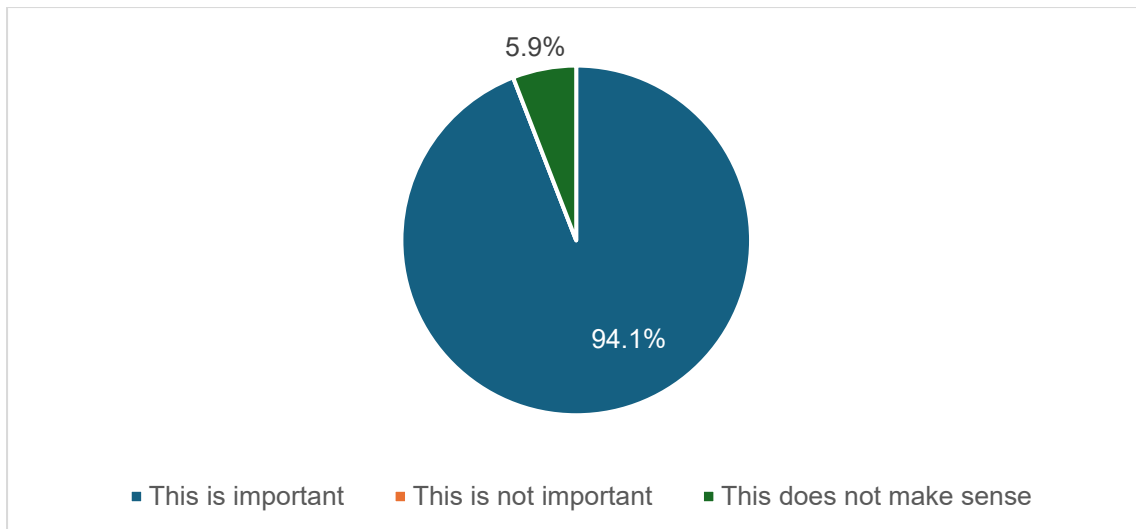
Support for the species abundance and diversity priority was consistently high across all respondent groups. Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers, public bodies, and the nature and environment sector all showed 100% total agreement, with no recorded disagreement, indicating strong alignment among those directly involved in land and environmental management.

Communities and individuals also showed high support at 91.7%, with a small proportion (4.2%) expressing disagreement. Agreement was similarly strong among those living in the DC area (95.5%) and BCP area (95%). There was a low level of disagreement at 3% for the DC area.

Youth survey response

Q. "Help more plants, animals and other wildlife live happily in Dorset"

(n-51)

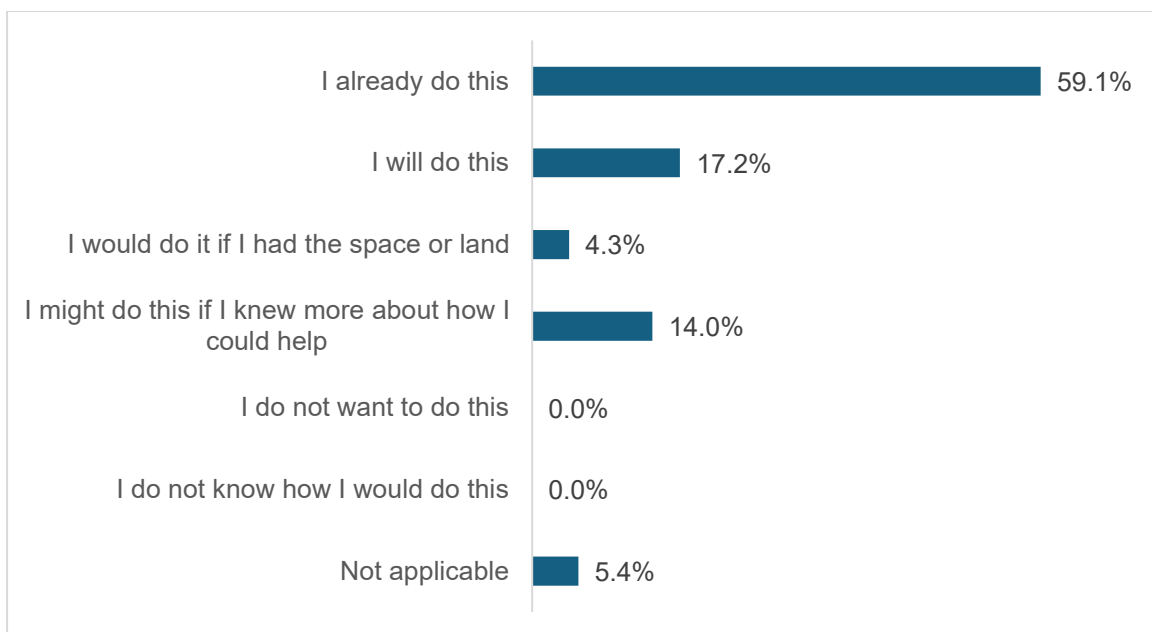


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	48	94.1%
This is not important	0	0.0%
This does not make sense	3	5.9%

Youth survey responses show very strong support for the priority to “help more plants, animals and other wildlife live happily in Dorset.” 94.1% (48) said this is important, while 5.9% (3) indicated the statement does not make sense. No respondent said it was not important, suggesting that young people clearly value biodiversity and understand the importance of supporting wildlife in their local area

Q. Would you do any activities to support the species abundance and diversity priority?

(n-93)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	55	59.1%
I will do this	16	17.2%
I would do it if I had the space or land	4	4.3%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	13	14.0%
I do not want to do this	0	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0	0.0%
Not applicable	5	5.4%

Responses for this priority show a high level of engagement, with 59.1% (55) of respondents already involved in activities that support species abundance and diversity. 17.2% (16) said they ‘will do this,’ and 14% (13) said they ‘might get do this if I knew more,’ suggesting that further awareness could encourage additional participation. A smaller proportion, 4.3% (4), would support the priority ‘if I had the space or land.’ Notably, no respondents said they ‘do not want to’ or ‘do not know how,’ indicating strong interest and clarity around this priority.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	69.2%	54.4%	36.4%	73.7%	63.1%	40.0%
I will do this	23.1%	23.9%	18.2%	0.0%	15.4%	30.0%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	4.4%	9.1%	5.3%	3.1%	10.0%

I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	7.7%	13.0%	27.3%	10.5%	15.4%	15.0%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not applicable	0.0%	4.4%	9.1%	10.5%	3.1%	5.0%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-13); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-46); 3 - Public bodies (n-11); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-19); 5 – Live in DC (n-65); 6 – Live in BCP (n-20)

Farmers, foresters, landowners, and land managers (69.2%) and the nature and environment sector (73.7%) show the highest levels of current engagement, demonstrating strong involvement. Communities and individuals also show solid participation (54.4%), with 23.9% showing intention to engage and 13% expressing a need for more knowledge. Public bodies show lower engagement (36.4%) but a higher proportion (27.3%) indicate they might participate if they knew more. Space constraints are most notable among public bodies (9.1%).

Residents in DC show stronger current engagement (63.1%) compared to those in BCP (40%). However, BCP residents are more likely to say they will participate (30% vs. 15.4%) and are more affected by space constraints (10% vs. 3.1%). These findings indicate that while DC residents are more involved, BCP residents may need more support to take part.

If you have any comments about the species diversity and abundance priority, let us know here.

40 respondents answered this question and their answers have been themed and coded. Some of the main themes were:

- references to specific projects and sites related to the priority
- omissions from the priority, or other things that haven't been considered, but should be
- comments on specific wildlife being present or noticing them more
- comments around an invasive species initiative, or work involving tackling invasive species

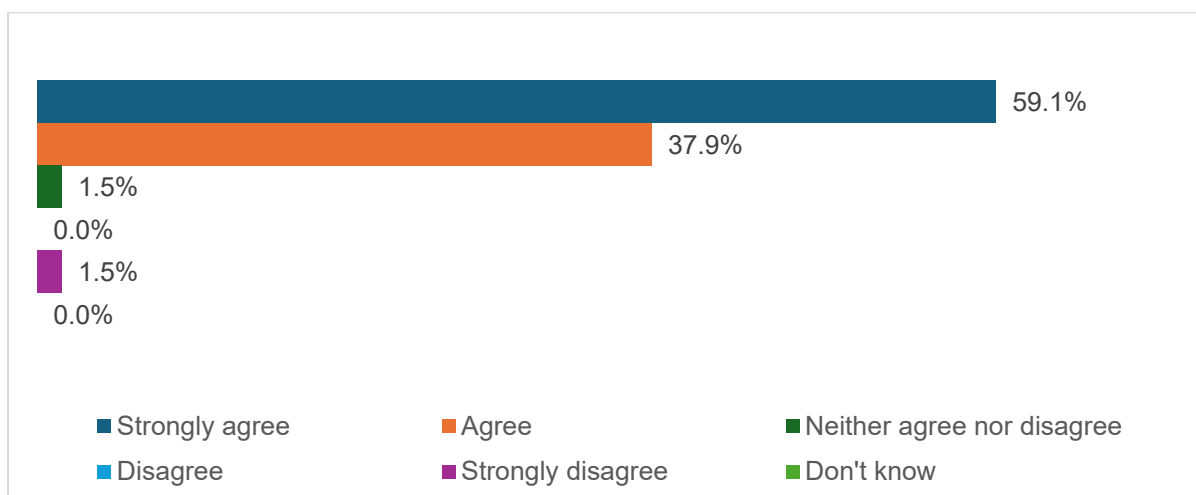
Comment/theme	Total
Specific site/project	8
Other	8
Omissions from the priority/other things to consider	7
Comment on noticing/specific wildlife	6
Invasive species initiative	5
Some areas need to be protected/not accessible to people or dogs	4
Reduce spread of damaging plants (and ideas on how to do so)/geographically appropriate plants and shrubs	4
Comment on individual support/provide more visibility/information for ways to get involved	4
Comment on use of chemicals	3
Concern for development impacting wildlife	3
Wording suggestions	2
Support and resources for land managers	2
Need to focus on illegal hunting, shooting, and badger cull	2
Joined up piece of work	2
Activity ideas/tweaks	2
Education and incentivisation to support essential	2

Priority 12 – Priority species

Dorset's priority species needing bespoke conservation action are supported and sustained.

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the priority?

(n-66)



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	39	59.1%
Agree	25	37.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	1.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	1.5%
Don't know	0	0.0%

Most respondents expressed strong support, with 59.1% (39) selecting 'strongly agree' and 37.9% (25) choosing 'agree', reflecting widespread approval of the priority." Only 1.5% (1) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 1.5% (1) strongly disagreed. No respondents selected 'disagree' or 'don't know,' suggesting the priority was clearly understood and widely accepted. This shows a high level of shared support for the protection of priority species.

Respondent type	Overall agreement	Overall disagreement
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	100.0%	0.0%
Communities and Individuals	100.0%	0.0%
Public bodies	100.0%	0.0%
Nature and environment sector	89.5%	5.3%
Live in DC	95.5%	2.3%
Live in BCP	100.0%	0.0%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-9); Communities and individuals (n-27); Public bodies (n-7); Nature and environment sector (n-19); Live in DC (n-44); Live in BCP (n-11)

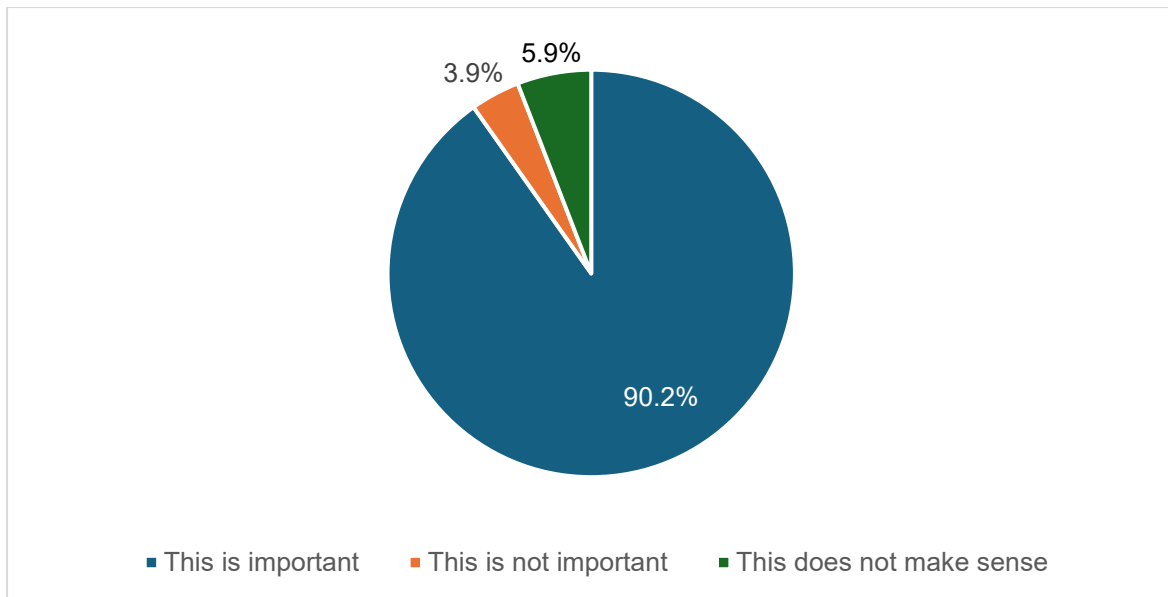
Support for the priority species priority was exceptionally high across all respondent groups. Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers, communities and individuals, public bodies, and those living in the BCP area all showed 100% agreement, with no recorded disagreement. Respondents from the nature and environment sector also demonstrated strong support at 89.5%, with a small proportion (5.3%) expressing disagreement.

Similarly, those living in the DC area showed high agreement at 95.5%, with only 2.3% disagreeing. These results reflect a consistently positive response across all groups and geographic areas, with overwhelming support for protecting priority species.

Youth survey response

Q. "Give an extra helping hand to wildlife that are most in need"

(n-51)

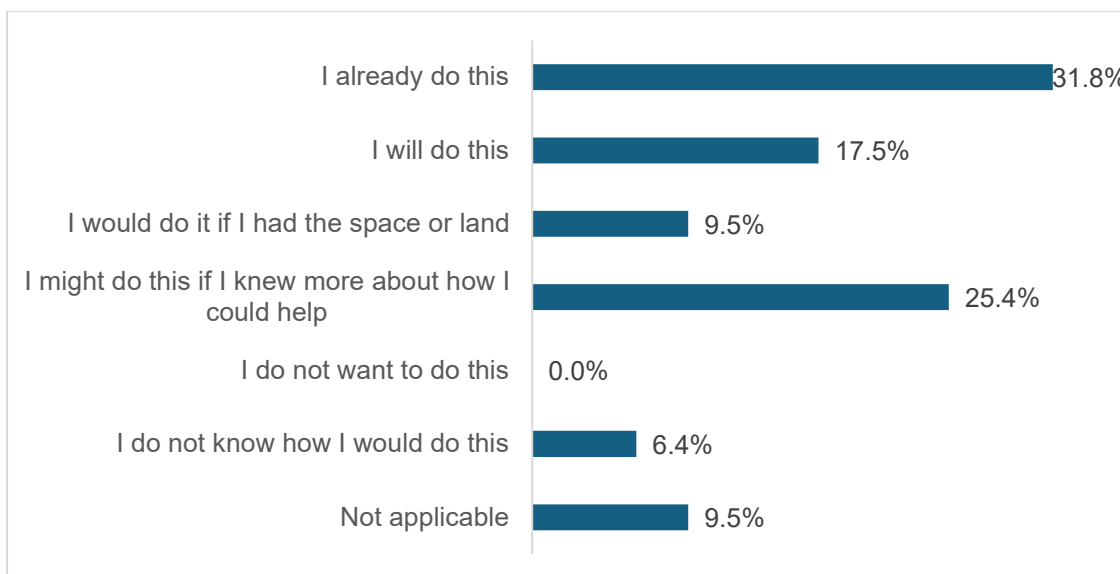


Option	Total	Percent
This is important	46	90.2%
This is not important	2	3.9%
This does not make sense	3	5.9%

Youth survey responses show strong support for the priority to “give an extra helping hand to wildlife that are most in need.”.2% (46) said this is important, while 3.9% (2) felt it was not. A small proportion, 5.9% (3), showed the statement does not make sense, suggesting a few needed clearer communication or framing. Overall, the results reflect a positive attitude among young people toward supporting vulnerable wildlife.

Q. Would you do any activities to support the priority species priority?

(n-63)



Option	Total	Percent
I already do this	20	31.8%
I will do this	11	17.5%
I would do it if I had the space or land	6	9.5%
I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	16	25.4%
I do not want to do this	0	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	4	6.4%
Not applicable	6	9.5%

The feedback for this priority shows a strong level of interest and willingness to take action, with 31.8% (20) of respondents already involved in activities that support priority species. 25.4% (16) said they might do this if they knew more, highlighting the potential impact of increased awareness and guidance. 17.5% (11) said they will do this, while 9.5% (6) would participate if they had the space or land. 6.4% (4) said they do not know how they would get involved. Notably, no respondents said they do not want to, indicating a generally receptive and engaged outlook toward supporting this priority.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
I already do this	55.6%	23.1%	0.0%	35.3%	28.6%	18.2%
I will do this	22.2%	23.1%	14.3%	11.8%	19.1%	9.1%
I would do it if I had the space or land	0.0%	15.4%	14.3%	5.9%	11.9%	9.1%

I might do this if I knew more about how I could help	22.2%	15.4%	57.1%	29.4%	28.6%	36.4%
I do not want to do this	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I do not know how I would do this	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	9.1%
Not applicable	0.0%	7.7%	14.3%	17.7%	4.8%	18.2%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-9); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-26); 3 - Public bodies (n-7); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-17); 5 – Live in DC (n-42); 6 – Live in BCP (n-11)

Farmers, foresters, landowners, and land managers show the highest current engagement (55.6%) and no reported barriers, indicating strong involvement. Communities and individuals have moderate engagement (23.1%) but face multiple barriers including lack of space (15.4%) and knowledge (15.4%). Public bodies report no current engagement (0.0%) but show the greatest potential for future involvement. 57.1% indicated they might participate if they knew more, alongside 14.3% who will be engaged (I will do this). The nature and environment sector shows moderate current engagement (35.3%), with potential for growth, as 29.4% might help if they knew more. This group also had a relatively high rate of 'not applicable' responses (17.7%), suggesting the activity may not fit well with what they currently do, or, that it may not be possible due to capacity.

Residents in the DC area show higher current engagement (28.6%) than those in BCP (18.2%). BCP residents are more likely to get involved if they had more knowledge (36.4% vs. 28.6%). Space constraints are similar across both areas, but BCP has a significantly higher rate of 'not applicable' responses (18.2% vs. 4.8%), which could be explored further to understand why the activity may not feel relevant or accessible to some residents.

Q. If you have any comments on the priority species priority, let us know here

25 respondents answered this question, and their responses can be seen verbatim.

Priority species monitoring working with local groups.
[redacted] Hazelbury Abuzz to save our bees/pollinators. We share bee sightings, research bees, plant pollinator friendly plants. I have shared details about three bee species included species recovery and only one would currently be applicable to our area - long horned bee. We plan to ensure we have suitable habitat in our gardens.

Flagship species tend to be atypical and chosen more for their visual appeal than ecological typicalness.
Our group was particularly interested in the 3 bee species which are part of 54 identified species in strategy. Only one of these bee species are relevant to our area currently but we plan to ensure habitats are available to it (great horned bee).
Please explain why Water Voles and Hedgehogs are not on your priority list, both of which are recognised as being endangered species in severe decline. Why is no priority being given to the Water Vole population that still exists within Asker Meadows when so few of our rivers support a thriving colony?
Ask company like Tesco to sponsor one of the priority species with a £1 from every meal deal.
Beavers up top of radipole lake they will create the swims which will then attract the fish and otters. We should work in harmony with the beavers, they can change the environment.
This section feels a little uncomfortable with the 'nature recovery concept and especially restoring 'natural processes- like the balance between 're-wilding' and 'conservation'. Some species have been lost through habitat damage, but others maybe relics of a period of historical land management, or br unsuited to our new climate. Has there been a prioritisation of restoring functioning habitat over species or are both indicated as equally important?
Priority species will benefit from landscape scale intervention on behalf of nature conservation. Not just nature reserves (which are not representative of the wider countryside) but wholesale. Changes to farming practices and urban planning.
'Swifts' in the Species Priority List Section Actions - please add: Protect existing nest sites. Reason: Swifts are nest faithful and if, on returning from Africa, they find their nest entrance is blocked they are often fatally injured whilst repeatedly trying to gain access. They are only in the UK three months of the year to breed and have little time to find a new site and breed in the same season.
not sure as an individual I would be able to contribute to many of these activities
In such a nature depleted country translocation introduces interesting opportunities and challenges.
Current references to swifts are welcome but too brief to be effective. Please include any comments from local groups e.g. Hampshire Swifts, and Salisbury/ Wiltshire Swifts. As a minimum, please make reference to the related update to the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) 2025 Natural Environment paragraph 017, which refers to swift bricks as a universal nest brick: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment As a minimum include the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per unit. "How can developments incorporate features which support priority or threatened

species?

The National Planning Policy Framework expects development proposals to bolster wildlife by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

The use of swift bricks is particularly important in this context because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting, and the national loss of suitable nesting sites through building renovation has been part of the reason for the species' decline. Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) where possible, with the general aim across a development of a minimum of one nest box per unit. Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows.

Extensive guidance is available on wildlife friendly features, including the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code which illustrate how well-designed places can support rich and varied biodiversity by facilitating habitats and routes for wildlife. More specific support for the selection and installation of swift bricks can be found in the British Industry Standard BS 42021:2022 the Future Homes Hub Homes for Nature Guidance, and the RSPB's Guide to Nestboxes.

Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 8-017-20250609"

See also the "exemplar" published Isle of Wight LNRS (2025) which refers to artificial nest cups, and protection of existing nest sites in UGG1.6, and please as a minimum include these.

"Swift bricks are a universal nest brick for small bird species and should be installed in new developments including extensions, in accordance with best practice guidance such as the Brighton and Hove Guidelines which require at least three swift bricks for all appropriate new builds. Artificial nest cups for House Martins should be similarly considered.

Existing nest and roost sites for building-dependent and building- reliant species such as Swifts, House Martins, House Sparrows, Starlings and at least 4 species of bat must be protected and wherever possible augmented and enhanced by designed and built additional provision within ecologically relevant distances."

It is likely that specific priority species will be strongly associated with certain geofeatures e.g. atlantic salmon spawning in post-glacial gravel river beds or the micromoths associated with limestone cliffs. Identifying and encouraging bespoke and targeted action to create and preserve these features will help support priority species.

Use the local population to help you measure the priority list. A mass effort can really drive this work forward.

I am concerned that no reptiles have been included in the list. Is this because it is thought that habitat management will suffice. Should this be explained?

The Hampshire LNRS Species Recovery Prioritisation Workshop Report proposed four amphibians & reptiles as priority species needing more targeted management – Smooth snake, Sand lizard, Natterjack Toad and Adder, with the reptile species requiring targeted habitat management as a priority: it is somewhat surprising that none of these is identified in the Dorset LNRS. Clearly there must be targeted habitat management to at least conserve existing populations habitat maintenance and restoration to allow for population increase. The area within Ringwood Forest adjacent to Moors Valley Country Park that straddles the Dorset/Hampshire border has the only remaining viable native sand lizard metapopulation in Hampshire and is also significant for smooth snake and sand lizard at county and national level. As discussed under other topics within my response, previous post minerals extraction has failed to restore heathland as have attempts at species relocation locally. This must be addressed rather than blithely proceeding on the assumption that heathland restoration after minerals is possible: HCC are unable to provide any evidence whatsoever that it can be achieved and recent RSPB research highlights the problems associated with heathland restoration and the need for management in perpetuity.

These species are integral to the Dorset habitats and together will help to bring back diverse nature and improve environmental connections for the future. These enigmatic species will provide enthusiasm and interest from the public and could even add to local eco-tourism.

The work of DCP in improving water quality and enhancing our rivers and wetlands will have beneficial knock-on effects for aquatic priority species such as Atlantic Salmon, European Eel, White-clawed Crayfish. Other species are likely to benefit from the wide range of activities that the partnership engages in through nutrient management, habitat creation and enhancement.

The average resident has no idea about these critical species and what they can do to help. This information simply needs to be available in an easy, accessible format. Things like light pollution from houses and streets are not on people's radar at all, for example, a simple toolkit to let people know how they can take action to help is desperately needed if anything is going to change.

Lots of very good, well-informed information provided. There is however often reference to 'intensive grazing'. Agreed this could be a problem for many spp/habitats, but I can think of no existing priority habitats in Dorset (except woodland with high deer populations) where too much grazing is an issue. Far more problematic in reality in Dorset today is insufficient grazing! Grassland sites in particular are all too often in decline and under threat from lack of adequate grazing. Spp plans that advocate relaxing grazing, or even introducing scrub, on surviving high quality grasslands should be urgently reconsidered, as should plans that suggest, wrongly, that winter grazing of grassland is an adequate management practice.

There is a risk that enthusiasm for reintroductions could detract from core nature conservation priorities and resources. Some of the 'sexier' proposals may even be 'vanity projects' of questionable nc value.

The Dorset National Landscape team:

- supports a variety of species conservation actions
- supports the responsible translocation of species for conservation purposes

Priority species are important. But trees are even more important in reversing climate change, and in creating a sustainable environment for all wildlife. Therefore please,

for example, prioritise trees more than, say, butterflies. Likewise trees are more important than heathland species, especially as heathland is not a natural environment.

The choice of species is very limited and biased to a few groups and will not achieve the aims of the plan. There need to be more species assemblages from a wider range of organisms and habitats selected if the plan is to be effective.

The long and short listing of species was logical, as were the actions for them but I was surprised that curlew was not selected as it is widely accepted as the most pressing bird priority in the UK. In terms of quarry species, the grey partridge was a good summary of what the species requires in terms of habitat provision and legal, humane predator control. We will also look at the National Trust's black grouse reintroduction feasibility report when complete.

On reintroductions we endorse this statement from the Species Recovery document: Conservation translocations, or re-introductions, must adhere to the code and guidance for reintroductions and other conservation translocations in England, and be subject to scrutiny to ensure that proposals provide clear benefits, recognise any risks and avoid negative environmental, economic or social impacts.

BASC has been involved in several reintroduction programmes across the UK, especially pine marten and wildcat. What is important in the feasibility stage is to avoid the temptation to focus on the initial years of a reintroduction and consider what the species and its interaction with people will look like in the long-term. The experience of beaver release in Scotland and the subsequent legal challenges is testament to a lack of long-term consensus on would be required to avoid undesirable outcomes from a successful reintroduction. This needs to be properly considered and prepared for in the feasibility stages and if it moves to a reintroduction, worked on in tandem from the outset.

We are surprised that the brown hare is not listed. Could it be added?

Probably a good activity but these species should not be protected to the exclusion or detriment of other species.

Other youth consultation results

Q. Can you suggest better words to explain any of the priorities?

There were 16 responses to this question, which can be seen below verbatim.

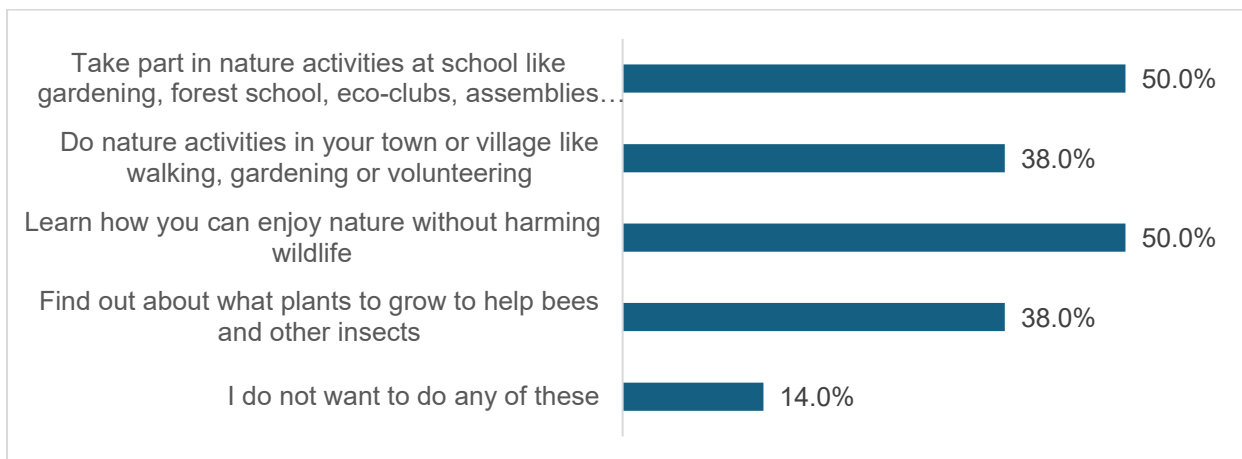
Use only environmentally friendly stuff and boom climate change - [redacted]

losing trees - deforestation. save the bees

heathlands - an explanation would be helpful / explain all the habitats more
dont cut down the trees because we need them to breathe and animals need them
Leaves
maybe make areas less with greenhouse gas by putting more trees and plants
tree
important
we need more woodland and grassland and wetland and walking routes
don't touch nature
Recovery of nature, improve the wildlife, protect nature
Afforestation
for Give people more ways to help nature also add encourage them to help/ promote helping nature
Essential
With this survey do a scale of 1 to 5 to gain a better understanding of what to do first
The survey doesn't seem to be age appropriate to teenagers - very basic. Very obvious statements, things that need to happen anyway. Not

Q. Would you like to do any of these activities to help nature?

(n=50)



Option	Total	Percent
Take part in nature activities at school like gardening, forest school, eco-clubs, assemblies or trips	25	50.0%
Do nature activities in your town or village like walking, gardening or volunteering	19	38.0%
Learn how you can enjoy nature without harming wildlife	25	50.0%
Find out about what plants to grow to help bees and other insects	19	38.0%

I do not want to do any of these	7	14.0%

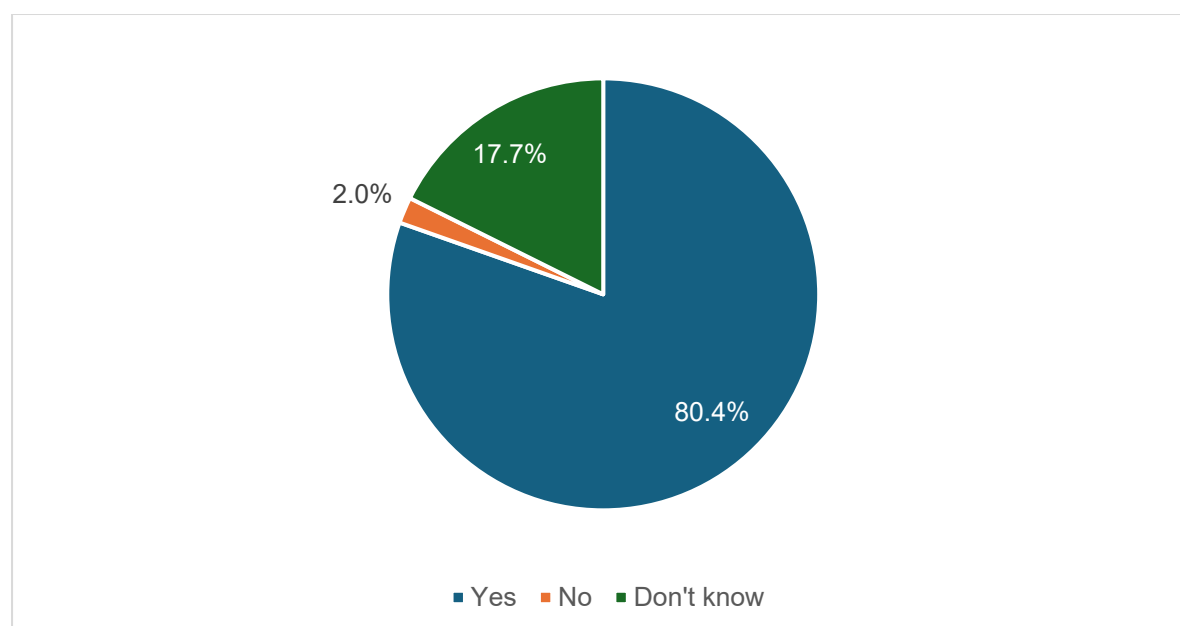
The response to this question indicates a strong interest among participants in engaging with nature through educational and community-based activities. Half the respondents (50%, equating to 25 young people) said they would take part in nature-related initiatives at school, while an equal proportion (50%) would learn about how they can enjoy nature responsibly, without harming wildlife.

In addition to activities within school, 38% (19) also stated they would be interested in nature-related activities in their local area, with the same number of respondents (38%) are also interested in learning more about plants and how they can support bees and other insects.

Notably, only 14% (7) did not want to participate in any of the listed activities.

Q. Do you think people should join in activities to help nature?

(n=51)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	41	80.4%
No	1	2.0%
Don't know	9	17.7%

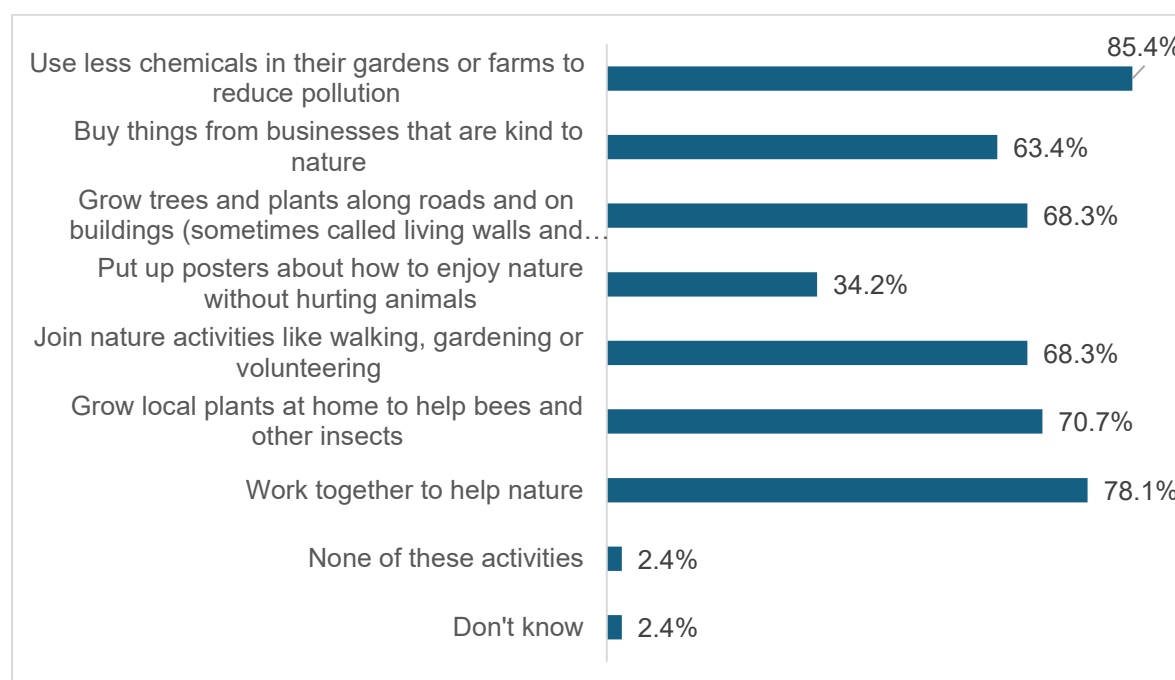
The findings show a strong level of support for people joining in activities to help nature, with 80.4% (41) responding 'Yes'. This indicates broad consensus amongst the young people that took part.

A small minority of respondents (2%) felt people should not join in activities to help nature.

17.7% (9) selected 'Don't know', which could suggest some uncertainty or a need for further information.

Q. What activities, if any, do you think people should do to help nature?

(n=41)



Option	Total	Percent
Use less chemicals in their gardens or farms to reduce pollution	35	85.4%
Buy things from businesses that are kind to nature	26	63.4%
Grow trees and plants along roads and on buildings (sometimes called living walls and roofs)	28	68.3%
Put up posters about how to enjoy nature without hurting animals	14	34.2%
Join nature activities like walking, gardening or volunteering	28	68.3%
Grow local plants at home to help bees and other insects	29	70.7%
Work together to help nature	32	78.1%
None of these activities	1	2.4%
Don't know	1	2.4%

Responses to this question build on similar themes identified previously, with the top 3 picked options relating to community-based activities, supporting nature responsibly, and growing plants to support bees and other insects.

85.4% (35) selected that there should be fewer chemicals used in gardens and outdoors to reduce pollution, 78.1% (32) said that there should be collaboration to help nature, and 70.7% (29) stated that people should grow plants to help pollinators.

Other options selected by many of the respondents were in relation to joining nature-based activities (68.3%), growing trees and plants along roads and on buildings (68.3%), and buying items from shops and businesses that have been sourced responsibly.

Around a third of respondents (34.2%) chose putting up posters to educate how to enjoy nature without hurting animals.

Once again, notably, just 2.4% (1) respondent identified no activities, and 2.4% (1) did not know.

Q. Are there any other activities that you would like to do or thing others should do for nature?

There were 30 responses to this question which can be seen verbatim.

Nature trips outside of the school.
Tree planting
Cycle/walk more. Don't be lazy.
Build fewer houses More focus on environment/climate change Stop littering - more bins
plant more trees go litter picking daily help the stray animals
plant flowers in your garden.
enjoy it
plant trees
-Building birdboxes, insect hotels and other habitats for animals -Make built up areas more eco-friendly
enjoy it
Just plant more trees and let them grow.
use less chemicals so it doesnt damage the nature
make the woods clean.
eco club
Forest and adventure stuff
i think we should do one massive clean up of dead trees and then we should plant new ones to help the enviermont

plant trees
Grow a garden
Maybe make allotments in some school grounds to get some people out and gardening
Walk round streets and pick up rubbish
litter pick
litter pick
grow more plants
plant more plants in our own gardens
No
Football pitches cinema and bring more good shops into town
Joining clubs that teach us how to be kind to wildlife, have a 5key things you can do to help nature on magazines, newspaper or tv.
Litter picking. Sponsored swims and walks. [redacted]
Litter picks encourage the elderly - pamphlets Planting trees Pollinator Friendly plant Bug hotels Nature walks More bird nesting programmes in the town centres and countryside helping any birds/animals that look poorly or hurt Nature clubs in schools Volunteering around the town/village Learn more about plants/gardening hiring people to help out with the environment Everyone should be more aware of nature. Poster campaigns and radio broadcasts
- More opportunities to access volunteering with nature and animals - Teach people to appreciate nature e.g. walks without phones and headphones

Do you have anything else you would like to tell us?

There were 17 comments made for this question, which can be seen verbatim. Some of the comments have been removed as they simply stated 'No' or 'No comment'.

i dont want posters because you have to cut down trees for the paper
More ponds for water animals
more trees
I like flowers
I love what you are doing ❤️ 💙 💜 🧡 [redacted]

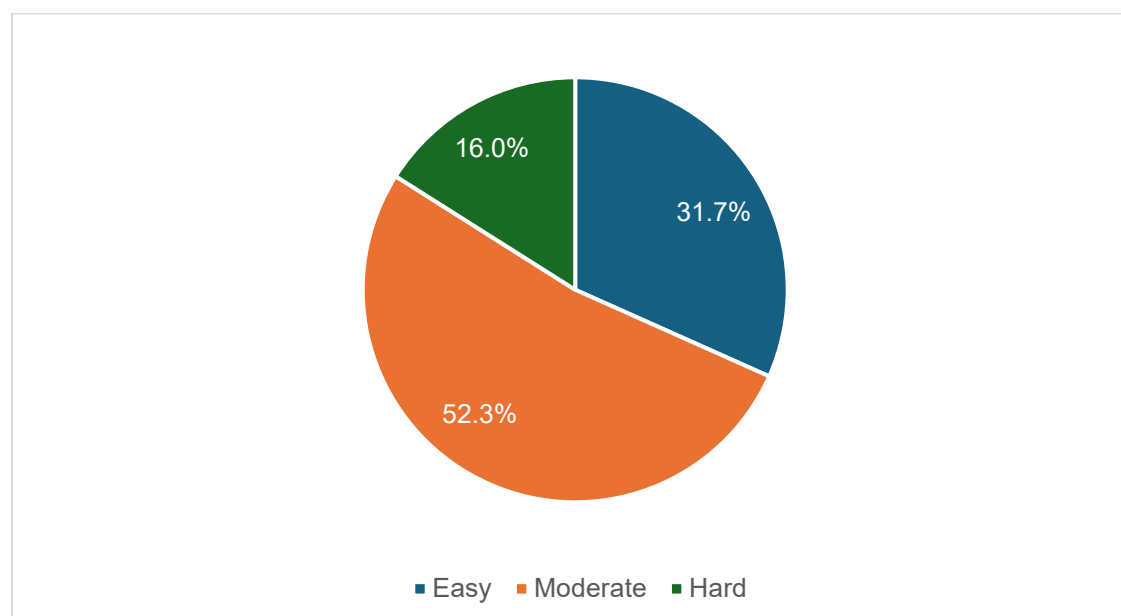
- Weymouth Youth Council is for 13-18 year olds and felt that the form was extremely basic. Some questions could do with more explanation of what they mean. Did not feel that the questions were specific enough. Young people did not know what area Dorset actually covers.

South Park is a complete desert that you have ruined, I am a keen ornithologist and this year there are no birds in South Park no Stonechats, warblers, nightjars
NOTHING YOU REALLY DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING!!!!

Local habitat map

Q. How did you find using the local habitat map?

(n=262)



Option	Total	Percent
Easy	83	31.7%
Moderate	137	52.3%
Hard	42	16.0%

As part of the consultation, respondents were able to view and use the local habitat map. This question details how they found the process.

Just over half of respondents (52.3%, equating to 137 people) described using the map as 'moderate', suggesting that while generally usable, there may be opportunities to improve the experience and make it more user-friendly.

31.7% (83) found the map easy to use, indicating it met their expectations in terms of functionality and content.

Conversely, 16.0% (42) found the map difficult to use, meaning there could be specific barriers or challenges making the tool inaccessible. Some of the reasons for this have been explained in the next question.

Q. Please feel free to provide a comment as to why you feel this

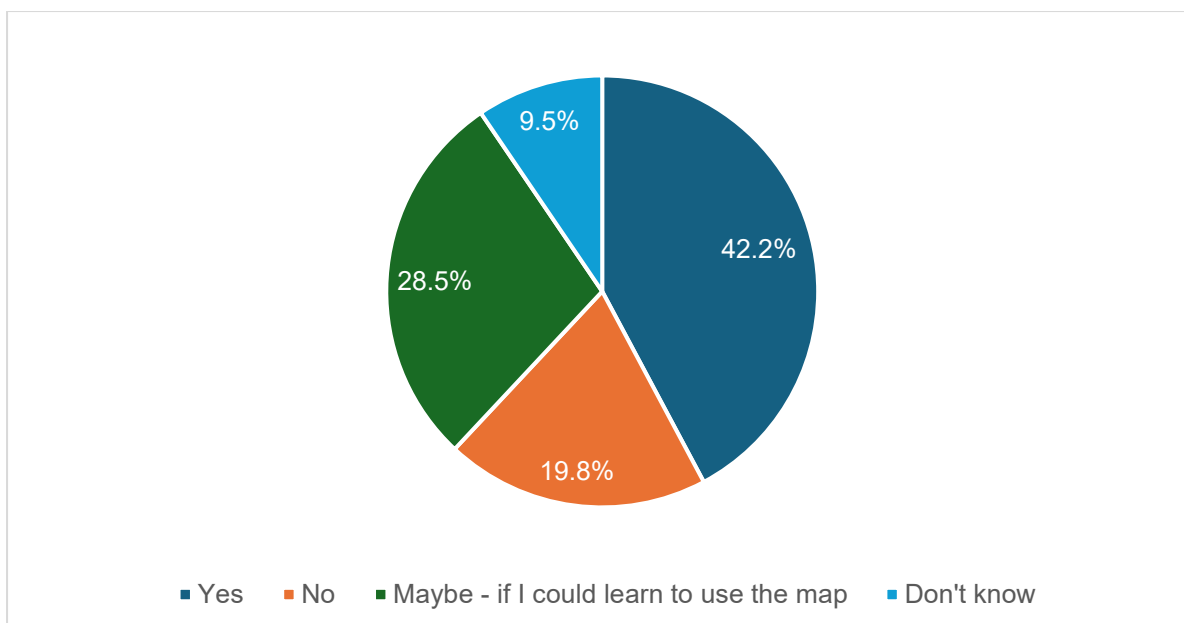
61 comments were left, allowing respondents to explain their response to the previous question. These have been coded and themed. Some of the main points raised were:

- the content being too complicated, either because of multiple layers being present, not understanding the information, or it just generally being complex to look at
- the guidance video, and lack of instructions/guidance within the maps, did not help the user experience
- it being difficult to access and obtain the information being looked for

Comment/theme	Total
Too complicated (too many layers, can't understand it, complex to look at)	12
Poor instructions	9
Difficult to access/obtain information	8
Poor functionality	6
Barriers to access	6
Missing information	6
Familiar with software	5
Problems with layers	4
Couldn't access the map	3
Too much information	3
Good functionality	2
Did not access the maps	2
Other	2
Comment on specific area	1

Q. Do you think the local habitat map, together with the written priorities and activities in the strategy, provide you with enough information to guide you in taking action for nature?

(n=263)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	42.2%
No	52	19.8%
Maybe - if I could learn to use the map	75	28.5%
Don't know	25	9.5%

Having reviewed the strategy documents and local habitat map, 42.2% (111) of respondents think it will provide them with enough information to guide them in taking action for nature.

While not definitive, 28.5% (75) also said that the documents and map could support them if they could learn to use the map. This suggests, which has been hinted at through various open comment sections, the mapping element of the consultation and project is proving to be a barrier for just over a quarter of all respondents. This could be due to technical limitations, or the general complexity of the information presented.

19.8% (52) said that all the documents as part of the consultation do not provide enough guidance, and 9.5% (25) did not know.

Option	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
Yes	44.4%	42.4%	27.8%	46.8%	38.2%	48.0%
No	14.8%	15.8%	33.3%	29.8%	23.0%	12.0%
Maybe - if I could learn to use the map	25.9%	33.5%	33.3%	17.0%	32.7%	25.3%

Don't know	14.8%	8.2%	5.6%	6.4%	6.1%	14.7%

Base: 1 - Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers (n-27); 2 - Communities and Individuals (n-158); 3 - Public bodies (n-18); 4 - Nature and environment sector (n-47); 5 – Live in DC (n-165); 6 – Live in BCP (n-75)

The response across the different groups is mainly aligned with the overall, but public bodies in particular – although it is worth noting it is the smallest sample size – were more cautious in their response. 27.8% said that it would provide them with enough information, which is a 14.4% drop compared to overall, and a 20.2% variation when compared to residents in the BCP area.

Public bodies (33.3%), communities and individuals (33.5%) and respondents in the DC area (32.7%) also had a higher proportion of those potentially having issues using the maps.

Q. Please feel free to provide a further comment as to why you feel this

68 respondents answered this question, and their answers have been coded and themed below. The main themes were:

- issues with the maps and documents. This varied from the maps omitting specific information, technical issues, to the language within the priorities
- ideas to improve the maps and documents, making them more accessible and user-friendly
- questions relating to the lack of an action and/or delivery plan. How does someone get involved from this information? Are there sources of information (like who is co-ordinating actions)? Or examples?
- in its current form, not a tool to engage the public, and needs to be simplified

Comment/theme	Total
Issue with the maps/document	17
Idea to improve the map/documents	13
Action plan not clear in how to get involved/where is delivery plan? Sources of information? Examples?	11
Other	11
Not a tool to engage the public/needs to be simplified	9
More information needed	4
Landowners key	3
Comment on specific location	3
Map covers so much information, so difficult to find what you need	2
Map lets you see where others are taking action, and their priorities. Help establish connectivity	1
Unsure how the mapping will help deliver priorities/activities	1

Not joined up	1
Expert advice/support	1
Make more areas for nature	1

Options A, B and C

Within the consultation, there were a few sections specifically for landowners, farmers, land managers and those working on nature recovery projects. This was to allow them to provide feedback on how their land or project is appearing in both sets of maps.

Comments relating to projects and specific points within the maps have been passed to the service to consider.

Option	Total	Percent
Option A - I am a landowner, farmer, land manager, or working on a nature recovery project and would like to add my land or project to the high opportunity nature areas	10	5.0%
Option B - I am a landowner, farmer, land manager, or working on a nature recovery project and would like to suggest a change to the primary activity shown for my land or project area	2	1.0%
Option C - I am a landowner, farmer, land manager, or working on a nature recovery project and have another comment or issue with how my land or project is shown on the map	11	5.5%
None of these options relate to me, I would like to skip to the next section	178	88.6%

Q. Would you like to comment on a primary activity shown in the potential activities map?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, I would like to suggest a change to the primary activity currently shown on the potential activities map layer	10	4.3%
Yes, I would like to suggest a primary activity in a place that does not currently have one in the potential activities map layer	14	6.1%
No, I do not have any comments	207	89.6%

Any other comments and making space

Q. If you have any further comments, please let us know here.

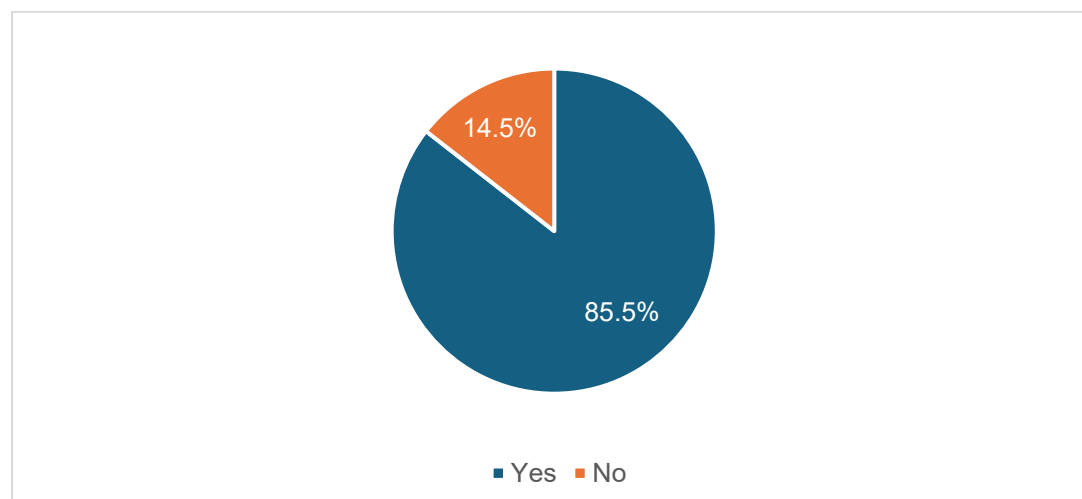
126 responses were received, which have been coded and themed. Some of the main narrative coming out of these comments are:

- generally positive comments about process, including the survey, wanting to help or already being involved in nature recovery projects
- commenting on specific areas of interest
- issues with the survey and/or documents in terms of inaccessible language and general negative comments

Comment/theme	Total
Positive comments about the survey / want more info / want to help / are already involved	45
Comment on specific area	25
Issues with survey (diff to understand/interpret/inaccessible language etc) and negative comments	24
Commentary on land use	22
General comments about development / length of the strategy (timings) and resourcing etc	21
Other	19
Organisations mentioned in narrative	14
Hedges and verges	13
Mention of particular species / animal	13
Issues with the maps	10

Q. Are you, or could you start, helping make space for nature in Dorset?

(n-242)



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	207	85.5%
No	35	14.5%

Overall, current and potential participation in making space for nature looks to be high, with 85.5% (207) indicating they are, or could start, making space for nature.

14.5% (35) said no, and more understanding would be needed to see if it is because of lack of interest, or barriers preventing respondents contributing to nature recovery.

Respondent type	Yes	No
Farmers, Foresters, Landowners and Land managers	96.0%	4.0%
Communities and Individuals	82.4%	17.6%
Public bodies	76.5%	23.5%
Nature and environment sector	97.6%	2.4%
Live in DC	89.0%	11.0%
Live in BCP	77.8%	22.2%

Base: Farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers (n-25); Communities and individuals (n-148); Public bodies (n-17); Nature and environment sector (n-42); Live in DC (n-163); Live in BCP (n-63)

There are some notable differences between the respondent types for this question. 96% of farmers, foresters, landowners and land managers and 97.6% of those in the nature and environment sector responded 'Yes'. This suggests those with the land, space or interest can, and would like to, support nature in Dorset.

Agreement across the other groups was still high, but there appears to be some limitations in cases. 23.5% of public bodies, 22.2% in BCP, and 17.6% of communities and individuals responded they do not, and could not start, making space for nature.

Demographic data

Q. What is your age?

(n-268)

Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	0	0.0%
18 to 24	1	0.4%
25 to 39	20	7.5%

40 to 49	32	11.9%
50 to 59	53	19.8%
60 to 64	42	15.7%
65 plus	99	36.9%
Prefer not to say	21	7.8%

Q. What is your sex?

(n-267)

Option	Total	Percent
Female	131	49.1%
Male	114	42.7%
Prefer not to say	22	8.2%

Q. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

(n-262)

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	237	90.5%
No	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	25	9.5%

Q. The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

(n-263)

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	27	10.3%
No	201	76.4%
Prefer not to say	35	13.3%

If at the previous question you stated you consider yourself to have a disability, please state the type of disability which applies to you.

(n-37)

Option	Total	Percent
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)	2	5.4%
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	4	10.8%
Autistic Spectrum Conditions	4	10.8%
Blind	0	0.0%
Dyscalculia	3	8.1%
Dyslexia	4	10.8%
Dyspraxia	1	2.7%
Deaf	1	2.7%
Hearing loss	5	13.5%
Long term health condition	11	29.7%
Mental health issues	6	16.2%
Physical impairment	6	16.2%
Sign Language User	0	0.0%
Visually impaired	2	5.4%
Medical conditions	6	16.2%
Mobility issues	8	21.6%
Learning disability	0	0.0%
Specific learning differences	0	0.0%
Wheelchair user	1	2.7%
If you prefer to use another term, please write in the box below	4	10.8%

Q. What is your ethnic group?

(n-262)

Option	Total	Percent
White: British	222	84.7%
White: Irish	0	0.0%
White: Gypsy	0	0.0%
White: Irish Traveller	0	0.0%
White: Other	4	1.5%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	1	0.4%
Mixed: White and Black African	0	0.0%
Mixed: White and Asian	1	0.4%
Mixed: Other	1	0.4%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistan	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Chinese	0	0.0%
Asian or Asian British: Other	0	0.0%

Black or Black British:	0	0.0%
Arab	0	0.0%
Other ethnic group	2	0.8%
Prefer not to say	31	11.8%

Youth response - Age

- 80.0% (40) of respondents were 11 to 13 years old
- 10.0% (5) were 14 to 16 years old, and a further 10.0% were 16 to 17 years old

Youth response – How they responded

- 52.9% (27) responded as an individual
- 37.3% (19) as a school, class, college or nursery
- 5.9% as a youth club or activity group
- 2% (1) with their family
- 2% (1) other

Youth response – Nearest town

- 90.0% (45) selected Weymouth
- 4.0% (2) selected Dorchester
- 2.0% (1) selected Poole, Swanage and Verwood

Out of format responses – main survey

The main response platform for the consultation was the online survey. However, the service received several responses to the consultation in alternative formats such as emails, letters, and detailed reports. These are called out of format responses and will be considered by the service directly.

Out of format responses were received from (individuals have not been mentioned for privacy reasons):

- Gillingham Town Council
- Northfield Farm
- Wyatt Homes
- Ewens Farm
- British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)
- Dorset Climate Action Network (DCAN)
- Dorset Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- Bloor Homes
- National Farmers Union (NFU)

- Dorset's Important Geological Sites group
- Dorset Wildlife Trust
- East Dorset Friends Of the Earth (East Dorset FOE)
- Historic England
- Lead Local Flood Authorities
- National Trails
- National Trust
- Nightingale Land
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Shaftesbury Town Council & Sustainable Shaftesbury Advisory Committee (SuSAC)
- The Crown Estate
- Gorwell farm
- Dorset Catchment Partnerships
- Branksome Triangle Committee
- The Erica Trust
- Upper Frome Cluster
- Chalkstream and Salmon Restoration Project
- Cranborne Chase Farmer Cluster
- Lulworth Estate
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council Planning
- Cranborne Estate
- Bumblebee Conservation
- Tamarisk Farm
- Brit Valley Project
- Mapperton Estate
- Dorset Downs Cluster

For this report, the service has themed the responses to show the main topics of discussion. They have also been considered by the service as part of the overall response.

Theme/topic of discussion	Total
Delivery and funding	46
Organisations mentioned in narrative	27
Commentary on land use	24
General comments about development / length of the strategy (timings) and resourcing etc	20
Targets, monitoring	20
Issues with the maps	19
Other	17
Nature in Dorset, pressures	13

Maps	13
Comment on specific area	11
Priority 6 urban	10
Priority 10 connection	10
Positive comments about the survey / want more info / want to help / are already involved	9
Priority 4 rivers lakes wetland	9
Priority 2 woodland	8
Historic environment	8
Priority 11 abundance diversity	7
Priority 12 priority species	7
Priority 3 heathland	6
Priority 5 coastal	6
Priority 9 nature based solutions	6
Mention of particular species / animal	5
Purpose	5
Priority 7 farming	5
Vision	4
Priority 1 grassland	4
Issues with survey (diff to understand/interpret/inaccessible language etc) and negative comments	3
Hedges and verges	3
Priority 8 natural processes	3
Mission	2
Health	2
Geological diversity	1

Out of format responses – youth consultation

The BCP Youth Forum held a couple sessions with groups asking them some questions related to the consultation. The officer running the sessions sent in the results, which will be showcased below.

Group 1 – looking at which actions/priorities are important

This is important

- Make our grassy areas better with more wildflowers
- Make our woods better and bigger with lots more trees
- Make our rivers healthy and have more wetland areas for wildlife that need patches of water covered land
- Use nature to help people. For example, plant trees to help clean our air and fight climate change

- In some places, leave nature to take care of itself. For example, let wildflowers grow and let rivers flow in a wiggly path across our land
- Give people more ways to help nature
- Help more plants, animals and other wildlife live happily in Dorset
- Create more wildlife-friendly spaces in our parks, gardens, along roads and on buildings
- Take care of nature as we take the things we need from it, like food and wood
- Give an extra helping hand to wildlife that are most in need

This is not important

- Take care of our heathlands and make them bigger
- Take care of our beaches, cliffs and rocks along the coast

Tweaks to wording for the priorities

- In some places, leave nature to take care of itself. For example, let wildflowers grow and let rivers flow in a wiggly path across our land. **Leave nature to be and let it take care of itself**
- Give people more ways to help nature **and encourage them to help/promote helping nature**

Group 2 – looking at which actions/priorities are important

- They're all important as nature and ecosystems are fundamentally interlinked with one another. It's like repairing a car, you can't fix some parts and leave others broken

Tweaks to wording for the priorities

- Give people more ways to help nature **and encourage them to help/promote helping nature**

Both groups

Are there activities that you would like to do or think others should do for nature?

- Everyone should be more aware of nature. Poster campaigns and radio broadcasts
- Litter picks

- Encourage the elderly – pamphlets
- Planting trees
- Bug hotels
- Pollinator friendly plant
- Helping any birds/animals that look poorly or hurt
- More bird nesting programmes in the town centres and countryside
- Nature walks
- Nature clubs in schools
- Helping any bees that have had too much nectar
- Volunteering around the town/village
- Eco clubs
- Learn more about plants/gardening
- Hiring people to help out with the environment

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Response to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) consultation findings

Draft report produced by Dorset Council LNRS team: Bridget Betts, Environment Policy and Partnerships Manager and Amy Smith, Local Nature Recovery Officer.

Version 4: 16/09/2025



Photo: Janna Bloice

Introduction

This report outlines responses to the content of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) consultation response analysis report. This response report does not repeat the findings explained in the analysis, such as levels of agreement with each priority or numbers of people willing to do the potential activities, instead it focuses on the consultation findings that require some clarification or an amendment to the strategy.

This response report is still in draft. Responses have been prepared by the LNRS team at Dorset Council, with some input from members of the LNRS steering group and advisory groups where required. The Dorset LNRS steering group have reviewed the changes proposed in this report. An informal briefing on this report was held with some members of Dorset Council Place and Resources Overview Committee. The report will now be presented to BCP Council and Natural England for formal pre-publication approval in October. Once agreed, changes will be made to the LNRS and the final version will be presented to Dorset Council Place and Resource Overview Committee in November, before proceeding to Dorset Council cabinet for final approval to publish on the 9th December 2025.

Some of the actions listed in our response refer to the ‘delivery phase’ of the strategy, this means they are actions we will take after the local nature recovery strategy is published.

Where page numbers and links are included, these refer to the [consultation draft LNRS](#). Please note that the page numbers and links will change in the final updated LNRS.

Responses are split into the following sections:

- [Feedback on overarching topics](#)
- [Feedback on the shared vision and joint mission](#)
- [Feedback on the priorities and potential activities](#)
- [Feedback on the maps](#)

Feedback on overarching topics:

This feedback was brought together from responses to a range of questions in the survey, where common themes were identified and best responded to together.

A. Strategy structure, style and preparation

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
1. Too long, complex and not accessible: • overly wordy • contains jargon • difficult to navigate • tries to cover too much • some found the PDF easier to follow than the web version	Our response: • The LNRS required content was set out in the statutory guidance, therefore it was difficult to deviate away from this and hence the length of the strategy • The strategy used plain English as much as possible and defined technical words, including a glossary of useful terms and video summaries to help people delve into each priority. • The potential activities were grouped to enable people to find the activities most relevant to their sector • For accessibility, two options to view the strategy were provided – a plain text website and downloadable PDF

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- those without internet access or experience are excluded - create a shorter, clearer summary for wider engagement	documents. However, we acknowledge some still had difficulties - Paper copies of the strategy were made available in libraries during the consultation and support to view the maps on library computers Actions: - Work with the website designers to look for ways to improve navigation around the web content for when final version is published - Make a printed copy of the strategy and map available at libraries - On the web version, include all activities as a list underneath the option to view just for one sector, for those who want to see them all - Take a more targeted approach in sharing specific parts and summaries of the strategy as part of the delivery phase (after strategy publication)
2. Vague or overly simple language: - too simplified - lacked seriousness on nature recovery	Our response: - The use of plain English does not detract from the seriousness of the topic but ensure it can be used by a wide range of people across all sectors - More technical detail can be found in the supporting documents - The strategy is a high-level overview of the range of activities needed for nature recovery across Dorset, therefore further technical detail would only be considered as part of delivering specific nature recovery activities No further action required
3. Engagement: - nature recovery should involve changing cultural values and behaviours, not just restoring habitats - the strategy needs to engage the wider public, beyond existing nature organisations - concern that it was developed mainly by experts, with limited public input - have more local meetings to find out what we can do to help - groups offering to share their work and plans - which stakeholders represented the BCP perspective?	Our response: - Many non-environmental groups were involved in strategy preparation - The Consultation and Engagement Report explains more about who was involved - The public consultation was chance for more people to help shape the strategy - Priority 10 sets out the aim to involve even more people and increase nature connection in local communities, in turn increasing involvement in planning and delivering collective action for nature. - The Nature Recovery Dorset network was set up during strategy preparation to capture all the great nature activities local people and organisations are already doing across Dorset, and inspire others to get involved. We intend to keep growing the network - Many of the representatives on the steering group and advisory group work across the BCP council area, such as Dorset Wildlife Trust, Community Action Network, National Trust and ARC. Communications were shared across BCP Council channels and BCP's greenspace team reached out directly to local environmental community groups Action

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	1. Deliver the activities under priority 10 as part of the delivery phase

B. Balance

4. Balance of nature and productive farmland - support for making space for nature on farmland - but farmers also need to produce food and make a sustainable income	Our response: - The Nature in Dorset sections of the strategy notes that it is now widely recognised that some farming methods that were introduced after the war to boost food production have too much impact on the natural environment, wildlife and the soils. Therefore many farmers in Dorset are making changes to more sustainable practices (page 29 of PDF and webpage) - The Dorset farm cluster group inputted into Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document which includes the pressures on those working in land management that impact nature - Priority 7 on sustainable farming is all about producing good quality food, in harmony with nature – it was written by the farmers on our advisory groups and includes potential activities local farmers told us they’re already doing or would like to do. It is made clear the shift to sustainable farming practices and making more space for nature needs to be financially sustainable for farm businesses which are a key part of the local economy. See page 59-62 of PDF or webpage) No further action required
5. Landowner choice: - protecting the rights of farmers/landowners - avoid public bodies dictating habitat activities - allowing landowners to decide if it’s appropriate and fits with other land use requirements - the strategy is seeking to impose top-down centrally planned approach to managing rural landscape and urban greenspaces - councillors shouldn’t tell farmers how to do their job - Concern the county can’t afford to lose farming and forestry activities to achieve 30x30	Our response: - As stated within the purpose section of the strategy the LNRS does not replace existing plans, remove the need for expert advice or local assessments, dictate funding routes, override best practice or policy, or force landowners to act—maps are a guide, and landowners retain flexibility to choose suitable actions and funding. – See page 16 of the PDF or webpage. - This co-produced strategy includes inputs to relevant sections from 75 reps on advisory groups, including farmers and landowners, plus specific farmer, forester and landowner events and feedback through the consultation process - The strategy is a high-level guide for the county, site-specific assessments, landowner decisions and local inputs will be part of delivering nature recovery activities Action: - Continue and upscale farmer, forester and landowner engagement during the delivery phase
6. Balance of habitat types: one habitat shouldn’t always be priority over another as it depends on the suitability of an area	Our response: - The priorities are explained to be of equal importance and are not listed in any specific order. The numbers are provided solely for ease of reference (pg 35 or webpage) - In the local habitat map, to decide which habitat type to map as the primary activity, a hierarchy was used to reflect that some habitat types are particularly scarce in Dorset (see point

- have joined up thinking across all species and habitat priorities. - some habitats should be considered more important than others	2 under ‘how this layer was created’ in Guide to Dorset’s nature recovery maps for more detail) Site specific assessments and expert input are where the right balance of habitats for a particular site or project area will be decided No further action required
7. Scepticism about council’s role: - nature recovery should not be the council’s responsibility, when people are facing financial struggles and housing shortages. - worry about misuse of taxpayer money - concern about effectiveness of council strategies due to past lack of real outcomes	Our response: - Preparing the local nature recovery strategy is a legal requirement and we received specific funding to do this from national government. - Nature recovery is a priority of both local authorities, alongside other key services - The strategy is not a council strategy but a co-produced strategy for Dorset. The results from the consultation have been carefully considered to make further refinements to the strategy - The strategy will be reviewed to track outcomes No further action required
8. Balance access to nature for people: - balance with protecting wildlife habitat and other private land uses - physical access is limited for many due to health, disability, transport, or landscape barriers	Our response: - The statutory guidance sets out that LNRS must focus on biodiversity, not on improving people’s access to nature - Dorset LNRS does consider how increased access to nature could be delivered in appropriate places, in addition to biodiversity benefits of nature recovery work Action - Link nature recovery delivery phase with wider work on increasing access to nature, green infrastructure, rights of way improvements and overcoming social and physical barriers to access - edit <i>page 16, purpose, the strategy does not</i>: focus on improving people’s access to nature, however, this strategy does include activities to increase nature connectedness and map locations to create more nature rich areas near people’s homes. Wider work on access to nature is ongoing, such as the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, ongoing programmes along the South West Coast Path and King Charles III England Coast Path and projects supporting people to overcome barriers to accessing nature

C. Missing content

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
9. Nature decline and recovery: - definition of nature recovery - missing baseline data - current state of nature - examples of biodiversity loss - too-rosy a picture - causes of nature decline - pressure from development - impacts of farming	Our response: - Nature recovery is defined in the introduction (webpage or page 11 in the PDF) - The Nature in Dorset section includes data showing the approximate cover of semi-natural habitats in Dorset now, along with a summary of declines and causes (with links to relevant sources of this data). See Webpage or page 22-29 in the PDF

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	• Further information on the pressures nature faces are can be found in the supporting document • Nature recovery isn't about aiming to recover nature back to a certain point in the past, it's about increasing biodiversity and ecosystem function to deliver what wildlife and people need, now and in the future • The strategy acknowledges the alarming declines in nature and impact of human activities, but focuses on what must be achieved in the next 10 years to start recovering nature and how every sector can play their part No further action required
10. Urgency: • need for nature recovery doesn't feel urgent in the text • urgent need to tackle climate change at the same time	Our response: • The joint mission refers to “the urgent need and ambition to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery”. • The links between nature and climate change are explained in the Nature in Dorset section, priority 9, and the pressures and opportunities supporting document Actions: To ensure this urgency is reflected in other sections of the strategy, make the following edits: 1. <i>Page 11, Introduction, Nature recovery:</i> But over the years the amount and variety of wildlife in our county has reduced and many areas for nature have been split up or lost, leading to a nature emergency that needs urgent action 2. <i>Page 11, Introduction, 30by30:</i> The overarching ambition of Dorset's first local nature recovery strategy is to help achieve the national and international 30by30 target to protect and manage 30% of land and rivers for nature by 2030. This is just 5 years away, showing how urgently we need to help nature recover 3. <i>Page 15, Purpose:</i> provide a clear understanding of Dorset's current biodiversity, the need for urgent action and opportunities for nature recovery
11. Why nature recovery is needed: • why 30x30 matters or what it will achieve. • what happens if we do nothing. • nature is essential to human survival, and this message should be clearer	Our response: • The benefits to wildlife and people of recovering nature are outlined in the following sections: introduction, purpose, and key pressures and opportunities. And priority 9 on nature-based solutions explains that nature gives us what we need to survive Actions: 1. edit the wording before the list of benefits of nature recovery in the introduction to show that these benefits are things we need, not just nice to have. <i>Page 11, introduction, nature recovery:</i> ~~By making more space for nature, nature recovery will~~ Nature recovery is needed to: 2. edit to show the impact of not acting to reverse declines in nature. <i>Page 27, Nature in Dorset, declines in Dorset's nature:</i> Nature (biodiversity) decline means that our ecosystems are not thriving and are less able to cope with change. This often results in a decline and degradation of essential ecosystem services, such as clean water and good air quality, which

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	benefit people. Without urgent action to recover nature, people and wildlife will both suffer. The figures listed below highlight the scale of the declines in nature that must be recovered.
12. Too generic: - doesn't cover specific threats to nature in Dorset - needs to be more locally relevant to Dorset communities to encourage involvement and show how the strategy affects their local area.	Our response: - The strategy is Dorset specific, prepared based on the views of local people, local evidence and Dorset data - Specific threats to nature in Dorset are covered in the Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document - Nature recovery examples are all local to Dorset Action: - Continue promoting the Nature Recovery Dorset network, to celebrate local action, inspire and connect
13. Specific guidance - requests for more detailed advice for specific habitat management - suggested specific habitat prescriptions - requests for plans to stop chemical use	Our response: - The strategy is not the place for detailed guidance on how to deliver the potential activities as any guidance may change during the lifetime of the strategy Actions: - Signpost to relevant guidance and resources via Nature Recovery Dorset - Identify any gaps in guidance for specific activities or sectors during delivery phase
14. Geology: - Concern the strategy neglects geodiversity when describing nature, focusing only on biodiversity - Dorset's unique geodiversity is an important feature of nature – including World Heritage Site - geodiversity also underpins all other natural features and processes - more on geodiversity is needed to make the strategy useful and provide relevant context for nature recovery	Our response: - Dorset's unique geology is recognised as an important factor in its biodiversity, within the Nature in Dorset section of the strategy - The habitat-based assemblage assemblages in the species recovery supporting document draw closer links between specific geodiversity features and the species they support - We have taken input from local geology group and the world heritage site officer to improve how geodiversity is reflected in the strategy Action: - Add more on geodiversity in the Nature in Dorset section, see Appendix A – add geodiversity to Nature in Dorset - Add geodiversity definition to useful terms 'Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms, sediments and soils, together with the natural processes which form and alter them' - Add geodiversity pressures and opportunities to the Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document Pressure: Geodiversity is often not understood or thought about as much as biodiversity, so it can be neglected or mismanaged. This neglect and lack of understanding reduces range, quality, function and accessibility of Dorset's geodiversity features. Opportunity: Utilise geodiversity data to improve habitat management and creation.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	• Opportunity: Identify and support activities that create and improve geodiversity features • Opportunity: Geodiversity helps understand our planet and its systems, including the causes and consequences of environmental change, critical biodiversity loss, mass extinctions, likely impacts of climate change. Celebrating geodiversity and protecting the crucial evidence it contains is an important part of nature recovery. • Existing activities in Dorset: The rocks, fossils and coastal landforms of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site provide evidence for ancient climate change, evolution, past biodiversity, and the ways more recent processes continue to shape the landscape. It is a destination for scientific research, education, and tourism, and protected on behalf of present and future generations of all humanity. • Existing activities in Dorset: Dorset is a key reference point for global Earth science research, it's unique geodiversity helping understand climate and nature emergencies. 4. Work with partners during delivery phase to signpost to information on geodiversity features as tools to help those delivering nature recovery activities. Look at potential links with existing tools such as landscape character area descriptions and British Geological Survey open data
15. Impact of domestic pets: concern the strategy fails to acknowledge the ecological impact of domestic dogs and cats, especially on small wildlife along public footpaths.	Our response: • The impacts of domestic pets on nature are covered in the Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document, along with opportunities to reduce these negative impacts • It is for individual landowners to consider the need for restrictions on dog access or dogs on lead policies not the role of the strategy No further action required
16. Everyday actions are harming nature: suggestions to raise awareness of how actions like tarmacking gardens, cutting trees, and planting non-native species are harming nature	Our response: These are all included in the potential activities in the strategy and promoted through Nature Recovery Dorset No further action required
17. Catchments as a useful concept for delivering nature recovery, with integrated human activities	Our response: The catchment-based approach is referred to mostly under priority 4 on rivers, lakes and wetlands, as well as the pressures and opportunities supporting document. No further action required
18. Hedgerows • were referenced in a large number of responses • concern that hedgerows not having their own priority failed to recognise their importance as habitats and wildlife corridors, and this	Our response: • Although hedgerows are contained within multiple priorities and the vision illustration, we acknowledge the importance of having a separate priority for hedgerows • In agreement with our supporting authorities we will add hedgerows as an additional priority Action:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
could negatively impact current efforts to restore hedgerows across the county	1. Add a hedgerow priority – see Appendix B – add hedgerow priority
19. Specific errors / typos were identified and require an edit.	Action: 1. P26 Map key: says ‘cenus’ not ‘census’ 2. P27 First paragraph: half way through it says ‘Taking steps to protect and enhance species and ecosystems’. This is unconnected to the sentences around it and feels more like a sub-heading. There is no context for having it here 3. P46 ‘Nature recovery in action’ box: the last sentence of the second paragraph ends ‘making ideal basking spots and insects’. Should it say ‘for insects’? 4. P73 Potential activity, ‘Make more space for nature nearby people’s homes’; is repeated as part of the final potential activity at the bottom of page 74 (ending ‘300m walk of nature’) 5. P87 Dorset’s high opportunity nature areas: Final sentence ends (ACB) then it says ‘together’ with no context 6. P89 Nature recovery in Dorset in the next ten years: the first bullet ends ‘made up of:’ but then no further breakdown of figures is given 7. P96 Dorset Council and BCP Council Local Plans: the third paragraph misspells ‘priority’
20. Transitional habitats, mosaics and ecotones • often the most biodiverse habitats • do not necessarily fall into the habitat groupings given • areas of lower height vegetation with interspersed trees and shrubs	our response • the strategy acknowledges the importance of allowing space for transitional habitats, encouraging habitat mixes where appropriate and buffers around built environment • this is covered under most of the priorities in turn, and then priority 8 is all about natural process-led approaches which encourage dynamic and transitioning habitats. no action required
21. Guidance for work on, or near, rivers or water courses	Action 1. Edit this part of the guidance on potential activities in the Dorset’s nature recovery maps section (pg87) Additional advice on ecology, planning requirements, historic environment, flooding and funding options may be needed to deliver the activity suggested. There are lots of organisations and partnerships in Dorset that can help with this. More information on the advice and permissions that may be required when planning nature recovery activities is available in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps 2. Add these points to the Flooding heading in the Wider considerations when planning nature recovery activities section of the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps. • Work in, or close to, rivers and water courses can affect water flow which can have impacts on drainage and flooding and would need to be considered by either the Environment Agency (EA) or Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- Any work on an ordinary water course (ditches, streams rivers and culverts) is likely to require an Ordinary Drainage Consent from the LLFA and may be covered by local byelaws. - Similarly, any work on a “main river” (see map layer in Dorset Explorer) may require an Environmental Permit from the EA. - Some of these proposals e.g. including engineering works /earthworks may also need planning permission. - Before any such work is started the relevant consents will be required
22. 30by30 clarification - all 3 of the 30by30 criteria must be met for an area to count, not just 1 or 2 - nature recovery is needed everywhere, not just on 30% of land	Actions - Edit Pg 11 to clarify: Simply put, an area can count towards the 30by30 if the following 3 criteria are met - Add to explanation of 30by30 on pg11 Nature recovery doesn't just focus on 30% of land though, it's about increasing nature-friendly management of the intervening land as much as possible. - Change order of introduction so sub-headings 30by30 and making space for nature flow into each other - introduction - nature recovery - local nature recovery strategies 30 by 30 target - making space for nature
23. Soil health should have more emphasis or its own priority as they are essential for our existence and a habitat for microbes, fungi and invertebrates	Our response: - We agree soils are essential and important - Many of the potential activities in the strategy will benefit soil health, from wildlife-friendly gardening to reduced chemical use in farming - Specific activities on farming for soil health are included in the strategy - The strategy encourages more nature-friendly land management practices which will benefit soil health, as well as other ecosystem services such as water and air quality. no action required
24. Land cover chart - unequal pie chart segments - request to include areas as well as % figures - request to visually separate the land cover types that are more impacted by human activity as highlighted in the text above - request to mention that coniferous plantation is mostly on land where broadleaved woodland or heathland used to be	Action: - Make pie chart segments in the pie chart of land cover equal for grassland & conifer 3% and broadleaved & urban 11%. - Include areas if possible - Consider ways to show the land cover types that are more or less impacted by human activity - Edit explainer text ‘coniferous plantation – land used to grow a crop of trees, often with non-native species and often on land that used to be broadleaved woodland or heathland

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
25. Safeguarding biodiversity section needs clarification • wildlife reserves are only one part of the solution • also include expansion, connection and creation of additional suitable habitat. • needed at landscape scale • Nature reserve is more commonly used than wildlife reserve which could imply a wildlife enclosure	Action: 1. Edit the final few sentences One way this can be achieved is through the establishment of protected areas like nature reserves. ~~And through bolstering the wider ecological network, involving native and local habitat communities~~ but it also requires expansion, connection and creation of suitable habitat to recover nature at a much bigger landscape scale.
26. Pressures and opportunities suggestions to add to the list	Our response: The pressures and opportunities listed in the strategy (pg30-32) are a summary of a much more detailed list in the Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document. Action: 1. Edit the summary pressures and opportunities Pg31-32 ○ Clean air opportunity: Air quality can be improved by increasing sustainable farming practices, wildlife-friendly gardening and low-emission sustainable transport. ~~plus Specific habitat management practices and buffers near busy roads~~ or creation can help mitigate impacts of air pollution on sensitive sites ○ Climate pressure: Climate change will increase pressure on nature through extreme weather (like flooding, drought and heatwaves), more pests and disease, coastal erosion, and species migration. This will impact how we manage habitats and farmland ○ Climate opportunity: Nature's climate resilience can be boosted by restoring damaged habitats, diversifying habitat structure, using resilient species, flexible management practices, preventing release of carbon from natural stores. Nature also offers solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, benefiting people as well ○ Biosecurity opportunity: Sustainable management practices, including local native species, boost resilience to pests, diseases, and invasive species. Coordinated control and awareness programmes can further reduce or stop their impacts ○ Risk of harm from environmental hazards – Resilience can be increased by expanding habitats, creating buffer zones and increasing connectivity. Nature-based solutions can help with flood management, water quality and cooling extreme heat. Awareness raising and behaviour change can reduce human-caused risks 2. Check the other suggestions are covered in the supporting document.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
27. Historic environment: - protecting heritage is part of nature recovery. - Dorset's heritage assets are ecologically and culturally valuable. - many nature-rich sites are also historic. - nature recovery should support and enhance heritage. - projects can help save assets on the heritage at risk register. - improving heritage sites boosts greenspaces and local identity. - land use changes like meadow creation can protect archaeology	Our response: - The importance of the historic environment is outlined in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps, which encourages use of the Historic England and historic environment map layers on Dorset Explorer and provides a link to the Nature Recovery & the Historic Environment guidance. - Registered parks and gardens are included in the nature areas of local important map layer - Spatial files of the draft local habitat map layers were provided to Historic England at the pre-consultation phase to check for potential activities being mapped that are unsuited to management of a scheduled monument, decision made due to large coverage of the maps not possible to check every monument so instead to explain this best in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps which was done. Actions: - Add to bullets under the historic environment subheading in Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - Consider if your nature recovery project could support a heritage asset on the at risk register - Consider how certain habitat creation or enhancement, such as tree planting, can cause damage to archaeology and the historic landscape, referring to guidance on Planting Trees for the Future Whilst Protecting the Past - Add activity under priority 10 – nature connection 'Explore opportunities to deliver nature recovery projects in places with heritage assets or historical features, to benefit the natural and historic environment'
28. Cranborne Chase National Landscape is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve	Action: Include this where the national landscapes are mentioned in the 'Delivery and funding' section

D. Targets and action plans

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
29. Targets: - does not set measurable or quantifiable targets - doesn't show what success looks like or scale of the challenge - not enough on how this links to national policies. - does not outline the monitoring required to meet the 30x30 target - suggestion to use targets from NE favourable conservation status and/or the measurements outlined	Our response: - The strategy sets out the overarching local, national and global 30x30 target to protect and manage 30% of land and rivers for nature by 2030 - The national environmental improvement targets were used to structure consideration of pressures on nature and opportunities for recovery - the foundation for setting Dorset's nature recovery priorities - The vision illustration was an attempt to show the ambition for what Dorset will be like in the next 10 years. The priorities set out the outcomes the strategy is seeking to achieve. - LNRS are not required to set quantifiable targets – the focus is on agreeing shared priorities and potential activities - Following learning from the Biodiversity Action Plan process, there was an intention to move away from setting very specific habitat area targets

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
in the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy suggestion for a scoreboard of data on species abundance to encourage people and ways for people to help wildlife count data	- The primary activities in the local habitat map give an indication of how the nature recovery network could grow (see figures in 'Achieving nature recovery' section of the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps) - There is a measuring success section (page 98-99 or webpage) that provide some specific ways to measure nature - After publication we hope to develop more plans to monitor progress, share updates and map where nature recovery activities have taken place Action - Add to the <i>achieving nature recovery</i> section pg 89: <i>The measuring success section gives an overview of how progress towards nature recovery could be tracked as activities happen on the ground. (include a link to the 'measuring success' page)</i> - Edit this sentence in the <i>measuring success</i> section pg 98: Further guidance from Defra is expected to enable us to carry out this measurement, <i>including how we might access Dorset data from the national process for counting land that contributes towards 30by30.</i>
30. Lacks actionable detail: - is more a vision, wish list rather than a clear, detailed action plan. - it is impossible to disagree with the priorities, super to work together but what will it mean in practice? - mission not linked to clear and quantifiable SMART aims and objectives	Our response: - LNRS are not intended to be prescriptive action plans – individuals, businesses, farmers, organisations will do their own detailed plans. - The shared priorities are for local people and organisations to agree on the outcomes for nature over the next 10 years for Dorset. - The potential activities are all the practical actions that will help deliver those priorities by everyone doing their bit. - The priorities are the outcomes, measuring will be developed against these and will be SMART No further action required
31. Concern about use of the Lawton principles - concern these are not strategic or targets based upon need, achievability and effectiveness. - where is the evidence that suggests that improving existing "core" sites is a better strategy than expanding those sites, or linking them with wildlife corridors? - for example, in rural areas, joining up scattered tracts of the same habitat may be most effective at increasing biodiversity; in urban areas, creating more woodlands	Our response: - These principles come from the widely commended and influential Making space for nature review led by Professor Sir John Lawton. The report was evidence-based and findings have been supported by subsequent research - The Dorset LNRS explains that these principles are a useful basis for delivering nature recovery and are not intended as specific targets - The evidence for the order of the importance of the principles is in Natural England's Nature Networks - a summary for practitioners - Simply put, if you were to start expanding or joining up habitats that are in poor condition, not functioning well or with low biodiversity – your efforts are less likely to be effective. So best to start with improving management of the existing core site, then move on to 'bigger', 'more' and 'joined up' No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
would help both biodiversity and climate resilience.	

E. Delivery and ways to get involved

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
32. Delivery: - unclear who is responsible for delivering the strategy and how it will be implemented, funded, and monitored - action for nature needs to be embedded in everyday activities across all sectors. - concerns around the cost of nature recovery being too expensive or unclear who will pay for it - concern community and volunteer action isn't enough for nature to recovery - A range of ideas to help deliver nature recovery were suggested, especially ways for communities and young people to get involved	Our response: - The delivery and funding section provides an overview of the multiple ways nature recovery can be delivered and funded, across multiple sectors (webpage or pages 90-97 in the PDF). - Priority 9 sets out the importance of embedding nature recovery across all organisations - As we move from strategy preparation to delivery, there will be chance to explore blended funding opportunities and share progress made via different delivery mechanisms. - The strategy is a tool that will help target a range of public, private and third sector funding – it can help see how funding individual projects or initiatives might join up to achieve the overall priorities for the county - The strategy highlights ways to involve communities in nature recovery, especially under priority 10, such as volunteering, school projects, and tailored guidance for specific sectors. No further action required
33. Managing the priorities: - who will be in charge of - when will the strategy be reviewed	Our response: - Within each priority there are potential activities that every sector can get involved therefore each sector or individual will be in charge of their own delivery. - Dorset Council's role, working with BCP Council, will be to: - coordinate delivery of nature recovery actions with local partners - monitor and report on progress and outcomes - review and update the strategy periodically - promote integration of LNRS into planning and funding decisions - Dorset Council will be instructed to review the LNRS by the national government, this must be within 3 to 10 years of publication. No further action required
34. Clarity requested on how landowners can be encouraged or incentivised to manage habitats in sustainable ways	Our response: - We acknowledge there has been change and uncertainty around environmental funding for farmers. The strategy supports farmers in calling for the right funding from government to help them transition to more sustainable practices - Funding and support routes are listed in the delivery and funding section, under 'sustainable farming and forestry' (webpage or pages 90-97 in the PDF)

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- More detail could be included on the advice and support for farmers and land managers to consider wildlife and habitats in their management plans Action: - Add a sentence <i>Page 92-92, Delivery, sustainable farming and forestry, add after the FiPL para:</i> Local advice and support to consider wildlife and the environment as part of land management is also available to farmers, land manager and landowners from a range of organisations. A few examples include: Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West, Dorset Wildlife Trust, The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Forestry Commission, Catchment Sensitive Farming (Natural England), Wessex Water - After publication deliver more focussed work with farmers and landowners - Add the big chalk partnership to <i>pg93 after FiPL:</i> Similarly, Big Chalk partnership and funding is available in parts of Dorset across the chalk and limestone landscapes.
35. Referencing neighbouring counties local nature recovery strategies and Joint working	Our response: - Since the start we meet monthly with our neighbouring responsible authorities, through a Southwest regional group and meetings with Hampshire to the East - Where possible we have joined up but each county was encouraged to deliver a strategy for their county - Defra will be joining up all the maps nationally. We will then be able to further explore key locations where cross-boundary collaboration is essential for nature recovery - Joint working has been identified as a key proposal for the Wessex Partnership region. - Our mapping can only cover our own county boundary. But we know some of the land manager or project proposals, and nature opportunities do go beyond the county border. Action: - Make clearer the link to neighbouring LNRS in the following sections: <i>Page 12, introduction, local nature recovery strategies, add green:</i> These spatial strategies will provide the framework to drive forward a nature recovery network across England, by agreeing local priorities and mapping locations where activities will most effectively contribute to these goals. National government will join Dorset's strategy with 47 others to cover the whole of England with no gaps or overlaps <i>Page 96, delivery and funding, related plans and strategies:</i> The local nature recovery strategy will also help identify key opportunities to work together with neighbouring counties in delivering nature recovery activities on/near the county boundaries
36. Land use, planning and development: a range of concerns were raised around the impact of	Our response: The purpose section outlines how the strategy can be used to inform planning and development decisions (pages 15-16 or webpage)

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
development, housing targets and economic growth on nature and how the local nature recovery strategy will link with planning policy and decision making. • concerns that biodiversity measures agreed in planning decisions are not being enforced • specific planning policy and guidance for certain habitat types were also suggested. • how does high opportunity nature areas and potential activities map layers affect planning • concern that the maps could limit development potential unfairly or prevent meeting housing need • maps should be used to identify areas less suited to development	• The Nature in Dorset section acknowledges how increased development has disrupted natural processes and negatively impacted the environment. It also acknowledges that development can be done sustainably and be required to deliver environmental benefits (page 29 or webpage). This is explored further in the Pressure on Nature in Dorset and Opportunities for Recovery supporting document • The priorities and potential activities include a range of actions that can be included in planning policy and in development site design • The delivery and funding section highlights several nature recovery delivery mechanisms that are linked to the planning system, including: Biodiversity Net Gain, environment mitigation delivery for development, and Local Plans • A separate webpage provides information on how the local plans and the local nature recovery strategy work together • The LNRS consultation cannot consider specific suggestions for changing planning policy and guidance. These should be submitted via the consultation processes for both Local Plans • High opportunity nature areas are not designations, and a site being mapped as a high opportunity nature area does not prevent development (including farm development) • The local habitat map can be used as one tool to inform allocation of housing sites in local plans, including identifying areas with high opportunity for nature that may be less suited for development • Where development is happening, the potential activities layer can guide habitat features to include in site design • Site-based assessments remain essential to decide the potential impacts of a proposed development on nature and this is considered on a case-by-case basis within the planning system Action: 1. Based on updated national guidance and local planning officer input, an update to the information currently on our website has been prepared to provide more detail and clarification – see Appendix D – updated webpage on nature recovery and planning 2. Share a summary of key consultation findings relating to planning with both local planning authorities 3. Work with planning colleagues during delivery phase to ensure nature recovery is embedded within planning policy and processes, alongside existing environmental policies
37. Funding – BNG: • concern the funding options are biased to BNG and other funding should be considered • concern about the long-term effectiveness	Our response: • The delivery and funding section is clear that there are multiple ways nature recovery can be delivered and funded, not just BNG • Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to secure habitat management for 30 years by a legal agreement and funded by the developer to make it financially feasible • Delivery of the BNG must be monitored and can be enforced if not delivered

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• rigorous pre and post development monitoring and enforcement required • concern about off-site credits not benefiting the area where habitat has been lost • cited evidence that only half of ecological enhancements promised by developers are delivered	• BNG applications are assessed by ecologists and there is a hierarchy to deliver as much on-site habitat gains as possible, before looking for off-site gains. There is also an incentive to deliver off-site gains close to the development site. • We are aware of the report on delivery rates of ecological enhancements in developments, this is not specific to Dorset and does not reflect delivery rates since BNG and its new monitoring mechanisms have been introduced • Some specific questions asked about the BNG metric are out of scope of the LNRS and relate to national government No further action required
38. Heathland mitigation • concerns heathlands still under pressure despite mitigation work • concerns that increased development and housing targets will put pressure on heathland despite 5km buffer • concerns Suitable Alternative Green Spaces (SANGs) are not proven yet to work, not accessible for part of year if in river valleys, and wildlife value is secondary to recreation	Our response: • Heathland mitigation work is ongoing and has to be considered as part of the planning process • Dorset Heaths Partnership carry out monitoring work and report on several aspects of heathland mitigation • The primary purpose of SANGs is to reduce recreational disturbance on other protected heathland sites. But the design, management plans and monitoring of SANGs can include nature recovery activities to ensure they deliver both public and ecological benefits No further action required
39. Nutrient mitigation: • concern nature being used to offset and allowing damage to nature elsewhere • concern too much reliance on good will of people to change practices	Our response: • Nutrient mitigation in relation to development is a response to excess nutrient levels occurring in our water catchments • It does involve offsetting the nutrient load that new developments would add by developers paying in to fund actions to prevent an overall increase in nutrient levels • Mitigation is not the only action proposed, there are other activities happening to reduce the nutrient pollution at source, such as wastewater treatment works upgrades and changes to farming practices • Using nature-based solutions to deliver nutrient mitigation is a way to enhance habitat and deliver wider environment benefits, at the same time as actions to address nutrient pollution No further action required
40. Funding balance for BCP: • concern nature mitigation funding from development in BCP Council area will be spent in the Dorset Council area – negatively impacting nature and people’s health in the BCP area • concern BCP is more nature depleted so needs more	Our response: • Each area of mitigation is underpinned by a supplementary planning document (SPD) prepared jointly by BCP and Dorset Councils, so mitigation is delivered strategically across both areas. These documents set out the parameters of the delivery and guidance on how this should be delivered. • The mitigation officers develop projects using current data, monitoring, and stakeholder input, which are then reviewed and approved by a steering group specific to their area of mitigation. The steering groups are made up of key

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
funding and should have higher than 10% BNG	representatives like Natural England, BCP Council and Dorset Council budget holders. 10% is the mandatory amount for BNG, some LPAs may be requesting a higher gain from developers but both Dorset Council and BCP Council have decided to follow the national 10% mandatory amount No further action required
41. Planning reforms and proposals in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill how will they link with LNRS?	Our response: we cannot give definitive answers on this yet but will update the website as further national guidance becomes available. No further action required
42. Local transport plan – how does the LNRS integrate?	Our response: - LNRS can inform Dorset's Local Transport Plan by identifying areas for green infrastructure, supporting active travel routes, and aligning nature recovery with transport planning to deliver shared environmental and health benefits. - The draft Local Transport Plan is currently out to public consultation, it includes a policy A4: Take a nature positive approach to transport design, delivery and maintenance to boost biodiversity. No further action required
43. Organisations are not taking care of nature, are hard to work with or get licences from etc e.g. Dorset Council, Forestry England, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, RSPB	Our response: - local nature recovery strategy is a high-level document and therefore cannot comment on specific cases or locations - Through Nature Recovery Dorset we commit to work with local residents and organisations and help overcome barriers to delivery where possible. No further action required
44. Council management of verges and greenspaces: - barbed grasses growing in verges that can injure dogs, - walking through long grass reduces people's enjoyment - long grass worsens hay fever symptoms - reduce road visibility - leave more wildflower areas - plant more wildflowers - don't cut April-August when young birds and mammals are needing cover	Our response: - we acknowledge some people do not like verges and wild patches being left for wildflowers and others would like more - Both Dorset Council and BCP Council have policies and management plans to balance wildlife and safety Verge cutting – Dorset Council Report overhanging trees or shrubs BCP Report a problem with a plant, shrub or hedge in a park or open space BCP No further action required
45. Council's own nature recovery actions: - concerns and suggestions on how the council manages its own land and meets its biodiversity duty. - concern the current Dorset LNRS is too focused on rural than urban – suggestion for separate urban LNRS	Our Response: - the LNRS is for whole county so doesn't contain detail on each council's actions as they are in range of strategies, policies and plans and will be reported on via the biodiversity duty mechanism. - The area for the LNRS is governed by the government and national guidance. Dorset's LNRS must cover the full county. - Both local authorities have worked together from the start of strategy preparation to ensure the strategy includes the nature recovery activities needed across both the rural and urban

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	areas. This is reflected in the written strategy and maps, e.g. priority 6 Urban and use of the nature nearby mapping. The LNRS links to BCP Council initiatives that are delivering on the nature recovery e.g. GI strategy, urban forest strategy, nature towns and cities. No further action required
46. Shooting: - land managed for shooting encourages management and creation of a range of habitats that support wildlife - advice is available to the shooting community to promote conservation alongside their sport - shooting delivers health and wellbeing benefits so can be considered alongside other green social prescribing options	Our response: The shooting community and associated land management is recognised as a delivery partner to nature recovery. No further action required
47. Show how local groups and volunteers are helping - raise awareness - mapping, surveying and testing - delivering projects	Our response: - The strategy recognises the great work happening for nature - The measuring success section signposts to the work of volunteer projects such as water guardians - Priority 10 includes activities to celebrate existing actions and collaborate with recording groups and other community projects - It's not possible to mention every volunteer group in the strategy so we set up the Nature Recovery Dorset network and are pleased several groups have already joined No further action required
48. Important role of Town And Parish Councils in providing - nature-friendly greenspace management - greenspaces that connect to wider countryside - spaces for people to enjoy	Our response: - We recognise the key role of Town and Parish Councils in delivering nature recovery for their communities - Dorset Council is working with Town and Parish councils on best ways to work together on climate and nature, an initial survey and successful event have taken place and more work is planned Action: - Continue working with Town and Parish councils in delivery phase to share successes and help overcome barriers
49. Schools and education: - create lots of apprenticeships on nature recovery - show how schools can be involved	Our response: - Lots of Dorset schools are already doing great nature recovery activities - Priority 10 includes nature activities within education settings, rural skills training and curriculum changes - Schools in Dorset can join the Nature Recovery Dorset network to promote what they're doing Action: - Expand work with schools during delivery phase – linking this to the School Climate Ambassador Scheme

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
50. Related strategies and plans supporting document: - refers to East Dorset Forest Plan 2020, this has been updated in 2025 since the LNRS work was done - links to wrong transport plan	Our response: - We acknowledge these errors and apologise Action: - Update supporting document to include the more recent forest plan - Update supporting document to include correct transport plan for DC and BCP area

Feedback on the shared vision and joint mission

Shared vision: Nature in Dorset is thriving, resilient, and connected across our landscapes. It is accessible to and celebrated by all

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
51. The vision: - nature is in crisis - unclear if the vision was describing the current state or future goals. - access to nature for people should be improved - landowners concern the vision is promoting unrestricted access - public understanding of nature's value is low, or people have more urgent priorities like housing or cost of living - landowners, farmers, water companies and developers need to be part of achieving the strategy - suggestion for a realistic, interim 10-year vision is needed alongside long-term aspirations	Our response: - the vision for the LNRS is a clear, aspirational statement that describes the desired long-term outcome the strategy aims to achieve. It sets the direction and purpose, helping guide decisions and actions - access to nature is not the primary purpose of the LNRS - accept that the vision wording may give the impression of access to all therefore needs amending. - the strategy sets out activities that all sectors can deliver, from individuals to big water companies to farmers to developers Actions: - edit the vision: Nature in Dorset is recovering, thriving, resilient and connected across our landscapes. Everyone in Dorset is able to access nature and be involved in nature recovery.

*Some feedback on the vision was quite detailed and related to other parts of the strategy – could not all be captured in a short vision statement so has been considered in relation to other sections.

Joint mission: “Collectively work together to meet the urgent need and ambition to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery”

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
52. The mission: - lack of targets or action plan would lead to complacency and tick-box exercises rather than action - urgent need to recover nature and address climate change not addressed - unhelpful or alarming language, use ‘crises’ instead - not an emergency: a few felt there is no climate and/or nature emergency, some felt locally the key issues are development, pollution and litter. - concern mission not agreed by all stakeholders. ‘collectively’ and ‘together’ have similar meaning - Some suggested redrafts but often with complex language - Suggestion ‘join together to make Dorset a national and global exemplar of humanity re-engaging with nature, unleashing substantial benefits in health, prosperity and happiness personally and for our communities while enhancing our safety – and that of nature – from the risks and crises in the climate and in nature’.	Our response: - The mission drives collaborative, place-based action that restores nature, supports biodiversity, and connects people with the natural environment across Dorset. It provides the overall direction of everyone who is agreeing to support delivery of the strategy. It cannot detail all the actions involved - Both local authorities have declared climate and nature emergencies, as a decline in nature is widely evidenced. Urgent and emergency are now commonly used language to refer to these issues. - The mission was created by the 75 advisory group reps and overall 85.7% agreement with the joint mission in the consultation Action: - Edit mission: ~~Collectively~~ Work together to meet the urgent need to address the climate and nature emergencies through nature recovery, bringing benefits for our wellbeing and communities

Feedback on the priorities and potential activities

This feedback are specific comments or concerns people raised in relation to each priority and it’s potential activities.

Priority 1 – Grassland

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
53. Knowledge and equipment requests:	Actions: Add new activity under priority 10 nature connection ‘Increase training of greenspace maintenance contractors to include

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- access to contractors who know how to maintain grasslands with nature recovery in mind - contractors with the relevant equipment or be able to hire this from the council e.g. wildflower seed harvester or scythes	managing grassland and other habitats with nature recovery in mind, including training on the equipment required and where this is available for hire’. Potentially create procurement criteria guide in delivery phase
54. Footpaths and national trails: Verges along paths and trails can be managed to be more species-rich, similar to verges on road and rail	Action: Add activity under priority 1 grassland ‘Manage verges alongside National Trails and Public Rights of Way to act as species-rich corridors, helping wildlife connect and allowing people to travel along and enjoy access to nature. This may involve a mix of grassland, hedgerows and trees’
55. Sewage: - sludge (treated human waste) applied to farm fields should be free of forever chemicals, hormones, pharmaceuticals, microplastics - prevent leaks of these pollutants from cesspits.	Our response: - It is not possible to add a potential activity on removing pollutants from sewage sludge in Dorset LNRS as national work is ongoing to find a solution to this problem Actions - Add to the pressures and opportunities supporting document, in the section on farming ‘Follow updates from national work looking at ways to reduce the presence of forever chemicals and microplastics in treated sewage sludge, before it is used as farm fertiliser’ - Edit potential activity under priority 4 to include cesspits: Improve maintenance of septic tanks, cesspits and sewage treatment works to reduce pollution reaching waterbodies
56. Grazing: - graziers becoming rare in Dorset - opportunity for traditional cattle breed rearing and grazing as demand increases as part of grassland habitat management	Action: Add potential activity under priority 10 with similar activities on rural skills ‘Promote the opportunity for traditional livestock breed rearing and grazing to meet the demand for conservation grazing as part of habitat management’
57. Acid grassland: create and maintain species-rich grassland within woodland tracks, open spaces and woodland edges’ should also apply to acid grassland	our response - Species-rich grassland was used in this activity to include acid grassland, along with other types like calcareous grassland or lowland meadows. - But note that acid grassland is not always species-rich but is still important habitat, so refer to semi-improved and unimproved grasslands as defined in the grassland priority explainer. Action - For clarity edit activity slightly: ‘create and maintain species-rich unimproved and semi-improved grassland within woodland tracks, open spaces and woodland edges’ No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
58. Run off: incentivise arable neighbours of species-rich grassland on steep slopes to reduce nutrient run-off	Our response: • Priority 1 and 7 both include activities to reduce run-off • The delivery and funding section will signpost to some of the funding that support farmers to reduce run off, such as Catchment Sensitive Farming. No further action required
59. Protecting existing sites: importance of ensuring designated sites are being managed effectively	Our response: • The strategy includes activities to protect and enhance existing grassland sites, which can include designated sites • There are separate processes for ensuring designated site responsibilities are being met. They often require specific forms of management to retain their ecological interest and ensure this is delivered long-term. No further action required
60. Dairy farms - how can you deliver nature recovery activities within a dairy farm, concerns include: • wildflowers not compatible with growing winter forage crops for dairy cattle (silage and hay) • smaller paddocks are not a helpful solution in units milking 600 heads as harvesting would be more expensive • mixing poor and better quality grasses for diverse sward height is not better use of the land.	Our response: • Farmers don't have to do every activity in the strategy, and have flexibility to decide what works for their farm • Overall, the strategy promotes sustainable farming practices, particularly in priority 7, but there are lots of potential activities relevant to farmers across all the priorities. • The potential activities under priority 1 are based on increasing examples and best practice of nature-friendly ways to manage grassland with livestock. • Subdivisions can be made using temporary electric fencing to manage units. • Many farmers find diversity in grassland species is beneficial for nature and food production. • In this video for priority 7 local farmer Sam describes how they manage permanent pasture and species-rich grassland on a dairy farm Action 1. Add activity under priority 1 'Create and maintain herbal leys as temporary grasslands on farmland to support pollinators, improve soil health and structure, capture carbon, reduce runoff and increase diversity of livestock forage' (farmer icon)
61. Improved grassland: • why it's called improved as that implies it's good for nature and its not? • is it possible to restore improved grassland to unimproved?	Our response: • The priority explains the 3 broad types of grassland -improved, unimproved and semi-improved (pg37) • We understand 'improved' grassland can be confusing if you're thinking about improved from a nature perspective, but the strategy explains the term means it was improved for agricultural productivity. This term has been used for decades so is understood by many working in land management and environmental sectors. • Improved grassland can't change back to unimproved, but can be managed to become semi-improved grassland with more natural features No further action required
62. local seeds – should use local seeds rather than commercial mixes of unknown provenance	Our response: • Local seed sourcing is already included under this priority No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
63. Carbon sequestration offered by grassland could be made clearer	Our response: - An activity under priority 9 – nature-based solutions is to ‘Enhance and create habitats to help mitigate climate change’ - This activity lists peatland, broadleaved woodland and saltmarsh as examples of habitats that tend to be larger carbon stores, but explains many other habitat types also provide carbon storage and diversity of habitats is key - this would include grassland. - Species-rich grassland can be important and significant carbon stores, keeping carbon in their soils and roots. But once grassland is established the process of removing (sequestering) carbon from the atmosphere is relatively slow. No further action required

Priority 2 – Woodland

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
64. Existing woodlands: - clarify difference between management and tree planting - long-term biodiversity value of existing woodlands - greater priority given to protecting existing woodlands and restoring PAWS than to new tree planting	Our response: The explainer paragraph sets out the importance of making existing woodland better managed, connected and bigger, with an emphasis on restoring ancient woodland. The paragraph then goes on to explain new woodland creation. No further action required
65. Right tree, Right place: - needs more guidance on where the right places are and what the right trees are - avoid trees being planted in inappropriate places as part of climate change projects, e.g. where it should be grassland habitat - what to do when the wrong trees are in the wrong place. - Ancient and veteran trees outside of woodland should be highlighted in the explanation of the priority, not just the potential activities	Our response - The strategy is a high-level guide for the county and the maps indicate where it may be appropriate to enhance or create woodland - Individual tree planting or woodland creation projects require detailed planning with expert input and the relevant permissions - Priority 11 includes activities to control invasive non-native species, pests and diseases, including exotic tree species growing in the wrong places in the wider countryside Actions: - Increase promotion of resources during delivery phase, such as Dorset Council Tree Planting Checklist for the public, businesses and community groups and Dorset Community Tree Fund. - Add text to woodland priority explainer <i>Page 41</i>, before typical woodland species: Trees outside of woodland are important connectors across the landscape, especially ancient and veteran trees. Activities to support trees outside of woodland are therefore included under several priorities, such as 2, 6 and 7
66. Grow trees from seed – encourage people grow from	Action:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
seed, share with others, collecting seeds from walks in the autumn	1. Edit this activity - <i>page 44</i> : Set up or use a community tree nursery to supply, bio-secure, locally sourced and grown native trees for community tree planting projects. This could include individuals growing trees from seed at home before sharing with others.
67. Leave trees to decompose naturally where practicable and not be tidied up or removed	Our response: • Priority 2 – woodland includes an activity which includes deadwood ‘...As well as retaining and creating open space and standing and fallen deadwood’ • Priority 6 – urban includes an activity on dead wood: Create dead wood habitats such as standing dead wood, log piles and dead hedges to provide homes for wildlife, using locally sourced material. No further action required
68. Add pond creation or enhancement as a specific activity in addition to keeping wet features and re-wetting land	Our response: • Ponds are covered under priority 4 and some under priority 6, 8 and 9 Action: 1. edit this activity to mention ponds within woodland <i>page 43</i>: As part of woodland habitat creation or enhancement, keep existing wet features like depressions or re-wet historically wet areas of the land, creating or enhancing ponds where appropriate.
69. Typical species: • lesser spotted woodpecker and stage beetle are not typical woodland species • they are now scarce and on threatened / red lists • more common typical species should be chosen	Action: 1. Change the typical species to • Great spotted woodpecker • Tawny owl • Silver-washed fritillary
70. Non-native tree species: • do not mention non-natives at all, due to the risk of invasives like rum cherry and Amelanchier on heathlands • non-native or near-natives species have some benefits for climate resilience and biodiversity, caution against an overly narrow focus on native species alone • source and use a diverse range of trees should more explicitly state this will assist with climate resilience • balance the need for more climate tolerant species with the risk from invasive species and disease • concern that this activity could be used to justify damaging practices	Our response: • The strategy identifies the threat of invasive non-native species in the pressures and opportunities section, and under priority 11 includes activities to respond to this • The sourcing local and native seeds or plants is encouraged • The strategy does not propose never using non-native species, as there may be carefully assessed circumstances where non-native trees can be used to deliver a specific environmental purpose and managed to control any impacts. The strategy is clear that woodland management should be UK Forestry Standard compliant, which would cover this in more detail Action: 1. Edit potential activity ‘Source and use a diverse range of bio-secure trees and plants for tree and woodland establishment projects. Use a broad and mixed palette suited to objectives. Use native species where possible, if using non-native species to provide climate resilience, prioritise near-native species and never use species that are likely to become invasive or plant large scale monocultures’

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
71. Coppicing: • add the farmer icon to the coppicing activities • recognise that increased demand from local people for natural wood products is needed for there to be an increase in coppicing • add copses as their own priority	Our response: • agree the farmer landowner and land manager icon should be added to the coppicing activities • support for the coppicing industry could involve campaigns and marketing to increase public support for purchasing these products • a separate priority is not needed as coppicing occurs in woodland and within this priority. Action: 1. Add the farmer, landowner and land manager icon to these activities: • Maintain active management of coppice stands and woodlands, and restore lapsed coppice woodlands, bringing these into management, delivering environmental benefits, wood products and economic benefit • Support the continuation of the hazel coppice industry and related rural industries such as hedge laying, to ensure associated woodland and hedgerow management continue
72. Woodland on acid soils: • guidance on restoring heathland on acid soils with conifer plantation is too weak • specifically state that management of rides would provide connectivity • remove conifers shouldn't just be considered, it should be priority where heathland restoration is possible	Action: 1. Redraft this potential activity 'In woodlands on acid soils, retain, buffer and connect heathland remnants to support species movement and restoration, for example by managing rides and tracks. Also consider removing conifers, disrupting historic drainage, and developing In these areas it should be a priority to remove conifers, and restore and developing mire systems with scrub and wet woodland components'
73. Low impact silviculture systems and regenerative forestry • concern it is more suited to native woodland • not suited in conifer plantation on former heathland • concerns about soil compaction and damage to the woodland understory • clear felling suggested as more appropriate in conifer plantations on former heath and can provide temporary heathland that benefits species • UKWAS standards identify that 'Use of lower-impact silvicultural systems may not be appropriate where there	Our response: • Research, case studies and managed woodlands demonstrate that Low Impact Silviculture Systems (LISS) and Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) systems work equally well within broadleaf or conifer woodlands. The suitability of a site for LISS, will vary and be driven by the condition, composition and structure of the existing canopy as well as site objectives. • LISS/CCF causes less soil disturbance, compaction and carbon losses than clear fell. • All forestry operations have temporal impacts upon soils and ground flora. In general, LISS management that is UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) & UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) compliant will cause the least damage of all silvicultural operations. Multiple, permanent but narrow extraction racks reduce impacts upon remaining forest soils and add additional open space also. • Some heathland species do benefit from clear fell, and the resultant temporary open space and successional habitats created. UKFS & UKWAS compliant forestry operations will consider and address protected species and open habitats during planning and implementation.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
is evidence that clearfelling is necessary for the conservation of priority habitats or species'	- Site assessment during planning stages and site objectives will inform the most appropriate silvicultural practices to use for a specific site i.e. LISS vs clear fell. Action: - Edit the explanation of sustainable woodland management in the priority explainer Sustainable woodland management, known as forestry or silviculture, balances our need for forest products and benefits with the need to keep forests healthy and usable for future generations. Management practices will be chosen based on assessment of existing habitat and species and the site objectives. Below are some of the more nature-rich management practices: ~~These are different types of sustainable management types including:~~ - regenerative forestry and low impact silvicultural systems (sometimes known as 'continuous cover forestry') delivers benefits for climate, nature and people by taking a whole system approach. These systems increase species and structural diversity, improving resilience and provision of ecosystem services - irregular silviculture is an example of a low impact silviculture system, it involves cutting down selected single or groups of trees, developing an irregular structure of varied sizes, ages and canopies - coppice is another example of regenerative forestry that has a long tradition in Dorset, providing sustainable products and creating a variety of age and canopy structure across a woodland In some circumstances these nature-rich management practices won't be appropriate, but other sustainable woodland management can be delivered that still makes some space for nature.
74. Deer and grey squirrel management should be mentioned here due to significant impacts on woodland, or signpost to where it's covered in priority 8 and 11	Our response: - This is included under priority 11 as it applies to multiple habitat types but several respondents felt it required special mention under woodland so we will add Action: - Add activity 'Coordinate landscape management of deer, grey squirrel and invasive species as outlined under priority 11'
75. Wood pasture is important too	Our response: Wood pasture is covered under priority 1 grassland No further action required
76. Error in the photo caption , the example is not of a Norway spruce plantation, it is a Norway plantation in conversion to an irregular forest	Our response - We acknowledge this error and have apologised Action: - update photo caption 'Norway spruce plantation in conversion to an irregular forest'

Priority 3 – Heathland

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
77. Restoration on coniferous forestry:	Our response:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• restore heathland from conifer plantations • promote restoring and linking heathland on conifer plantation • restoration of the natural catchment of valley mires within woodland	• Restoration of mires and peatland is covered under priority 4. Action: 1. add potential activity under priority 3 ‘Explore opportunities to restore heathland from conifer plantation, especially where this can expand and connect existing heathland, restore disrupted hydrology to favour peat formation or utilise less productive conifer plantations.’
78. Acid grassland: • acid grassland is rarer than lowland heath and should be protected, not converted. • not priority for heathland restoration over conifer plantation • heathland may expand on acid grassland naturally but shouldn't be promoted	Our response: • Response above addresses concerns about promoting heathland restoration on conifer plantation • The activity does not promote converting acid grassland to heathland restoration but recognises that in some cases it may be appropriate to consider a habitat mix or connectivity Action: 1. Edit this activity under priority 1 to better reflect the need for site-specific considerations ‘~~To enhance acid grassland (former heath),~~ When considering acid grassland management, consider if it is appropriate to use rotational and conservation grazing to develop a mix of heathland and grassland, thereby increasing habitat and species diversity and helping join up heathland fragments’
79. Former minerals and waste sites: • concerns that soil restoration on minerals sites can fail to retain heather and become gorse dominant • concern heathland restoration not always delivered • concern granting mineral extraction permission could impact other heathland restoration opportunities	Our response • As recognised by the BNG metric, minerals extraction permissions have the potential to deliver significant gains at a large scale • Impacts of minerals permissions on habitats are considered via the planning system • Whether suitable habitat restoration for a site could include heathland or other habitat types would be decided as part of the specific site restoration plan • On reflection, the activity of habitat restoration on former minerals and waste sites is not heathland specific so should not be under this priority Actions: 1. Remove activity ‘~~Restore heathland habitat on former minerals and waste sites~~’ 2. Add activity under priority 11 covering the opportunity for habitat restoration in general on former minerals and waste ‘On former minerals and waste sites, restoration should prioritise nature recovery in accordance with planning authorities. Explore options to encourage longer-term management beyond the aftercare period’
80. Manging open areas in forests: • include heathland connectivity in the activity • avoid new conifer plantation over heathland • manage natural regeneration • remove conifers from heathland sites	Our response: • modern UK forestry standard (UKFS) practice and statutory processes (afforestation EIA) would not support conifer plantation on heathland Action: 1. Edit activity – ‘Manage some open areas in forests, such as heathland, wetland and peatland, to provide a network of habitats for wildlife, connected with existing habitats beyond

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
manage tracks and rides to avoid loss of heathland habitat and connectivity	the woodland site. Maintain woodland tracks, edges and rides to support heathland connectivity. - Add activity 'Restore heathland where appropriate, following the open habitats policy. This may include removing conifers and managing natural regeneration'. - Edit activity 'Protect existing heathland sites, managing them to improve their condition and increase connectivity between fragmented sites, for example by managing rides and tracks'
81. Fire risk and recreation pressures: support for continuing or expanding existing initiatives like BBQ bans, SANGs, school visits, buffer zones, dog control campaigns, ground nesting bird season	Our response: These activities are included under this priority No further action required
82. Public engagement: have more opportunities to help with conservation / taking care of heathland, like offered in parks and woodlands – to encourage more people to take care of it and not leave rubbish	Our response: While we welcome responsible engagement, we're not aiming to attract more visitors to heathland sites, as our priority is protecting sensitive habitats from increased pressure No further action required
83. Invasive species control should be included	Our response: This is included under priority 11 as it applies to multiple habitat types No further action required
84. Heathland shouldn't be prioritised because it's not natural and is manmade	Our response: Dorset heaths are internationally important and rare. They support lots of important wildlife and are some of the biggest remaining areas in the UK so it is important they are protected and enhanced No further action required
85. Pigs - pig grazing as part of heathland management is experimental and requires more input than cattle or ponies - the photo and illustration of pigs may encourage inappropriate pig grazing	Our response: - Pigs are used on the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve as part of a conservation grazing strategy to mimic the natural processes once carried out by wild boar. They restore habitat diversity replacing the need for mechanical methods. - Natural England consent is required to introduce pigs into any SSSI No further action required
86. Forestry England and Forestry Commission: - land is shown in the maps but not showing detail of how they're managing for nature recovery - may miss opportunities to restore heathland from conifer. - Issues with forest plans and open habitats policies	Our response: - Forestry England (FE) land is included as a land manager or project proposal; the primary activity is shown as: create or enhance habitat according to forest plan - When you click on the potential activities layer where it covers FE land you can also see the secondary activities which include habitat types identified through the habitat and ecosystem service modelling – which in many cases include heathland and wetland. - In the preparation of their Forest Plans, FE will have regard to the LNRS, including these related data sets

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
Issues with felling licences for heathland management	- Forest Plans detail all operations proposed, including habitat restoration and creation, and the enhancement of natural processes - FE are working collaboratively with numerous partners to restore a wildlife rich mosaic of habitats within Dorset, including heathland, valley mires and peatland. This work is a priority for FE as demonstrated through their commitment to 'Wild Purbeck' - The Purbeck Forest design plan will operationalise the FE's Wild Purbeck - Issues with plans and licences are policy, procedural and operational issues that national and local FE and NE teams are addressing to remove barriers to nature's recovery - ongoing collaboration between statutory organisations, NGOs and private landowners will be essential and as part of strategy delivery we will look to help overcome obstacles to delivery. Action - Add potential activity 'Apply learning from recent changes in the management of conifer forests on former heathland in Purbeck to other relevant parts of Dorset'

Priority 4 – Rivers, lakes and wetlands

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
87. Support and more focus for activities to reduce how much pollution enters water: - financial accountability for polluters and change their practices - stop sewage discharges - slurry tanks and management - upgrade wastewater infrastructure - greywater separation - statutory agencies and local authorities should allocate resource to scrutinise and support - monitor and regulate farms - mention water companies as a specific group like farmers - more buffer strips, cover crops, reduced tillage, reduced chemical use - reduce agricultural run-off - more hedge and tree planting, wetland creation, natural flood management	Our response: - Water pollution from agriculture, wastewater and road run-off are covered in the strategy and in the pressures and opportunities supporting document - Priority 4 and 7 includes activities to reduce water pollution from farming – including reducing run-off, reducing chemical use, having buffer strips near water bodies and slurry trading - Priority 4 and 9 include activities to reduce water pollution from wastewater – including: - Improved maintenance of sewage treatment works - Wetland creation as part of wastewater treatment - Permeable materials and SuDS to redirect water in urban areas into natural soakaways, rather than the wastewater system, to reduce the number of storm overflow discharges - It is not the responsibility of the LNRS to cover monitoring as this is carried out by the Environment Agency - Dorset Catchment Partnerships is a good example of people from all sectors working together in the Catchment based approach to reduce pollution and improve water quality and help nature recovery - It is good to see support for many of these activities and hear from those who are already involved in delivering them Actions:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• septic tank maintenance • special protection for chalk streams • peat, ponds and nutrient mitigation	1. Add activity under priority 4 ‘Create buffers of plants and trees along highways to slow water and reduce run-off of pollution from the roads’ 2. Edit activity under priority 4 ‘Improve maintenance of septic tanks, cesspits and sewage treatment works, and upgrade infrastructure, to reduce pollution reaching waterbodies’. 3. Add activity under priority 4 ‘Improve slurry management to make best use of slurry as a source of organic nutrients, while also reducing risk of pollution into water courses’ 4. Edit activities under priority 4, copying the wording from priority 9 that links permeable materials and SuDS to reducing risk of storm overflows
88. Use of chemicals like glyphosate should be completely stopped – not just reduced as their continued use impacts ability to achieve all the priorities	Our response: • The strategy cannot ban specific chemicals, instead it promotes stopping chemical use where possible and elsewhere having a clear plan to reduce chemical use, through practices such as sustainable farming and wildlife-friendly gardening. • Dorset Council is committed to using herbicides responsibly and only where absolutely necessary to protect highway infrastructure and to assist in their statutory duties. Dorset Council is currently running a pilot project to test alternatives to glyphosate and remains committed to reducing environmental impact wherever possible – read more about the pilot No further action required
89. Flooding: • prevent development on flood plains • deliver habitat enhancements and natural flood management together • how can the strategy help reduce flooding?	Our response: • the strategy draws links between activities to recover nature and the ability to deliver wider environmental benefits like flood protection (priority 4 includes reference to this, but more detail on activities for natural flood management are included under priority 9) • the strategy is a high level guide for the county, it may give ideas of how to use natural features to reduce flood risk but projects will require expert inputs, site-specific assessments and input from the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority No further action required
90. Seepage springs / spring lines / small wetland features associated with geology: • explain more in Nature in Dorset about the geological relationship – porous permeable greensand and chalk overlaying impermeable clay • help makes better sense of the opportunities that exist, where, and why. • Likely to be affected by climate change – less active	Our response: • The importance of the geology is explained under priority 4 • Opportunities to support these features are identified on the local habitat map by using greens and geology data (see final paragraph, potential activities layer in Guide to Dorset’s nature recovery maps) • Based on this feedback we will increase how these opportunities are highlighted in the strategy Actions 1. Increase explanation of link between geodiversity and nature recovery in Nature in Dorset (appendix A) 2. Add to the pressures and opportunities document ‘pressure: human activities have disrupted seepage springs which are important small wetland features. They occur in specific

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
in drought, or more active and more in number in wetter winters In the past these were sources of water for farming, explore the sustainable use of springs as an opportunity to protect farming from pressures and threats	locations due to Dorset's complex geology, where porous permeable greensand and chalk overlay various impermeable clays. They are likely to be under further pressure from climate change, being less active in drought, or more active and more in number in wetter winters' 'opportunity: conserve and recover seepage springs with sustainable management to benefit biodiversity and explore potential for sustainable use of springs to provide water supply to farming, increasing resilience against groundwater shortages' - Edit the explainer paragraph that mentions these features and add a specific potential activity relating to their management – 'Small wetland features like seepage springs are important for wildlife, they are found where permeable geology overlays impermeable geology (typically Greensand), and often on valley sides above headwater streams. ~~If working near small wetland features, seek specialist advice about their conservation and recovery~~' - Add activity: 'If working on greensand or chalk geology that may contain small wetland features like seepage springs, seek specialist advice about their conservation and recovery. Explore opportunities for sustainable use of spring water to increase water supply resilience in farming'
91. Mention key target sites for better water management and permeable surfaces and SuDS – schools, holiday parks, car parks, business parks	Our response: This is for the Local Plan to consider, using the LNRS as a tool to enable better water management No further action required
92. Current state of rivers: - not enough on poor condition and water quality - river ecological status data is not that helpful - data on water quality and species populations would be better	Our response: - Information is provided in the Nature in Dorset section and pressures and opportunities supporting document - Spatial information on the current state of river and riparian habitats is provided in the Dorset river habitat mapping (more info Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps) No further action required
93. Chemicals in veterinary medicines: - caution that reducing medication can put domestic animals, livestock and humans at risk - both internal and external treatments can result in chemicals deposited in environment	Our response: - The wording is clear that this is about reduction, not stopping medication - Individual decisions would come down to the advice from a veterinary professional and the pet/livestock owner's decision and not within the scope of the LNRS Action: - edit activity 'Reduce the use of chemicals in farming, gardening and veterinary medicines. This includes ~~preventative use of pesticides used to treat external parasites of domestic pets~~ (as these often end up contaminating water bodies)'
94. Concern methane emissions from wetlands exceed methane emissions from beef and dairy	Our response:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
farming, but wetlands don't provide food and employment	- Livestock farming is a human-caused source of methane, but sustainable farming practices are being introduced to reduce methane emissions - Wetlands are a naturally occurring source of methane - Wetlands also store carbon, support biodiversity, offer natural flood management and can offer employment through land management roles - Having a range of habitats in a functioning ecosystem also indirectly supports food production No further action required

Priority 5 – Coastal

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
95. Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site not mentioned including: - geodiversity - coastal change and retreat are a key component of its Outstanding Universal Value - key habitats associated with the site including fleet lagoon	Our response: - The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is included in the Nature in Dorset section - It is an omission not to refer to it again in the coastal priority Action: - Add to the coastal priority explainer paragraph 'The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and it's internationally recognised rocks, fossils and landforms support a range of ecosystems, such as rocky and sandy shorelines, coastal saltmarshes and reedbeds, and deciduous temperate forests.
96. Coastal retreat: - habitats lost to erosion – conflict between this wording and priority 8 natural processes - coastal retreat and its driving processes create a complex and highly valuable mosaic of habitats on the cliff slope and foreshore - erosion is generative as well as causing the rollback of land - more precise way to describe – - maintain connectivity between the complex/pioneering coastal and mature/established inland habitats - raise awareness of the benefits of coastal change for nature, using the Jurassic coast as a case study	Our response: - Acknowledge the need to add/change wording within this priority to clarify that the importance of making space for both coastal, intertidal and cliff top habitats in places where the coastline is naturally changing or being managed to be a more natural coastline. Actions: - Edit the priority – 'The coastal strip is enhanced and restored to safeguard key habitats that protect rare and vulnerable species and space is created for cliff top and intertidal habitats as the coastline retreats ~~coastal retreat as habitat is lost to erosion and sea level rise~~ - Edit priority explainer paragraph as outlined in Appendix C – edit priority 5 - coastal - Add potential activity under priority 5 'Connect habitats along the coast with habitats inland and support wildlife corridors' - Work with partners to raise awareness of links between nature recovery and coastal change during delivery phase

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
97. Concern about long-term economic impacts of coastal managed realignment	Our response: • This is not within scope of the LNRS as it does not make decisions about coastal managed realignment. Shoreline Management Plans set out a planned approach to managing flood and coastal erosion risk • The local nature recovery strategy and shoreline management plans should be used together when considering activities along the coast No further action required
98. Suggestions relating to the activities on recreation and disturbance: • change to <i>significant</i> disturbance, not just any disturbance, wildfowling can be done to sustainable levels without negatively impacting distribution, location, abundance or breeding of species • reference dog walkers • where it is not possible to protect habitat through education and behaviour change initiatives alone, use enforcement tools such as zonation, new byelaws, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) • create and enhance alternative sites for recreation such as dog walking that reduce pressure on sensitive coastal areas e.g. SANGs • more signs and restrictions during winter and nesting times • need to balance areas enjoyed by people, not just areas for habitat – still provide opportunities to enjoy coastal nature • continue work of BARI • educate to put crabs back not leave in buckets all day	Our response: • Although one disturbance event may be 'insignificant', cumulative impacts must be considered, as the pressures from each 'insignificant' event may combine • Edits will be made to the activities on reducing recreational disturbance and balancing nature with space for people to enjoy, based on feedback • Some of the specific details will not be added as they are captured by the general activities included e.g. zonation and bye laws could be one way to deliver 'changing access patterns' Actions: 1. Edit activity - 'Reduce pressures from recreational disturbance, for example, helping water sport users, tourists, wildlife spotters and coastal dog walkers understand how to enjoy the coast without disrupting sensitive habitats and species. For example, by continuing the work of BARI – The Bird & Recreation Initiative' 2. Edit activity - 'For coastal areas with high numbers of people visiting, use a mixture of methods to make more space for wildlife, such as. For example, changing access patterns to give wildlife more space and providing alternative opportunities for people to connect with coastal nature, or creating areas for wildlife on nearby land that will be less disturbed, for example, ground nesting habitat for birds on adjacent undisturbed fields' 3. Add activity – 'Create and enhance alternative sites for people to enjoy recreation, such as dog walking, to reduce pressure on sensitive coastal areas'
99. Pollution: • sewage discharges • microplastics • litter on beaches	Our response: • The coastal priority includes an activity about reducing pollution from wastewater treatment Action: 1. Add activity 'Tackle plastic pollution in coastal waters by promoting ways to reduce single-use plastic and

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	microplastics and reducing litter left on beaches and further up the river catchment’.
100. The South West Coast Path and the King Charles III England Coast Path (and its associated coastal margin) can be green corridors connecting habitats along the coast	Action: 1. Add activity ‘ Manage The South West Coast Path and the King Charles III England Coast Path as green corridors connecting habitats along the coast ’
101. Reduce brightness of lighting over water	Our response: An activity to increase natural darkness is included under priority 6 in the urban environment, this would apply to artificial lighting near the coast too. No further action required
102. Topsoil loss: - silt in rivers and harbours - silt mitigation - DNL project calculations could be used to show cost/benefit of tonnage lost and value	Our response: A range of activities to reduce top soil run off are included in the strategy under various priorities Action: 1. Work with partners on ways to show the risks of top soil loss and benefits of mitigation during delivery phase
103. Include artificial nesting islands/platforms into design of flood defence	Action: 1. Edit activity ‘Design habitat creation into flood defence and other coastal engineering works, for example, artificial reefs, rockpools, sand dunes and artificial nesting sites ’
104. Marine nature recovery: - stop bottom trawling 30by30 includes land and sea but isn’t in the strategy - deploy eco moorings in other locations following success of Studland project to protect seagrass	Our response: - The strategy covers all the land and freshwater, up to the inter tidal zone as far as mean low water, the strategy does not cover the marine environment - National government initially permitted us to do a voluntary extension into the marine environment but then instructed us we were not to do this. - The nature areas of national important layer includes marine sites beyond the council boundaries because potential activities on the land can have a positive effect on them. But we cannot map high opportunity nature areas and potential activities in marine areas - Separate work for the marine environment is planned No further action required

Priority 6 – Urban

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
105. Light pollution can also be reduced by drawing curtains after dark and using blackout linings in curtains	Action: 1. Edit activity – ‘Increase natural darkness by using timers and movement sensors on household and street lighting, to reduce light pollution that disturbs the natural rhythms of wildlife, for example, bats, birds, insects. Choose lights that are not too bright and warmer shades, then position the lights as low as possible and pointing downwards rather than into the sky. Also draw curtains or blinds after dark once the lights are on, if possible use thick or blackout lined curtains ’

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
106. Urban nature recovery must go beyond creating parks, it should address housing and carbon emissions of the built environment	Our response: The local plans will be able to refer to the Dorset local nature recovery strategy in relation housing and carbon emissions of the built environment No further action required
107. Request for training for grounds maintenance teams on nature-friendly management practices	Action: An activity related to this was also suggested for priority 1 so will be added under priority 10 nature connection, where there are other activities relating to skills and training.
108. Request for more advice to avoid people planting invasive or near-invasive species	Action: Add activity on priority 11 'Raise awareness of which invasive or near-invasive species to avoid planting in gardens or community projects'
109. Add an activity on reducing noise pollution which impacts wildlife	Our response: Noise pollution and actions to reduce or mitigate are best considered on a case-by-case basis, via relevant systems such as planning, licencing and environmental health No further action required
110. Cycle lanes concern tarmacking over verges destroys nature	Our response: - There is often a careful balance to strike when creating infrastructure for people to use and protecting nature areas. - Cycle paths play an important role in enabling more sustainable, active travel options for residents. By encouraging walking and cycling and reducing reliance on cars, we can lower carbon emissions and improve air quality locally—both of which are essential in addressing climate change, a major threat to wildlife and natural habitats. - Where possible cycle paths are designed to have natural verges alongside them, but these areas can take time to grow when the paths are newly created. - As noted in an earlier response in this report, the draft Local Transport Plan includes a policy A4 on taking a nature-positive approach to transport design. No further action required
111. Support for activities: - Wildlife-friendly gardening - Avoiding artificial grass - Water recycling - Habitat creation and natural features within development - Wildflower verges and 'untidy' areas are good - Tree planting - Green corridors to help nature and people - Balance needs of wildlife and people - Reduce light pollution - Permeable materials if converting garden into parking space	Our response These are all included in the strategy so it's good to see so much support for them No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• Climate resilient trees • Nature-rich spaces boost mental health • Nature-rich spaces in golf courses and sports pitches	
112. Ways for community groups to help: • Information on how to manage grassy areas between houses for nature • If maintenance costs prevents urban tree planting, see if community groups can manage trees	Our response: • Managing nature spaces in urban areas would require landowner permission and other considerations like nearby highways – but there is scope for community involvement in a planned way Action 1. Consider how to enable community groups get involved in taking care of nature in urban spaces during delivery phase
113. Consider adopting the 3x30x300 rule, which states that individuals should • see three trees from their dwelling • have 30 % tree canopy in their neighborhood • and live within 300 m of a high-quality green space	Our response: • This is for the councils to decide if they wish to consider adopting this through the local plans. This will be passed to both councils Action: 1. Pass 3x30x300 rule to relevant teams within both councils
114. Geodiversity in urban areas: • Building stone • Natural and human made rock outcrops • Hard substrate surfaces • Cuttings • Inland rock • Host rare and diverse species • Volunteers could monitor lichens on rock in towns	Actions: 1. Add potential activity ‘Protect or create patches of bare rock habitat amongst other habitat in urban spaces because these support wildlife such as invertebrates, lichens and mosses. For example, leaving bare rock exposed in cuttings, natural stone buildings or keeping a rock face in quarry restoration’ 2. Idea for volunteer involvement in monitoring lichens on bare rock and buildings in towns and villages can be taken forward into delivery phase
115. Footpaths and national trails: Verges along paths and trails can be managed to be more species-rich, similar to verges on road and rail	Action: 1. Add a potential activity under priority 6 (same as one added under 1) ‘Manage verges alongside National Trails and Public Rights of Way to act as species-rich corridors, helping wildlife connect and allowing people to travel along and enjoy access to nature. This may involve a mix of grassland, hedgerows and trees’.
116. Mention community farms – currently missing	Our response: • The strategy does refer to community growing projects, which could include community farms Action: 1. Add activity ‘Continue and grow the number of community farms, allotments and other growing projects using nature-friendly practices such as no chemicals and rainwater harvesting’.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
117. Barriers to making space for nature in urban areas: - Landlord willingness to do nature activities - Density of urban areas preventing tree planting - Council focus on larger greenspaces rather than smaller patches - Community group access to resources to do things	Our response: - The strategy encourages making space for nature in larger open spaces, as well as in smaller patches and in streets where possible - Exploring ways to overcome these barriers will be part of delivery of the strategy – including support for community groups Action: - Explore opportunity to provide advice to landlords on nature-friendly management in properties during delivery phase
118. Pollution from transport is a threat to local environment but the strategy doesn't include activities to reduce people travelling in vehicles	Our response: - The strategy cannot cover ways to change vehicle use in detail as these are covered by the Local Transport Plan and Active Travel initiatives, which the local nature recovery strategy will be delivered alongside. - Pollution from transport is identified in the strategy as one of the pressures on nature - The strategy includes some activities that are nature-based solutions to tackle pollution No further action required
119. Tree strategy Dorset Council should have a tree strategy similar to BCP Urban Forest strategy to help increase urban tree planting and increase canopy cover	Our response: We will pass this on to Dorset Council to consider No further action required

Priority 7 – Farming

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
120. Activity on hedgerows should include allowing hedgerows to expand in width and height	Our response: - The words 'enhance' and 'manage' in the activity would include expanding width and height - The new hedgerow priority will cover more on hedgerow management No further action required
121. Promote agriTech where it can help increase productivity and sustainability, and the one health agenda	Action: - Add activity 'Explore how Agri-Tech can help deliver sustainable farming practices and healthy food production (icons – business, public, farm)' - Add Dorset One Health approach, The UK Agri-Tech Centre farming & food innovation and Farming & Agriculture including Agritech Business Growth Dorset as an existing opportunity in the pressures and opportunities supporting document
122. Dorset Council's own land The council owns great tracts of land including 46 farms. Less productive land should be restored for nature	Our response: - Dorset Council is working on a new Farms Strategy for their council farm estate. A key part of that strategy is making sure they are managing the estate responsibly and sustainably. - The Dorset Council plan includes a target for "70% of our county farms land will be managed using sustainable farming

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
Work with its tenant farmers to encourage more sustainable farming.	practices that balance food production and nature by 2030”, this will be achieved by working with tenants The council is also looking at delivering more for nature elsewhere No further action required
123. Support and agreement with: - increasing hedges - hedgerow management - farm clusters - reduced chemical use - buffer strips - reduced hay cutting - sharing sustainable practices with more farmers	Our response: These activities are all covered in the strategy so it’s good to see support for them No further action required
124. Support for farmers needed to adopt sustainable farming practices: - farms to be viable, productive and sustainable - financial certainty – guarantee funding for nature recovery alongside food - advice on nature recovery - recognise key role of farmers in delivering nature recovery - farmers help deliver all priorities not just this one - make economic case of sustainable practices clear and compelling	Our response: - Many of the potential activities under all the priorities are indicated as most relevant to farmers, landowners and land managers - Other responses in this document cover the support we acknowledge is needed for farmers Action: - Deliver targeted events and signposting during delivery phase
125. Food system: - low food prices put pressure on farm viability and productivity - reduce reliance on imports - effect of nature recovery on amount of food grown in Dorset - focus on more plant-based eating, support farmers to use land to grow a diversity of food not just animal products and have some nature areas - grow more food for humans and less for animals	Our response: - Sustainable farming can be compatible with nature alongside profitable food production, food production is not the primary aim of the LNRS Action: - Continue working with farmers and others during delivery phase on overlapping issues within the food system that are barriers to delivery of nature recovery
126. Land not being used for food production: land bought by large companies, hedge funds and others viewing land as an	Our response: The planning system is where most land use changes are considered. Planning decisions will increasingly be asked to consider how this could impact delivery of nature recovery

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
investment or tax advantage rather than a social asset • misuse of funds on rewilding / taking land out of food production • monocropping for energy crops with long road miles is not sustainable • fields used for solar energy	• In some cases the council is involved in land being bought or used for environment mitigation which as an added benefit delivers nature recovery, this does not use the council's own funds but specific money from development or government grants No further action required
127. Community initiatives: • interested farmers could work with local community groups who can help manage a small part of their land for nature recovery	Action: 1. Explore options during delivery phase, work with partners and learn from existing examples where this is working well in the county e.g. interested farmers allocating small areas to market gardens
128. Slurry management needs addressing e.g. include: • Alternatives to the potential activity to transport slurry from dairy to arable farms that don't need transport • Reducing stock numbers • adaptive grazing techniques to use grass more strategically and reduce maize • covered slurry stores with 6 month+ storage capacity	Our response: • An activity on slurry management has been added under priority 4 based on feedback Action 1. add activity on slurry management under priority 7 'Explore options for improving slurry management e.g. covered slurry stores, larger 6 month+ capacity storage, adaptive grazing to use grass more strategically, reduction of maize planting and reducing stock numbers'
129. Typical species: • Corn marigold is native of eastern mediterranean, corn poppy would be more appropriate • Corn bunting specifically rather than buntings as not all buntings are farmland birds	Our response • Corn marigold is not native but is an ancient introduction so is now typical in Dorset farmland • Buntings should have been Corn Bunting Action: 1. Change bunting to corn bunting
130. Stopping glyphosate use should be a farming priority due to: • Health risk to farmers and employees, to soils, wildlife and people consuming food and water • Economic risk relating to lawsuits • Council to do more to monitor and discourage use in farming, gardening and roadside management	Our response: • The strategy encourages farmers to understand their current chemical use and then follow a plan to minimise use and losses • Any ban of glyphosate in farming and private land would be a national issue, not something this strategy can set • Both councils have policies and management plans for roadside management No further action required
131. Illegal hunting, shooting and the badger cull:	Our response:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- Dorset identified as the worst county for illegal foxhunting - Hare coursing, Mink hunting etc disturbs habitats not just impacting the target species - species introduced for shoots negatively impact native - Badger cull both supported and not supported - evidence that land managed for shooting (legal) provides more habitat such as hedgerows, cover crops, crops for pollinators	- The strategy includes an activity to continue the work of the Partnership Against Rural Crime, which includes wildlife crime (more info Country Watch) - Dorset Police website contains information about illegal hunting. If you have concerns about potential illegal hunting or other wildlife crimes (e.g. destroying a bat roost) you can report this to Dorset Police - The strategy includes an activity linking to the new national TB eradication strategy, which looks at things like the use of badger surveillance and cattle vaccination, to move away from badger cull - BASC provide advice to landowners and those involved in legal hunts and shoots on managing land in ways that support wildlife as well as sport No further action required
132. Geodiversity: - another opportunity to work with neighbours on cross-holding features - geology supports different habitats and land uses	Actions: - Edit activity 'Work with neighbours to take an integrated approach to managing cross-holding features such as hedges, buffer strips, margins, water courses, slopes and geodiversity features.' - Add activity 'If extracting small amounts of mineral for other works on farm, consider whether appropriate to leave some exposed bare rock, sand or gravel habitat for wildlife. This can also be a learning opportunity for others to observe and understand more about geology'
133. Restrict intensive activities in flood plains and within 20-30m of water courses e.g. - Ploughing - Chemical spraying - Slurry spreading - Growing conventional maize and cereals	Our response: - The strategy cannot put in place specific restrictions but does include an activity to create buffer strips near waterbodies on farms - The local habitat map includes an activity to 'create or enhance river and wetland habitat' along flood zone 2 No further action required
134. Poole Harbour Nutrient Management scheme - support for the scheme - concern it is not doing enough and wasting farmer/consultant time to fill in	Our Response: It is not for the LNRS to respond to this and should be addressed by those running the scheme. No further action required
135. More education on sustainable agriculture	Our response: Activities on increasing sustainable practices in farming and forestry curriculum, and peer learning events, are covered under priority 10 with other points on skills and knowledge No further action required
136. Mixed farming not as viable in the modern farming: bigger machinery and less workers makes smaller fields/paddocks harder	Our response: - Farmers don't have to do every activity in the strategy, and have flexibility to decide what works for their farm - As there is increasing evidence that some modern farming techniques and machinery are causing too much harm to the environment, alternative sustainable practices are being

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- price per tonne of wheat is much lower than the 70s - trees in fields are hard to work around	developed and trialled which can overcome some of these challenges - local examples are shown in the strategy No further action required

Priority 8 – Natural processes

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
137. Land boundaries: - Issues with dynamic habitats lacking clear boundaries - System of land ownership and county jurisdiction has clear boundaries	Our response: - Some landowners and projects are using natural process led conservation on a large scale especially where they have the available land and/or partnerships with neighbours e.g. through landscape recovery projects - Natural process approaches can still be used to inform management of smaller sites and is cited in the strategy as an option No further action required
138. This priority doesn't seem as detailed as other priorities - less clearly defined than the other priorities - to what extent will restoring natural processes overrule other land use plans	Our response: - The video for this priority provides more detail - The strategy does not overrule any land use plans, it is a guide to consider incorporating more nature recovery activities into land use plans No further action required
139. Some habitats still require specific targeted interventions, even if natural processes have been restored e.g. - encroachment of scrub and secondary woodland successional processes on calcareous grassland to detriment of the grassland - heath will need management to prevent succession to woodland, even if natural processes have been established.	Action: Edit the last sentence in explainer paragraph – ‘Enabling this landscape change is likely to require larger areas and sufficient time to work effectively, and some species and habitats will still require targeted interventions’.
140. Raise awareness on ‘untidy’ areas are not neglected areas and why natural processes need to be restored	Action: Edit activity under priority 10 nature connection – ‘Support communities to understand and celebrate any changes happening through habitat restoration and why it is needed. For example, information signs on footpaths and near projects, volunteer days, and explaining the positives of having wilder areas that may seem ‘untidy’ to some
141. Support and agreement with: natural river processes	Our response: These are all included in the strategy and pleased they are supported

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- Beavers - Deer and grey squirrel management	No further action required
142. Restoration opportunities: - oyster, muscles and shellfish beds to poole harbour - seagrass to Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch bays	Action: Edit activity under priority 5 – ‘Seek to restore lost coastal and intertidal habitats such as seagrass beds, oyster reefs, mussel beds, saltmarsh and sand dunes, as improvements in underlying environmental conditions allow
143. Beavers would help improve natural processes of rivers and wetlands	Our response: Beavers and their role as ecosystem engineers is covered in priority 12 - priority species No further action required
144. Farmers to have 20m along rivers as wild places for nature	Our response: An activity to include buffer strips near waterbodies is included under priorities 7 and 4 No further action required
145. Wet woodland is covered in the priority explainer but not a potential activity , could the strategy suggest planting trees which favour wet conditions such as alder, willow and aspen in wetter areas?	Our response: - Wet woodland is mentioned under priority 2 and this priority 8 - The strategy does not get into the detail of recommending specific species for habitat types Action: - Work with partners to identify if more advice on wet woodland is required in delivery phase
146. Geodiversity: - natural processes largely driven by underlying geodiversity - geodiversity characteristics essential to understand processes active in an area	Action: Add to the explainer paragraph of the priority ‘Understanding of the geology in an area is essential to inform what natural processes are, or could be, active there’
147. Opportunity-cost decisions may be needed for trade-off decisions between ecosystem services, including food production.	Our response: - The strategy does not replace detailed decisions about the best use of a piece of land - It does not always have to be a trade-off between different ecosystem services, it can be possible to restore functioning natural processes on productive farmland, in ways that benefit wildlife and food productivity No further action required

Priority 9 – Nature-based solutions

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
148. First choice: - Nature-based solutions might not be right every time - Each case should be judged on its merits - Consider unintended consequences	Our response - The use of the words ‘first choice’ means nature-based solutions are the first options considered when responding to wider environmental issues - This doesn’t mean they must be used every time if the evidence suggests another solution would be more effective. Action:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	1. Edit priority wording 'Nature-based solutions are ~~used as~~ the first choice option to address wider environmental issues, such as flooding, climate change and pollution'
149. A decision framework should be introduced to ensure nature-based solutions are looked at first by local authorities, water companies, national grid and other infrastructure	Our response: - Nature-based solutions are increasingly being considered first by many organisations, but this priority is about ensuring that happens - The priority includes an activity to embed nature recovery across all organisations and ensure nature-based solutions are considered as part of decision making Action - Ensure nature recovery is embedded in decision making as we move into delivery phase
150. Natural stone: - lower carbon footprint than importing or using synthetic materials like concrete - should we be advocating for the use of local stone where possible - supports jobs associated with quarrying - opportunities for bare rock habitats and geodiversity	Our response: - It is often best to use natural stone and there are opportunities for habitat restoration on former minerals sites, which could include leaving bare rock habitat - But natural stone isn't in itself a nature-based solution so not to be added under this priority No further action required
151. Seagrass: - good for carbon sequestration - not just seahorses - possibly also help with eutrophication - charge a seagrass levy on every harbour mooring - allocate areas for seagrass restoration in Poole harbour	Our response: - There is an activity under this priority to 'Enhance and create habitats to help mitigate climate change' - This activity lists peatland, broadleaved woodland and saltmarsh as examples of habitats that tend to be larger carbon stores, but explains many other habitat types also provide carbon storage and diversity of habitats is key. - Seagrass beds can store carbon - A seagrass assemblage is included under priority 12, and the potential activities listed in the species recovery supporting document include restoration and some byelaws No further action required
152. Food and farming are also a nature-based solution for our health as well as nature	Our response: - This is a good example of the connection between priorities, as priority 7 is all about sustainable farming to produce food in harmony with nature - As green social prescribing has been included here as a nature-based solution for health, sustainable food production could also be listed Action - Add activity to priority 9 'Use sustainable farming practices to produce healthy food and support initiatives to connect people with local sustainably produced food'
153. Rainwater harvesting: for individual use: residents to have water butts	Our response: There is an activity on water butts for rainwater harvesting under priority 6 Actions:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
for community use: install intermediate bulk containers in public spaces	- Add activity under this priority 'Use rainwater harvesting to capture rainwater and use this to water plants in residential and community spaces - Work with partners to promote rainwater harvesting in residential and community spaces during delivery
154. Support for: - Hedgerows - Permeable materials - Natural flood management - Tree planting - Sustainable drainage systems	Our response: These are all included in the strategy so it's good to see so much support for them No further action required
155. Wetlands for sewage treatment: Concern about health risks Especially in dry summers	Our response - One activity refers to using wetlands for final treatment of wastewater that has already been treated. - Another activity refers to untreated sewage, but specifically where this sewage would be discharged from storm overflows. - Use of wetlands does not replace wider work to reduce the occurrence of storm overflow discharges. - Water companies are actively trialling different options to use wetlands, and each project requires detailed planning and consideration of potential risks. No further action required

Priority 10 – Nature connection

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
156. Nature connection is most important - essential to the rest of the strategy - focus should be more on nature connection - not necessarily more involvement in nature recovery	Our response - As outlined in response 6, all the priorities are of equal importance - This priority recognises the need for more people to connect with nature for nature recovery to be achieved - The LNRS is not able to focus on nature connection in isolation, so instead we included this priority to show how nature connection can lead to more action for nature recovery No further action required
157. Support for raising awareness and more opportunities for people to connect with nature e.g. - explaining why 'wild' areas are left - citizen science - guided nature walks - climate change/ nature links	Our response: - These are all included in the strategy so it's good to see so much support for them Action: - Continue working with partners during delivery phase to expand these opportunities and overcome barriers
158. Access to nature is a key way for people to connect: - support the rights of way and open access land - balance opportunities for people and nature	Action: Add activity under this priority 'Promote ways for people to connect with nature when using footpaths, national trails, rights of way and open access land.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
159. Geodiversity awareness: • raise awareness of the ways geodiversity supports nature recovery and protecting geodiversity as its own important part of nature • river restoration is about geomorphology, not just the diversity of wildlife • nature is not just the living things but the systems that support them • tourist literature, interpretation boards, QR codes • volunteering to conserve geological sites • museums to learn natural history and stories	Actions: 1. Add potential activity under nature connection ‘Share opportunities for people to learn more about local geodiversity, how it supports the natural environment, what nature recovery activities are supported by different geology, and opportunities to conserve geology through volunteering. 2. During delivery phase encourage those creating communications about nature recovery projects to refer to geodiversity as well as biodiversity
160. Important to fund the publicity and outreach around delivering nature recovery	Our response: • Defra have funded Dorset Council initially for one year to convene and facilitate delivery of the strategy, this will include spending funds on publicity and engagement No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
161. Suggestions that Dorset Council could have a role in - giving people a range of opportunities to get involved, not just ‘informing’ but inspiring and organising - supporting administrative aspects of volunteer work e.g. template documents, insurance policies - catchment-based landowner clusters to help farmers, householders and businesses along the same river system work together - supporting local initiatives to stop using chemicals - co-ordinating the many community river initiatives and groups - replication of successful landscape-scale recovery projects - facilitating the involvement of Town and Parish Councils to produce action plans via funding, information, community workshops and advisory groups	Our response: - The strategy contains a wide range of different potential activities that all sectors can deliver - Priority 10 includes an overview of the many ways that Dorset Council and other partners can create opportunities for more people to get involved - Many of these suggestions are more relevant for the delivery of the strategy, rather than its content. - Some of these suggestions are already delivered by partner organisations - Dorset Council is involved in several developing landscape scale recovery projects that are included in the local habitat map, awaiting future funding rounds - As outlined earlier in this report, Dorset Council is working with Town and Parish councils - Dorset Council will have a coordinating role, through Nature Recovery Dorset, but it requires support from everyone to help grow the network, join up existing work and get more people involved Action: - Explore these suggestions with partners and community groups during delivery phase

Priority 11 – Species abundance and diversity

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
162. Which species should be increased and which controlled: - some confusion that some non-natives are ok, but others should be destroyed - if some non-natives are ok, then you need a fuller list of the non-natives that should be controlled and not introduced - additional invasive non-native species or those which spread from gardens easily were suggested to be added to the list - some species/diseases are a direct pressure on wildlife,	Our response: - The LNRS cannot provide a complete list of every invasive non-native species in Dorset, especially as evidence and best practice guidance changes. This is done by the Non-native Species Secretariat, the best source for the latest information. - In the key pressures and opportunities section of the strategy (pg33-34 or webpage) we included a summary of some of the key biosecurity pressures in Dorset with links to find out more. On reflection, this list could be misleading as it will never be complete or up to date. - Priority 11 includes specific examples of invasive non-native species, pests or diseases and suggested activities in response to them. Actions: - Remove the list of biosecurity pressures and images from the pressures and opportunities section.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
others are a pressure on land managers	2. Add activity 'Stop introduction or spread of invasive non-native species by increasing understanding of the risks and how they spread' 3. Edit activity 'Undertake targeted and sustained control of non-native and invasive plants and animals, for example, rhododendron, Himalayan balsam, snowberry, sour fig, cotoneaster, Japanese rose, giant hogweed, water fern and mink. Use resources from the non-native species secretariat for further information and examples. 4. Edit activity 'Monitor tree stocks for pests and disease, and where impacts are high, adapt woodland management plans and practices to respond. Refer to Forest Research for further information. 5. Add activity 'Follow guidance and regulations set by the Animal and Plant Health Agency'
163. Suggestions for delivery of actions on biosecurity pressures • raise awareness that some plants that are ok in gardens cause harm in the countryside • work with garden centres and local and national horticultural societies • is it realistic to control species that are available in garden centres or widely accepted • build in action on invasive non-natives to existing projects • encourage local native plants via planning process • promote volunteer activities on controlling invasive species and information • BASC offer guidance on deer stalking and grey squirrel management	Action: 1. Explore these ideas further during delivery phase, linking in with national initiatives to raise awareness such as RHS
164. Concern reducing all chemical use may impact food growing on allotments	Our response: • The strategy promotes reducing chemicals, for some this may be a more gradual process • Advice is available on wildlife-friendly gardening practices with alternative methods of pest control to chemicals e.g. Dorset Wildlife Trust and Soil Association No further action required
165. Concern about the efficacy of badger vaccination for bovine TB reduction	Our response: • The strategy supports following the new national TB eradication strategy, it will be important to follow updates and reports on this as the work progresses No further action required
166. support for	Our response:

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- Deer management - Grey squirrel management - Invasive non-native species control - Habitat connectivity - Ash dieback coordinated response including trees in hedgerows	These are all included in the strategy so it's good to see so much support for them No further action required
167. Deer population management: - the activity separates management of muntjac and sika deer identifying the former as a non-native invasive species - both species are non-native and invasive requiring control.	Our response: - The wording of this activity was based on Forestry Commission advice - Although both species are non-native, Muntjac is also considered invasive - So future work to coordinate management of deer populations would be looking to eradicate Muntjac, while managing sustainable Sika populations Action: - edit the activity 'Coordinate landscape scale management of sustainable deer populations to improve the ecological condition of semi-natural habitats, supporting the natural regeneration of trees, woody shrubs and ground flora, and to protect agricultural crops. Control muntjac deer (as an ~~non-native~~ invasive species). Within both Wareham and Purbeck focus management actions upon sika deer populations.
168. Diverse species: if re-planting trees lots to disease, use more resistant and more diverse species	Action: Edit activity 'If plants or trees are lost to disease, re-plant with a more resistant and diverse species mix but make sure these perform similar or enhanced ecological functions and are native if possible
169. Where should there be more abundance: - More abundance and diversity is not always better at some sites - every street, every garden, every field, every 1km square – people will be motivated if where they live matters, abundance on their doorstep as well as whole county	Our response: - The priority is about increasing overall abundance and diversity of species across Dorset, this is essential due to significant declines in biodiversity in the county - It can be delivered at every scale No further action required
171. Geodiversity: - geodiversity features support diverse species - so supporting and enhancing biodiversity will support species - local geological sites are an opportunity to do this	Action: Add activity 'Maintain local geological sites in order to support geodiversity and species diversity

Priority 12 – Priority species

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
172. Priority species list too limited: • biased to a few taxa • wider range of organisms and habitats needed to achieve nature recovery • balance between restoring habitat function and conserving specific species • concern reintroductions could detract from core nature conservation • some species that have been lost may no longer be suited to current times • unclear the relationship of the excellent multi-taxa habitat assemblages with the rest of the plan • difficult to see the species ruled out of the priority list • not ambitious enough • concern flagship species are chosen for their visual appeal but aren't typical	Our response: • The priority species list is one part of the LNRS, it is not to be used in isolation, the rest of the priorities cover the full range of species, habitats, natural processes and enabling actions required for nature's recovery • The species recovery supporting document sets out the criteria for selection of priority species set by Defra and the range of taxa experts involved in the process. • The species longlist contains a much wider range of taxa. It was not just a step in the process of identifying the priority species, it can be used as a tool in it's own right, along with the multi-taxa habitat-based assemblages. • Any activities delivered for species on the priority list should consider how they might also deliver benefits for a wider range of species • Based on feedback we will strengthen the link between the longlist, habitat-based assemblages and the priorities in the rest of the LNRS. • The longlist spreadsheet indicates the species ruled out of the priority list (Appendix A of the species recovery supporting document includes link to download spreadsheet) • The species task and finish group endeavoured to strike a balance between ambition and realistic delivery – meaning the priority species list is considered too ambitious by some, and not ambitious enough by others. • Some examples of typical species are included in each of the habitat-based priorities 1-7. Action 1. Edit explainer in priority 12 Making more space for nature across the landscape will lead to an increase in the abundance and diversity of wildlife across Dorset. By delivering activities under the other nature recovery priorities, we expect to see increases in populations of species associated with specific habitats, such as woodlark benefiting from the heathland priority. However, some species need bespoke action to enable their numbers to recover, increase and be sustained. To identify which species should be on this priority list, a group was formed with experts representing amphibians and reptiles, birds, fish, fungi, invertebrates, lichens, mammals and plants. ~~The group followed a process set out by Defra to:~~ Following a process set by Defra, the group: • created a longlist of almost 1,000 species that are characteristic of Dorset, at high risk of extinction or otherwise locally significant • selected the 54 priority species from the longlist by identifying species requiring bespoke activities, and considering factors such as urgency, feasibility, climate change and existing work

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	The species recovery supporting document explains the methodology, who was involved, and which species were selected for the long list. While the priority list focuses on species requiring bespoke action, the longlist is a useful tool for planning nature recovery projects. The longlist species are grouped into habitat-based assemblages, each with their own guide explaining which species have similar habitat requirements and the pressures they face. These guides provide useful information to understand how activities under other priorities in this strategy will help species. For example, the potential activities under priority 5 – coastal can support the assemblage ‘species of soft rock and slumping cliffs’. This is the first time this approach has been taken for such a large range of important species in the county, bringing together key information on species requirements to inform habitat management and restoration. Priority species There are 73 individual priority species but some have been grouped into assemblages where they require the same bespoke activities to reduce the list to 54. The potential activities for each species can be found in the species recovery supporting document. ~~Here you can also find details on the methodology, who was involved, and what species are on the long list.~~ For the first section of the priority list the ambition is to reverse declines, for the second section of the list the ambition is to explore the potential for conservation translocation. It may not be possible to recover or reintroduce some of the priority species within the lifetime of the local nature recovery strategy, instead the potential activities for some species focus on better understanding evidence, risks, local views and deliverability. - Edit sentence in explainer under priority 11 ‘This will be achieved by combining potential activities listed under a number of the other nature recovery priorities’ - Add link to the habitat-based species assemblages in the pressures and opportunities supporting document under the thriving plants and wildlife section ‘The species recovery supporting document includes habitat-based species assemblage guides, which summarise the key pressures on groups of species in Dorset that share similar habitat requirements’ - Work with partners during delivery phase on how the habitat-based assemblages can be promoted as useful tools to inform delivery of nature recovery projects
173. Conservation translocations, or re-introductions: must adhere to the code and guidance for reintroductions and other conservation translocations in England	Our response: - These points are covered in the explanation of conservation translocations within the LNRS (pg83 or webpage see subheading ‘priority species for conservation translocation’) - Further explanation and links to national code and guidance are provided in the species recovery supporting document

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• be subject to scrutiny to ensure that proposals provide clear benefits, recognise any risks and avoid negative environmental, economic or social impacts • important in the feasibility stage to avoid focus on the initial years and consider what the species and its interaction with people will look like in the long-term	• Each conservation translocation will require its own plan of action and cannot rely solely on being mentioned in the priority species list. • The strategy is clear that species on the conservation translocation section of the priority list are included to better understand evidence, risks, local views and deliverability, before any translocation were to take place. No further action required
174. Water vole and hedgehog are endangered and in severe decline so should be on the priority list. An important water vole population is reported in the Asker Meadows.	Our response: Hedgehogs: • Do not require bespoke actions for their recovery so will be supported by the other activities listed under the other priorities in the strategy. • Priority 6 lists hedgehog as a typical urban species and includes an activity on wildlife-friendly gardening which can include actions for hedgehogs. There is an activity encouraging the use of ‘hedgehog highways’ in new development, we note these can be added in existing buildings and outdoor spaces too • Priority 11 includes a potential activity on wildlife-friendly gardening, listing hedgehog house as an example. Water vole: • Some activities that would benefit water vole will be delivered by general habitat improvements, such as re-naturalising the riparian zone through environmental land management schemes • Water voles would also benefit from the complex wetlands created by Beavers, already on the priority species list • The main bespoke action required by water vole is tackling predation from American mink, a non-native species. There was previously no credible method for mink eradication but a new method has been shown to be effective in East Anglia at a sub-regional scale. • Multiple species may benefit from mink control, so water vole are a good flagship species for this Actions: 1. Edit activity under priority 6 urban (pg58) ‘Include species enhancements in the design of new buildings and developments. For example, bird and bat boxes/bricks, bee bricks, hedgehog highways. And add these to existing buildings and gardens too.’ 2. Add water vole to the species priority list with the following potential activities added in the supporting document: • Increase the geographic extent of suitable habitat • Increase the quality and complexity of habitat, especially wetlands

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- Remove predation pressure from non-native American mink - Learn from new mink control methods from the Waterlife Recovery Trust project - Learn from previous Dorset project to remove mink to protect water vole on the Brit and Bride catchment delivered by BASC, SITA Trust and EA.
175. Swifts: - add an activity to protect existing nest sites. Because Swifts are nest faithful and if, on returning from Africa, they find their nest entrance is blocked they are often fatally injured whilst repeatedly trying to gain access. They are only in the UK three months of the year to breed and have little time to find a new site and breed in the same season. - fit swift boxes to old properties and new builds. - refer to NPPF guidance refers to swift bricks as universal nest bricks - require a minimum of one nest box per unit in a development - nest bricks can benefit other species such as starlings and sparrows - artificial nest cups for House Martins should be similarly considered - guidance available in National Design Guide, National Model Design Code, British Industry Standard BS 42021:2022, Homes for Nature, RSPB Guide to Nestboxes.	Our response: - Not deemed credible to prevent any property maintenance when former nest sites are unoccupied, it is already a crime to disturb birds that are nesting. The focus should be on raising awareness, signposting to relevant guidance and encouraging to place a swift brick as part of any maintenance. - Two of the potential activities for swift refer to adding nest sites within new builds and mandating action via the planning system. The LNRS is not the place for detailed planning guidance or policy, but this is an example of how the LNRS can inform planning and help embed nature recovery across decision-making processes. - The Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol (DBAP) already includes a requirement for all new residential development to include built-in bird boxes/bricks in 50% of all new houses, all householder applications for alterations and extensions must provide a minimum of 1 nest box/brick and this is extended to non-residential development where appropriate. Whilst this is guidance and not policy, it has become common practice within the Dorset Council area. The choice of provision is guided by biological records, the information collected by the consultant ecologist, and our own local knowledge to ensure the boxes selected are the most appropriate for the species present locally - swift, swallows, house martins or sparrows. - Best practice guidance can be shared during delivery phase Actions - Edit potential activity 'raise awareness among householders, developers, builders and planners of the need to accommodate swift nesting during household renovations' - Edit the activity 'raise awareness among planners, builders and architects of the options for incorporating swift nest sites into new builds, such as universal nest bricks' - Edit the activity 'use the planning system to mandate action for swifts, such as a minimum of one universal nest brick per unit where appropriate'

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
176. Reptiles: • concern no reptiles on the list • suggestion that Hampshire LNRS is including Smooth snake, Sand lizard, Natterjack Toad and Adder • targeted habitat management needed to conserve existing populations • habitat restoration needed to allow for population increase • Dorset has majority of the national population of sand lizard and is also significant for smooth snake	Our response: • Natterjack toad is on the priority list (amphibian) • Smooth snake, sand lizard and adder require the same habitat enhancement and creation as others in their habitat-based assemblage, not something bespoke, so it is best to focus on delivering the requirements for all species in the Species of dry and humid heath assemblage. • Sand Lizard require bare ground in addition to general heathland management, but bare ground is beneficial to a range of other plant and invertebrate species, as shown in the Species of bare ground on dry and humid heath assemblage and is therefore not bespoke. • Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is an example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist and the other priorities in the LNRS – the priority list includes those that need bespoke action, but all species and habitats require recovery activities • Sand lizard and other species are affected by unfavourable conservation status of heathland sites, including fire, loss of mature dry heath, inadequate bare ground (egg laying/recruitment) and poor site connectivity. And some management choices lack balance between the needs of different species and land uses. • Heathland management can be delivered to benefit multiple species, and reducing disturbance from recreation and non-native grazing pressures can enhance the habitat and its species. Some additional management, such as increasing bare ground, can support specific species such as sand lizard. Priority 3 on heathland could be edited to better reflect this. Action: 1. Add activity to priority 3 heathland - Create and enhance bare ground areas on heathland to benefit plants, invertebrates, and sand lizard' 2. Update assemblages to include heathland reptiles (sand lizard) within the species of bare ground and pioneer stages of dry and humid heath
177. Priority species are important but trees are more important	Our response: • Trees feature in more than one priority as they are fundamental to many habitats • All priorities are considered equal so priority species are not placed above trees, but the priority species are those requiring bespoke action for recovery • Black poplar and elm are 2 trees identified as priority species due to their need for bespoke action No further action required
178. Could Brown Hare be added to the priority list	Our response: • Brown hare doesn't meet the first few criteria for inclusion on the longlist as it's not under IUCN threat categories, but was added to the longlist under the criteria of species of local significance

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	• We acknowledge many farmers are working to support this species • Priority 7 lists Brown hare as a typical farmland species • Priority 10 includes an activity on preventing rural wildlife crime, which would include hare coursing • The sustainable farming practices encouraged in the rest of the strategy will create/enhance habitat to support brown hare so there is no need to add to the priority list • Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS No further action required
179. Great bustard should be reintroduced	Our response • A reintroduction project is happening on Salisbury Plain for this species • It is too soon to know if this would be appropriate or effective in Dorset • Following lessons learned from the Salisbury project, this can be reconsidered at the next LNRS review No further action required
180. No lichens on the priority list: • 2 of the micro-habitat assemblages could be on the priority list • 'Lichens, fungi and bryophytes of mature and veteran wayside and pasture trees' because Dorset has the richest surviving example of this assemblage in UK • 'Lichens of coastal rocks and bounders' because the lichen assemblage on Portland is unique in Britain and highly threatened • The micromoths of limestone cliffs assemblage are included but have no IUCN status and no threats	Our response: • Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS. • Lichens can be supported by the habitat management activities proposed under the other priorities in the LNRS. For example, priority 5 coastal has activities that will benefit the lichens on Portland. • Lichen translocation is not yet successful so not enough evidence to add species that could benefit from this to the priority list. Similarly learning about fungi is ongoing but not yet sufficient to include any fungi on the priority list. This can be reconsidered at the LNRS review. • The micromoths of limestone cliffs are included in the longlist as they are listed as Nationally Rare or Nationally Scarce in Great Britain, with Dorset supporting nationally or regionally important populations. They are included in the priority list due to the pressure that rock-climbing on Portland puts on these species – and the simple opportunity to work collaboratively with rock-climbers to reduce this pressure. Activities for these moths will benefit other taxa using cliff ledge habitat. Action: 1. Add the 'sports, tourism and leisure activities' threat to the micromoths of limestone cliffs (cliff plume and samphire knot-horn) in the assemblage guide
181. Stone curlew: • create nesting plots in arable farmland on the chalk downs	Our response • Stone curlew plots are beneficial for other species too so a good thing to encourage

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
e.g. central Dorset and Cranborne Chase Stone curlew might benefit from translocation as it may take time for them to spread naturally from neighbouring Wiltshire and Hampshire	- Translocation is likely to be very expensive and not aware of any UK projects to date, focus should be on habitat creation/enhancement initiatives first Action - Edit the potential activity 'Incentivise the provision of fallow / nesting plots on farmland nearest to the existing Wiltshire and Hampshire populations (also beneficial to other wildlife)'
182. Curlew is pressing priority in the UK	Our response: - Projects are underway to 'headstart' curlew and some have encountered issues, so it is best to wait and learn from the outcomes of existing projects - As general habitat creation and enhancement delivers nature recovery at a landscape scale, Dorset may become more suitable for Curlew in the future. In particular, the peat restoration work covered under priority 4. - This can be reconsidered at the next LNRS review No further action required
183. Cliff nesting birds: - annual Purbeck Seabird Survey report documents the declines in Kittiwakes, Cormorants, Fulmars, Herring Gulls and Great Black-backed Gulls as well as Puffins - actions for Puffin on the priority list may not benefit the other species 50 Kittiwake pairs were recorded at Portland Bill, nests with eggs were predated by Ravens and no fledged young recorded	Our response: - Puffins are included on the priority list as there is current research and feasibility work happening in Dorset to deliver bespoke actions for this species - In Purbeck, the puffins are unusually on ledges adjacent to other cliff breeding birds so actions for Puffin can also benefit other species - For the other seabirds mentioned, some of the pressures such as industrial fishing practices and raven predation are outside the scope of what the LNRS can propose - Priority 5 – coastal includes potential activities to reduce recreational disturbance and promote ways for people to enjoy the coast responsibly, such as coasteering and boat trips, which will benefit these birds - Several of the birds are within the Species of maritime cliffs, undercliffs and coastal slopes - Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS No further action required
184. Bats relevant to additional habitat-based assemblages	Action: - Make the following edits: - Species of freshwater and brackish reedbeds: Does not include bats of riparian habitats and this sort of habitat is a hugely important resource for bats - Species of open woodland, glades, rides and early-stage coppice: does not include woodland bats, which will use these features as well as the main woodland - Species of wet woodland: Does not include woodland bats - Species of wayside and pasture trees: Does not include woodland bats. I know its not woodland, as such, but these sorts of trees, especially when sat in a rich landscape, can be hugely important for bats

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	Species of the built environment, greenspaces and brownfield habitats could the following sentence be amended, slightly, to 'Also included are recently abandoned mineral workings plus old mine adits and man-made caves, these are mostly found in the wider landscape rather within urban environments'. These are an under-recognised resource for bats and some of the static work we are doing is showing them to be used by multiple species, even in winter. They may also, if big enough and complex enough, be swarming sites.
185. What was the rationale for not including heathland invertebrate assemblage on the priority list	Our response: - There are multiple invertebrate assemblages relevant to heathland, which are grouped into habitat-based assemblages with other taxa. These can't all be placed on the priority list - Heath tiger beetle was selected for the priority list due to it's requirements for bespoke action - The other species within the assemblages will benefit from general habitat activities under priority 3 – heathland - Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS No further action required
186. Slow worm and nightjar should be protected: - Why were nightjar excluded from the priority list? - Slow worm are listed as typical species under priority 6 - Concern about protections for these species in specific planning cases	Our response: - Priority 6 lists slow worm as a typical urban species, and Priority 3 lists nightjar as a typical heathland species - These species were not selected for the priority list because general habitat enhancement activities delivered under those priorities will support them. They do not require bespoke activities to be included in the priority list. - Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS No further action required
187. How many species on the priority list are in the BCP Council area? - There are other species which are uniquely dependent on the environments within BCP - For example, Common Lizards and Grass Snakes can thrive in neglected urban green spaces, railway embankments, heathland, allotments, and larger gardens but are vulnerable to habitat loss and fragmentation.	Our response: - Several of the priority species are relevant to the BCP area and experts working in this area were represented on the species task and finish group - The activities listed under the other nature recovery priorities, especially priority 3 Heathland, include protecting sites and reducing fragmentation which would benefit these species. - Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS Action: - During delivering phase, work with partners to identify the priority species most relevant to BCP

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
As well the as the Dartford Warbler and Hen Harrier.	
188. Dorset Biodiversity Strategy - Why are some species on the 2003 priority list still a priority? - Why are some not? - What actions were taken?	Our response: - Firstly, the process set by Defra for the priority species list in LNRS is different to the criteria used in the 2003 biodiversity strategy. The LNRS process was set based on lessons learned from previous biodiversity strategies and action plans. - Secondly, progress has been made with conserving some of the species previously listed, while others remain in need of support. - At the review of Dorset Biodiversity Strategy it was decided it would be more effective to focus Section 41 habitats and species to be considered and actioned by relevant planning authorities No further action required.
189. Shrill carder bee – incorrect photo	Action: Photo requested from Bumblebee Conservation Trust of a Shrill carder bumblebee
190. Longlist criteria should have included birds that have historically bred in Dorset, not just resident breeders but also migrants	Our response: - Some migrant species that have bred in Dorset are included - Corncrake and red-backed shrike are on the priority list No further action required.
191. The focus seems to be very Purbeck and East Dorset orientated	Our response: - The species task and finish group considered species across Dorset - The geographic location of some species selected for the priority list is based on where the remaining populations and supporting habitats are present No further action required
192. Nightingales and turtle doves are missing from the priority list	Our response: - Nightingales and turtle doves would both benefit from general habitat enhancements under the other priorities in the LNRS, such as scrub creation, wet scrub and dynamic habitats - Not being on the priority list doesn't mean these species aren't important - this is another example that the priority species list must not be used in isolation from the longlist, assemblages and the other priorities in the LNRS No further action required
193. Black poplar - use of native and local black poplars (<i>Populus nigra</i> subsp. <i>betulifolia</i>) to repopulate riparian zones - increase the amount of male/female pairs to allow for increased genetic diversity and natural propagation	Our response: - Genetic diversity is key to propagation, but longer term the mix of male and female trees remains essential for sexual reproduction to allow response to climate change etc - The need for suitable conditions for natural seed germination and growth should be addressed through wider riparian habitat actions in LNRS (under priority 4 in particular) Action: - Edit potential activity for Black poplar 'build on the established project looking at DNA to establish parentage of remaining plants and propagation/reintroduction of new plants of both sexes'

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
194. Add 3 species to longlist that have been found in Dorset since the list was created	Action: 1. Add fringeless nomad bee to longlist 2. Add long fringed mini miner to longlist 3. Add scarce forester to longlist
195. Grazing: • reference to intensive grazing as a threat • insufficient grazing is also a threat for some habitats	Our response: • Both over-grazing and under-grazing were considered as pressures on the habitat-based assemblages – as explained in the species recovery supporting document No further action required
196. Suggestions for delivery: • monitoring with local groups • Supermarket sponsor a species £1 with every meal deal • Groups interested in supporting the priority species • Explain how individuals can help these priority species in simpler toolkit	Action: 1. Explore these ideas during delivery phase

Feedback on the maps

General

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
197. Hard to use: • rich in detail but hard to interpret and too cluttered • lots of time and computer skills needed • multiple map layers • better explanation needed • make it easier for people to see how their activities connect to others and ways to get involved • pale colours on pale colours not accessible • can't find the key / legend • daunting for a one-off user • not suited to a phone screen • more detail wanted for each opportunity • can't see the landowners or project information	Our response: • Dorset's nature recovery maps are tools that can be used to identify opportunities and guide nature recovery activities • The maps are high-level maps covering the whole county and are not intended to replace site-based feasibility assessments or management plans. They are a guide, not a prescription • We acknowledge the maps are complex for new users, which is why we provided the video and Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps. The guide explains the purpose of each layer and suggested ways to use it • To get the best experience, users will need to take some time to get used to navigating the maps and read the guide • The Dorset Explorer help documentation also provides general tips to navigate, find layers, open the legend/key, and reduce transparency/opacity of background map or other layers • The Nature Recovery Dorset network layer is a way for people to see how their actions connect with others and ways to get involved in other local nature activities • The land manager or project proposal layer provides extra information about the proposals included in the high opportunity nature areas

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- There may have been issues/delays with the map loading in within the survey due to the amount of data Actions: - Run some webinars during delivery phase on how to use the maps and what they mean in practice - Work with partners during delivery phase to find out how they are using the maps, what works well or what is challenging – and share this learning with others, tailoring advice to different sectors and user-groups.
198. Link between map and written strategy: - list of activities in written strategy may be overwhelming - map doesn't seem to help decide where to do different habitat activities - when you click on an area could it link directly to the relevant LNRS section to show the potential activities?	Our response - This is explained in the 'using the mapped and written activities together' section of the strategy (pg88 and more detail in Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps) - The potential activities layer is colour-coded by primary activity, many of which relate directly to the priorities in the written strategy. - You can click/tap on an area on the map to open a pop-up box summarising the primary and secondary activities. Where possible we have included the number of the 'most relevant priority' to the primary activity. But if primary activity is a mix of habitat type(s) the numbers will not show, but you should still refer to the relevant parts of the written strategy. It is not possible to include a direct link. No further action required
199. Nature areas of national importance layer: - when I click on the site, the map indicates that there are no known features - no potential activities in specific sites	Our response - This layer is about showing you where the nature areas of national importance are in one merged layer - Information about some of the sites included in this layer are available via other layers in the layers menu on Dorset Explorer such as Special Areas of Conservation or Local Nature Reserves - The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance which have their own management plans and legal frameworks. Except for areas of irreplaceable habitat outside of designated sites and some specific land manager proposals. More info in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps Actions: - Explore whether we can add a pop-up box for the nature areas of national importance layer when you click/tap on the map, to tell you what the site is - Add links to the separate layers on Dorset Explorer for these sites, in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - Add summary explanation to the strategy under subheading pg87 <i>potential activities</i>: The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance because these have their own management plans and legal frameworks. So activities are mostly mapped in the high opportunity nature areas, with a few exceptions where potential activities are mapped for irreplaceable habitat and some specific restoration projects.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
200.No features found when you click on the high opportunity nature areas	Our response: - This layer is about showing you where the high opportunity nature areas have been identified, there is no additional information when you click on the map - Please turn on the potential activities layer to view the guide to what nature recovery activities could be delivered in those areas. No further action required
201.Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) also known as local wildlife sites (LWS): - not included in the local habitat map - underestimates the extent of existing biodiversity hotspots	Our response: - SNCI are on Defra's inclusion criteria for the nature areas of national importance layer - But the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps explains that SNCI are not included due to data sensitivity issues that the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) and Defra are seeking a solution to in future - Some SNCI are likely picked up in the high opportunity nature areas but have not been included as a specific data set Action: - Work with partners on the SNCI panel to find a solution to include SNCI in the local habitat map
202.Potential activities on grassland: - areas with existing grassland have a primary activity of heathland or woodland - incorrect impression there is huge scope for heathland restoration on unsuitable areas that are too nutrient-rich or ecologically valuable as grassland	Our response: - Specific location suggestions to change the primary activity have been considered in turn - The potential activities layer provides a guide to the primary activity based on land manager proposals and modelling. But it is not a prescription, and site-specific assessments and plans are still needed - In some places, on-the-ground evidence may show it would be more appropriate to maintain and enhance the current habitat on the site, rather than create the habitat shown as a primary activity - In other cases it might be possible to deliver elements of the current habitat and the opportunity identified in the potential activities layer, such as enhancing existing grassland and tree planting in a corridor that connects with nearby woodland. No further action required
203. Heathland restoration potential - use map produced by RSPB	Our response - From an initial visual review of Heathland extent and potential (HEaP), it seems it may have identified similar areas to the heathland network mapping used in Dorset LNRS but we will check Actions - Check how it differs to areas identified with a primary activity of heathland in the local habitat map - Add link to list of other maps and tools section of the guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps
204.Lack of nature activities in urban areas and public access: urban areas need more nature	Our response: - The high opportunity nature areas can't cover the whole county, it is a guide to the highest opportunities - Buildings and man-made surfaces were cut out of the high opportunity nature areas and potential activities layers.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
• some areas aren't covered by joined up opportunity areas or activities • show which areas public can improve by having access • many urban areas are nature depleted and have deprivation • if one of the aims is to help people in nature-deprived areas form a connection with the natural world, would it not be more effective to focus on protecting, enhancing, and recovering nature within the urban, nature-deprived areas of BCP?	• The local habitat map does not show all the places that nature recovery is required, the strategy explains the importance of using the mapped and written activities together (pg88 and more detail in Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps). • Wildlife-friendly gardening and urban greening are examples of activities that aren't shown on the map but still need to be delivered in all towns and villages to provide important stepping stones and wildlife corridors that link up to the larger areas of habitat across the countryside, as well as delivering ecosystem services that benefit the people living there. • The LNRS local habitat map must focus on opportunity to enhance biodiversity, rather than increase people's access to nature. But we have looked for opportunities to deliver both - by using the 'priority areas for creating nature nearby' layer which shows areas where the nature nearby modelling suggests 30% or less of the population live within 300m of a nature-rich space or right of way. This is one of the nature nearby layers from a separate project by Public Health Dorset and University of Exeter. • In the BCP Council area there is quite a high level of overlap between the 'priority areas for creating nature nearby' and the 'high opportunity nature areas'. In the 'potential activities layer' these areas have an ecosystem service opportunity of 'reducing inequality in nature nearby'. If nature recovery activities are delivered in these high opportunity nature areas this should in turn increase the percentage of the population with 'nature nearby' • BCP council greenspaces team are actively looking to bring forward nature recovery projects in the high opportunity nature areas, and areas identified through their Green Infrastructure strategy and Urban Forest strategy. The LNRS can't include the same level of detail as those more localised plans and projects for BCP. • For clarity, the layer 'nature nearby and deprivation' does not specifically show "nature deprivation" rather it shows the nature nearby modelling of the % of the population in an area likely to live with a nature rich space or path within a 300m walk, alongside Index of multiple deprivation data. no further action required
205.Farmland and farmer views: • concern there may be spillover from land put forward by participating farmers onto non-participating farmers' land • use data on agri-environment schemes such as Countryside Stewardship (available on Magic Maps) if agreed by the farmer/landowner	Our response: • The high opportunity nature areas layer is made up of land manager or project proposals, complemented by habitat and ecosystem service modelling • Some land has been 'put forward' by the landowner or farmer, and some has not. Either way, being included in the high opportunity nature areas does not commit the landowner to take any action • Some landowners who put land forward requested that the boundary of their land was blurred slightly – in those cases we applied a 100m buffer • We recognise people delivering or interested in nature recovery is a big opportunity, so we invited people to put their

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
- consider farm level data where relevant - use ground-truthed data - proposing nature recovery or land use change on the Best and Most Versatile agricultural land could have unintended consequences and may not be in line with farmers own ambitions - more farmer engagement would have been possible if further guidance was provided given the planning implications of the mapping	land forward. This also gave land managers the chance to tell us what they planned for the site based on their knowledge on the ground and/or any schemes there are part of - The potential activities layer does not include high levels of detail about each parcel of land, as this detail is best decided in site-based assessments and plans based on the local evidence and landowner choice - The Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is Grades 1, 2 and 3a. Grade 1 and grade 2 agricultural land was taken out of the high opportunity nature areas, except for where the land is within flood zone 2, or was put forward in a land manager or project proposal. Sufficient data on grade 3a land is not available - We created a dedicated page for farmers, landowners, and land managers and what it means to put land forward as a high opportunity nature area Action: - As we move into delivery, we will continue speaking to Defra about ways to share summary data around what is being achieved via Environmental Land Management schemes in Dorset, to recognise farmers contribution and avoid them having to report on this to national and local government. - We will also continue to request Defra make data for grade 3a land available
206. Geology - local geological sites (LGS) should be in the nature areas of national importance - local geological sites are included in the Dorset's eco networks so could be in the local habitat map - local geological sites would benefit from a greater degree of recognition within the land-use planning system - understanding geodiversity gives context for nature recovery 'Create or enhance geodiversity' could be an activity on the potential activities layer	Our response: - The inclusion criteria for the nature areas of national importance layer were set by Defra so we cannot include Local Geological Sites there, although some are covered as they have another nature designation - Several local geological sites do overlap with high opportunity nature areas in the local habitat map Local geological sites layer is available on the Nature Recovery Dorset version of Dorset Explorer, so can be viewed alongside the local habitat map - Inclusion in the local habitat map is not the way to give these sites increased recognition within the planning system. - Changes to the written strategy will emphasise the importance of geodiversity in nature recovery - Enhancing geodiversity is something that should be done everywhere– so not appropriate to add as a mapped activity Actions: - Add local geological sites to the nature areas of local importance layer - Add to the list of activities that aren't shown on the map in the 'using the mapped and written activities together' section (pg88 and more detail in Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps). Understanding and enhancing geodiversity is something that should be done as part of all nature recovery activities, not just those shown on the map.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	3. Add geodiversity to the wider considerations when planning nature recovery activities section of the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps Geodiversity - Geodiversity underpins what habitats, species and natural processes are supported in an area, so your nature recovery plans need to be informed by the geology and other features in the area - You should consider ways your activities can protect and enhance geodiversity features - Please refer to the Local Geological Sites layer on Dorset Explorer to see if your activities could support nearby sites - You can also refer to the BGS Geology Viewer - British Geological Survey for detailed information about bedrock and superficial geology, and explanations of how certain features were formed. - The Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites provide further information about statutory geological and geomorphological site conservation in Great Britain 4. Find out if we can republish any of the BGS data on Dorset Explorer to view alongside the local habitat map and other nature recovery layers.
207. Council management plans: - Areas put forward by BCP Council and Dorset Council have an activity 'create or enhance a mix of habitats as per the management plan' – are they available? - Be transparent, especially near urban areas	Our response: - Dorset Council's website includes information about management of Countryside sites and nature reserves - Wider Countryside management including verges and trees - Other Countryside, coast and parks - BCP Council's website includes information about How we manage green spaces Countryside Parks, nature and green spaces No further action required
208. Other tools and maps: - Landscape character areas Dynamic Dunescapes Sand Dune Managers Handbook Making seagrass visible - Ocean Conservation Trust Technology furthering seagrass mapping and monitoring efforts - Ocean Conservation Trust - Priority Habitat data - DERC data	Action: Add link to list of other maps and tools section of the guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps
209. Links to existing maps - how will the new 'habitats and ecological network' layers relate to or integrate with the existing Dorset's Eco Networks	Our response: Partners involved in preparing the existing Dorset's Eco Networks maps were on the advisory groups preparing the LNRS

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- Lessons learned from preparing these eco network maps informed the slightly different method used by Dorset National Landscape to prepare the habitat and ecological network maps that are available through Dorset's nature recovery maps and fed into certain of the local habitat map in the LNRS - The eco-network map layers are available on the Nature Recovery Dorset version of Dorset Explorer, so can be viewed alongside the new habitat and ecological network layers. - Dorset's Eco Network maps are still used by partners across Dorset, including both Local Planning Authorities. Once the LNRS is published the local habitat map in the LNRS will have a direct link to BNG, but LPAs can still choose to refer to the eco network maps Actions - During delivery phase work DERC, planning officers and other partners to establish how the different map layers will work together moving forward
210. Habitat and ecological network layers - suggest using 'core' in the layer name to match the description of the Lawton principles in the written strategy	Action: Discuss with Dorset National Landscape officer who led this part of the mapping work whether it is appropriate to change layer names on Dorset Explorer and in the guide
211. Cycle access not noted	Our response: - Cycle access is out of scope to show on the local habitat map - The cycling map layers are available to view over the top in Dorset Explorer (see Cycling folder). No further action required
212. High opportunity nature areas - description should also state the ambition within these areas is to create coherent ecological networks by joining up High Opportunity Nature Areas with each other and with nature areas of international importance	Action: Edit the high opportunity nature areas description (p87) The high opportunity nature areas do not overlap with the nature areas of national importance. This is because lots of the nature areas of national importance already have statutory management plans that include nature recovery activities. The ambition is to join up these existing nature areas with the high opportunity nature areas and grow the nature recovery network.
213. Will hedgerows be added to future mapping opportunities?	Our response: - Enhancing or creating hedgerows is an example of one of the potential activities in the written strategy that there is opportunity to do in lots of places across Dorset and therefore isn't shown on the map - We did look at options to map hedgerow opportunities but found hedgerow data is not currently available for the county, and some national data was considered but felt to contain too many errors - We can look at option to include hedgerow data in future rounds of LNRS where appropriate No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
214. Heathland and grassland primary activity colours very similar	Action: 1. Make the colour for a heathland primary activity darker and the colour for a grassland primary activity brighter, to make it easier to see the difference between the two.
215. General statements from developers/planning agents in some cases referring to specific development sites	Our response: • No change to the local habitat map has been requested. • These comments support that the local nature recovery strategy explains that a site being mapped as a high opportunity nature area wouldn't necessarily prevent development, and that site-based assessments are needed to decide exactly what activities and habitat(s) would be most beneficial in the area. • This is the sort of detail that would be considered on a case-by-case basis within the planning system. No further action required
216. Does the map show the best opportunities for nature improvement? Concerns: • not based on scientific analysis of the most nature-depleted areas • based on locations where farmers and landowners have put forward their own projects for nature recovery – often for commercial reasons • map is misleading • cannot be used to test whether proposed housing development sites are in conflict with, or supportive of, nature recovery	Our response: • The habitat and ecological connectivity modelling used a scientifically based method that buffers from existing habitat to identify opportunities to expand and connect habitat, thus strengthening and growing the habitat/ecological network. This aligns with the Lawton principles of making better, bigger, joined and more space for nature. The method therefore does not start from the most nature-depleted areas as suggested by this response • In Dorset it was decided that habitat/ecological network modelling is not the only way to identify opportunity, as opportunity also comes from where people are taking/considering actions for nature recovery. These land manager or project proposals were therefore also included in the high opportunity nature areas map • Delivering nature recovery does cost money and funding is changing. It is positive that land managers are aware that nature recovery needs to be part of their business. The local habitat map will be one tool that helps target funding to areas where nature recovery activities can be delivered. But it won't replace site-based assessments • The purpose of the local habitat map is not to test whether a proposed development site is in conflict or supportive of nature recovery. But it will be a tool used to inform planning, as explained in the responses under 'delivery and ways to get involved' earlier in this report No further action required
217. Update flooding links and layers only giving limited picture of flood risk	Action: 1. Update Wider considerations when planning nature recovery activities in Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) – update to the BCP SFRA Level 1 (page currently being updated and relocated, new link will be provided for future LNRS and an explanatory note on how to use the SFRA) 2. Find out if we can include additional EA data “Check Your Long-Term Flood Risk” and “Flood Map for Planning” on Dorset Explorer, if not can it be linked to in the layer

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	description or a pop-up on the other flood layers available on Dorset Explorer
218. Add King Charles III England Coast Path layer	Action: King Charles III England Coast Path layer added to Natural England folder on Dorset Explorer.
219. Clarification on the ask - Are you asking landowners to suggest land use change? - How does this fit with landscape recovery projects? - What about problems from development?	Our response: - Local nature recovery strategies do not replicate landscape recovery projects, it sits at an overarching level for the whole county whereas the landscape recovery projects get into more detail and delivery in their areas. Several landscape recovery projects are therefore included in the local habitat map to capture this - The ask for landowners during the strategy preparation and consultation was to tell us where there is opportunity for nature recovery on their land - this could be continuing work they're already doing or land use change they're thinking of. - The LNRS does not allocate funds directly but will be a tool used to target funding and resources in future - The local habitat map will be a tool used to inform development and planning, as explained in the responses under 'delivery and ways to get involved' earlier in this report No further action required

Specific locations

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
220. National landscapes: - boundaries should be changed - should be included in the map - Cranborne Chase FiPL projects should be in the FiPL layer	Our response: - National landscape boundaries are set nationally - It is not possible to show the national landscape boundaries as part of the local habitat map, as they cover such a large part of the county. But their importance is raised in the written strategy, and they national landscape map layer is available in the Dorset Explorer map viewer (Natural England folder). - FiPL teams at Dorset National Landscape and Cranborne Chase National Landscape to liaise about possible shared mapping. No further action required
221. Requests to add land manager or project proposal added to the map	Action: - Add land manager or project proposal to the map - Upper Frome cluster - GWCT Chalkstream and Salmon Restoration Farmer-led Partnership Project - Gorwell farm - Shaftesbury's Green Wheel project - Northfield Farm - Dorset Catchment Partnerships – Stour project - Branksome Meadows Project (noting that this does not confer any designation or nature reserve status, aside from the existing SNCI, any decisions for future use of the site will need to be discussed with the landowner and decisions made via the planning process)

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	• The Erica Trust x5 sites • National Trust Kingston Lacy • Charminster Parish Council • Lower Brimley Coombe Farm • The Escarpment Cluster • Family field • Weymouth Town Council 2. Land manager or project proposal not added: • Studland MCZ not added because the high opportunity nature areas and potential activities layers are not permitted to cover marine areas.
222. Requests to edit an existing land manager or project proposal	Action: 1. Edit existing land manager or project proposal • Cranborne Chase Farmer Cluster – change boundary • BCP Council development site – change primary activity based on site evidence • Lower Barton Farm – change boundary and activity • Brit valley project – change activity • Dorset Downs Cluster – change boundary
223. Request to change primary activity – old Leigh farm near Wimborne	Our response: • 4 different responses were received relating to woodland being an inappropriate opportunity for this site, due to it being existing grassland and some scrub. This is supported by the survey evidence submitted through the draft local plan process. • Note that the local habitat map cannot be used to block development and any decisions to allocate the site for development are part of the local plan process. If the site is developed, the local habitat map can be a guide to help inform how nature is considered within site design. Action: 1. Change the primary activity to grassland and scrub.
224. Request to add primary activity – Pennington's Copse	Our response: • No potential activity has been mapped because the area suggested is within the nature areas of national importance. • The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance which have their own management plans and legal frameworks. More info in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps No further action required
225. Request to change primary activity – Colehill scarp	Our response: • Part of this response referred to old leigh farm actioned above • This response identified some other areas where there is existing grassland with trees and woodland features, that are currently showing with a primary activity of woodland. This will be changed to grassland and wood pasture. More detailed plans for this site may consider enhancing existing trees in this area but also the open grassland spaces • The areas where there is a 'river and wetland' as primary have not been changed, as the written guidance explains that these

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	could involve a mix of other habitats e.g. wet grassland, 'river and wetland' is made primary to highlight the importance of considering links and impact on nearby river habitat in these areas Action: 1. Change the grassland areas to 'create or enhance grassland or wood pasture'.
226. Request to add/change primary activity – cannon hill	Our response: • Part of this proposal is to create grassland or heathland on an area that isn't currently in the high opportunity nature areas, this means was not identified via the land manager/project proposals or modelling that identified the highest opportunities, and as this isn't a land manager or project proposal it won't be added now • The other part of this proposal is to change an activity from woodland to grassland. The area has been picked up as a possible woodland opportunity through the habitat and ecological network modelling, likely due to proximity to the existing woodland sites. So the activity will not be changed, but as with all the mapping, site-based assessments may identify that grassland or a habitat mix may be appropriate for the site No further action required
227. Request to change primary activity – Pilford valley	Our response: • The primary activity was not changed because having grassland and woodland mapped as primary in this area does not mean that wet grassland or wet woodland cannot be supported or encouraged • This is an example of where the map shouldn't be used in isolation from the written strategy, it is a high level guide suggesting woodland and grassland are important in this area, the user should then refer to the detailed potential activities listed under the grassland and woodland priorities, which both include reference to keep existing wet features as part of managing those habitats. No further action required
228. Request to change primary activity – Ferndown to Uddens	Our response: • The activity wasn't changed because this appears to be an existing woodland. • An example of where the map is a guide not to be used in isolation from the written strategy, having a potential activity of woodland mapped here, should guide someone to look at the activities listed under the woodland priority, which include some specifically aimed at changing woodland management to help blend and connect with heathland habitat. • Further site-based assessment and plans for delivering nature recovery here would identify the most appropriate habitat(s) for this site and management to help connectivity with other nearby habitats No further action required

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
229. Request to change primary activity – Nightingale land off Birchdale road	Our response: - Primary activities of 'create or enhance woodland' and 'create or enhance grassland or wood pasture' were identified as primary activities over this site from the habitat and ecological network modelling. - Landowner request and ecological surveys for the site show grassland and scrub are present and could be enhanced. Action: - Change primary activity to include grassland and scrub
230. Request to change primary activity – SANGs	Action: Change primary activity on some SANGs to better align with the agreed management plans for these sites
231. Request to change primary activity – large private gardens	Our response: - Primary activity was showing as heathland, but landowner explained these private gardens have existing woodland with ponds that are to be retained - Grassland and woodland were already listed as secondary activities - Surrounding areas continue to have heathland as the primary activity Action: - Primary activity changed from heathland to woodland, rest kept the same
232. Request to add primary activity – Askers Meadow Local Nature Reserve	Our response: - No potential activity has been mapped to this site because local nature reserves are within the nature areas of national importance. - The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance which have their own management plans and legal frameworks. More info in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - Not having a potential activity mapped doesn't mean that local nature reserves don't have potential to contribute to nature recovery - Any concerns regarding current management of the site should be discussed with the landowner. - Funding for nature recovery can be a challenge, but there are some opportunities for public sector projects as well as private landowners. No further action required
233. Request to add primary activity – Radipole Lake (beavers, current management concerns)	Our response - No potential activities are currently mapped in the area drawn as it is nature area of national importance - The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance which have their own management plans and legal frameworks. More info in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - Part of the suggested activity may not be ecologically appropriate and would require much more detailed assessment of the site and impacts - We understand concerns regarding current management of the site have been shared with the landowner/manager

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	No further action required
234. Request to add primary activity – urban tree planting in Poole, tree planting across whole county	Our response • We cannot map tree planting as an activity across the whole county. Priority 2 woodland and priority 6 urban both support more tree planting and woodland, following the right tree, right place principles • Urban tree planting cannot be mapped as a potential activity in the local habitat map as this would cover large urban areas. • This is an example of how the maps should not be used in isolation from the written strategy For BCP area: • The ecosystem service opportunity ‘increase tree equity score’ is shown where the high opportunity nature areas overlap with the 10 wards identified in BCP Council’s Urban Forest Strategy as having the lowest tree equity score • Both the BCP Urban Forest Strategy and the BCP Urban Greening Design Guide contain more detail than the LNRS which will help deliver more urban trees in Poole • The BCP council greenspace team are seeking opportunities to deliver tree planting projects and recently secured some funding to support this in Poole No further action required
235. Request to add primary activity – Waterston Ridge	Our response: • The area submitted is not already in the high opportunity nature areas, meaning it was not identified via the land manager/project proposals or modelling that identified the highest opportunities • This proposal is not part of a developing project to work with the landowners so cannot be added as a land manager or project proposal • Not being included in the map doesn’t mean nature recovery is not possible, and the proposer might be able to work with the landowners during the delivery phase No further action required
236. Request to change primary activity – area adjacent to Branksome Park Woods	Our response: • Some areas adjacent to Branksome Park Woods are included as land manager proposal as BCP owned or managed land, but aren't all pulling through to the map, we will get this corrected • The other areas mentioned are private gardens so have not been added to the map • Note the high opportunity nature areas map does not prevent development but can be a tool to guide site design and nature actions within a development Action: 1. Fix mapping error
237. Request to add primary activity – Woodland Walk	Our response : • Error identified in the mapping, the woodland walk area is a land manager or project proposal from BCP Council but is not pulling through into the high opportunity nature areas and potential activities layer. This will be rectified.

Summary of key feedback points	Our response or actions
	- There are lots of nature recovery activities happening in Woodland Walk Action - Fix mapping error
238. Request to change primary activity – near Boscombe & Southbourne Overcliff Local Nature Reserve	Our response: - The area is already included as a high opportunity nature area, as a BCP council owned or managed openspace. - The detailed suggestion on making a nature discovery area in this space will be shared with BCP Council No further action required
239. Request to add primary activity - Poole Harbour	Our response: - No activity currently mapped in this location because it's in nature areas of national importance - The strategy does not actively seek to map potential activities in nature areas of national importance which have their own management plans and legal frameworks. More info in the Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps - As we move into delivery of the strategy it might be possible to develop a project around seagrass as suggested, but this would require involvement from those responsible for managing the area, it could consider which actions would be most beneficial and effective such as no anchor zone, dredging, maps and posters No further action required
240. Request to change primary activity – winter gardens	Our response: - This area is already included as a land manager proposal as a BCP council owned or managed open space in the high opportunity nature areas - the potential activity is for a mix of habitats. This is compatible with the response that the development for the site will consider how to address Biodiversity Net Gain requirements No further action required
241. Request to add primary activity – corridor near Knapp Mill Waterworks	Our response: - This suggestion related to a wildlife/migratory corridor mostly along bridleways and footpaths. This is the sort of thing that is better captured in the written part of the strategy, as we can't add a nature recovery activity on every bridleway and footpath on the map - It's an example of why it's important that the map is never used in isolation from the written strategy, because the written strategy provides much more detail on the broad range of nature recovery activities needed across the county - There is already an activity under priority 6 to 'protect and enhance green corridors that connect up nature areas to help wildlife travel'. We will look to add something more specific to public rights of way as wildlife corridors No further action required

Appendices

Appendix A – add geodiversity to Nature in Dorset

As outlined in point 14, the Nature in Dorset section will be edited to better reflect the role of geodiversity in Dorset's natural environment. The updated text is below:

Nature in Dorset

Dorset is known for its natural beauty, with a network of habitats that provide homes to a wide range of wildlife. Fifty-two per cent of Dorset is designated as National Landscape, the highest proportion of any English county, **while its coastline forms part of the only natural World Heritage Site in England.** For a small county, Dorset punches far above its weight for biodiversity **and geodiversity** but has still been affected by the declines in nature observed across the world

Dorset's Geodiversity

Dorset's geological diversity is a key factor in the county's wildlife **and landscape** richness. From extensive acidic and infertile sands, gravels and clays in the south-east **supporting heathland**, to a central broad sweep of high, rolling chalk country and downland, with clay to the north and west **forming broad and** narrow vales, and a sequence of Jurassic, Cretaceous and Paleogene rocks along its coastline **creates a complex and spectacular series of cliffs, headlands, bays and beaches** ~~the stage is set for an impressive range of habitats.~~

Geodiversity is the term given to the variety of non-living elements of nature, such as rocks, minerals, fossils, soils, landforms, along with active processes like rivers, flooding and landslides. Together with climate and weather, geodiversity underpins everything in Dorset's natural environment and provides the fundamental conditions for nature recovery.

Rock type, soils and landforms determine the mix of habitats and natural processes that occur in an area, and certain geodiversity features can support particular species. For example, post-glacial gravel riverbeds support Atlantic salmon spawning, limestone cliffs support rare moths, bare ground and stones in heathland support sand lizards and ants, and active processes like landslides create perfect conditions for pioneering plants. Geodiversity features range tremendously in scale, from small natural rock outcrops to ridges and escarpments that run the length of the county. They can also be manmade, including stone built walls in towns and field boundaries, the remnants of disused quarries and the dark depths of abandoned mine adits.

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is the jewel in the county crown, inscribed for its globally unique geodiversity. Further inland, many geological features are protected as part of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These are further supported by Dorset's network of 50 Local Geological Sites (also known as Regionally Important Geological Sites).

Dorset's exceptional geodiversity helps us understand the function of Earth systems over very long periods of time, including the causes and consequences of environmental change, critical biodiversity loss, and mass extinctions. Fossil data from more recent times is being used to confirm environmental baselines, which help guide water management and rewilding projects, and predict climate change impacts on wildlife and habitats. Dorset is a key reference point for this type of

research at a global scale, helping improve understanding of the current climate and nature emergencies. Locally, understanding geodiversity can help improve the identification of nature recovery opportunities and forecast the likely resilience of landscape and habitats to environmental change.

Dorset's biodiversity

Fine examples of chalk downland survive on steeper slopes where grazing maintains species-rich grassland featuring fine grasses, aromatic herbs, and a select band of orchids. Dark green fritillary and Adonis blue butterflies still flourish in places, alongside stripe winged grasshoppers, and countless other insects.... ~~Text to continue as it is on pg23-26, but this sentence to be deleted from pg25 to avoid repetition: Dorset's coastline forms part of the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognised for its outstanding rocks, fossils and landforms. It stretches 95 miles across parts of Dorset and East Devon.~~

Appendix B – add hedgerow priority

As outlined in point 18, an additional priority will be added on hedgerows, the priority, explainer paragraph and potential activities are below:

Hedgerows are maintained, enhanced and expanded to support wildlife and provide corridors that connect habitats across the county.

The priority is to protect and expand existing hedges, increase wildlife-friendly hedgerow management methods, and establish new hedgerows.

Hedgerows are lines of trees or shrubs, often planted as boundary lines around fields or gardens, they can include features like banks, walls, ditches, fences and gates within the hedge. Hedgerows are a Habitat of Principle Importance and are of high ecological value, even hedgerows consisting of mainly one native species qualify as priority habitat.

In Dorset, hedgerows are a key feature of the landscape, they perform a vital role in supporting some of the UK's rarest species such as brown hairstreak butterflies and dormice. When managed to have a diverse structure and species mix, hedges can support a variety of wildlife, such as birds, bats, hedgehogs, lizards and pollinators. Hedgerows are also corridors that help wildlife travel between nature-rich areas, providing important connectivity across the farmed landscape and between urban areas. Hedgerows are integral to the landscape and its ecological function.

Hedgerows also help reduce soil erosion, run-off, and flooding by slowing the flow of water across the landscape, which can in turn help improve water quality. They help absorb pollution and carbon from the air, helping to improve air quality and tackle climate change, as well as providing shelter and shade for livestock.

The goal is to have thick, diverse and dense hedgerows, but hedgerows are dynamic living habitats, so their management also needs to be adaptive. Managing hedgerows on a cycle can help ensure they continue to thrive for nature. The [Adams Hedgerow Management Scale adapted by PTES](#) is a helpful tool to understand where a hedge currently is within the management cycle:

- dense and well managed hedges

- over-trimmed hedges
- tall and overgrown hedges
- recently rejuvenated hedges

Typical species

1. Hawthorn
2. Oak
3. Bumblebees (buff-tailed bumblebee if need specific one)

Nature recovery in action

The [Great Big Dorset Hedge project](#) connects community volunteers and farmers in a shared goal of restoring and expanding hedgerows across Dorset. Farmers can sign up to have their hedgerows surveyed by volunteers, the survey report provides farmers with key information on hedge health to inform their management plan and to secure funding to maintain and enhance their hedges through Environmental Land Management schemes.

The project supports hedge planting activities, and some volunteers have been learning about traditional hedge laying practices from local experts. Currently, over 400 volunteers are coordinated by a team of specialist contractors, as they undertake surveys and planting projects across more than 100 farms. More volunteers, more specialist contractors and more farmers are welcome - if you'd like to get involved email greatbigdorsethedge@gmail.com

Potential activities

Survey hedgerows to understand current structure and diversity and identify what restoration work is needed. Community volunteers can be a great help to do this at scale.	all sector icons
Manage a hedge on a cycle, such as the Adams Hedgerow Management Scale adapted by the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).	all
Improve hedge structure by avoiding cutting the hedge to the same height each year, instead use incremental cutting to trim hedges about 10cm higher and wider each time.	all
Reduce hedge cutting to every 2 or 3 years. Over a larger site, cut a selection of hedges across different parts of the site on rotation.	all
Leave cutting until late winter (December to January) to allow wildlife to feed on berries and fruit through winter, but before the hedges start growing in spring.	all
Do not cut hedgerows during the bird nesting season (1 st March – 31 st August) to avoid disturbing nests, eggs or chicks which are protected by law. If you discover nesting birds outside of the bird nesting season dates, it is still a crime to disturb them. Birds often start setting up territory before the season begins, so it is ideal to get cutting done in December to January. Follow national hedgerow management rules , which include exemptions for situations like managing hedgerows overhanging roads for driver safety.	all
Protect old trees within the hedgerow, and identify some new plants within the hedge that will be allowed to grow up into mature hedgerow trees	all
Fill in gaps in hedgerows by planting native shrubs and trees to improve structure and diversity	all

Encourage a diverse range of tree, shrub and plant species in hedges, as well as scrub and wildflower banks alongside hedgerows	all
Create grassy buffer strips alongside hedges with a variety of wildflowers to increase diversity and connectivity	all
Plant new hedges with native trees (ideally every 20m) and shrub species that are found in the local area, and use a mix of different species to support a variety of wildlife	all
When creating or enhancing hedgerows, plant double hedgerows where possible as these provide sheltered corridors favoured by bats	all
Maintain or establish hedges in places that will connect habitats, such as other hedges, woodlands, grasslands or orchards	all
Consider using hedge laying or hedge coppicing to help restore hedgerows	all
Keep and enhance existing hedgerows within building developments, and use hedgerows rather than fences and walls around homes, gardens, footpaths, roads and public greenspaces	business, public bodies, communities
Where appropriate, allow hedges to grow wide and tall (over 3m and at least 2m in width) to give bats the opportunity to hang up and feed.	all
Create or enhance scrub alongside hedgerows as important transitional habitat and increase connectivity between hedgerows and other habitat types	all

Appendix C – edit priority 5 - coastal

As outlined in point 96 on coastal retreat, priority 5 - coastal will be edited to better capture the importance of making space for coastal, intertidal and cliff top habitats as the coastline changes. The updated priority and explainer paragraph is below:

The coastal strip is enhanced and restored to safeguard key habitats that protect rare and vulnerable species and space is created for cliff top and intertidal habitats as the coastline retreats

Dorset's coastal habitats include cliffs, rocky shores, saltmarshes, sand dunes, shingle and sandy beaches, intertidal habitats and seagrass meadows. The priority is to restore these habitats to good condition, support natural processes to take place, and build resilience to future pressures such as erosion, sea level rise, tourism, recreation and industry.

Protecting and enhancing the coastal strip is essential for the important species and ecosystems that depend on it. Restoration of historical coastal habitats, such as oyster reefs, that were destroyed by over exploitation a long time ago is particularly important.

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and its internationally recognised rocks, fossils and landforms supports a range of ecosystems, such as rocky and sandy shorelines, coastal saltmarshes and reedbeds, and deciduous temperate forests. Key coastal water bodies such as Poole, Christchurch, Portland, and Weymouth harbours, along with The Fleet, host a wide variety of wildlife in their mudflats, saltmarsh and shallow waters. Protection and recovery of nature in these harbours is closely linked to nature's recovery along the river catchments that flow into them.

Cliff top habitats are particularly vulnerable to being squeezed by coastal retreat and should be given more room to spread and retreat landward. Similarly, intertidal habitats face pressure where rising sea levels meet man-made flood defences, creating new space for these habitats is essential. All flood

defence and coastal infrastructure projects should embed nature recovery into their design from the outset, building ecological resilience into future coastal management.

Appendix D – updated webpage on nature recovery and planning

Update to this webpage: [How the Dorset local nature recovery strategy will work with planning policy - Dorset Council](#). The content below will replace the information currently on the Dorset Council website, a new page on the BCP Council website will be added to summarise this information and then link across to the Dorset Council webpage for full information.

Nature recovery in planning and development: how Dorset's local nature recovery strategy works with planning

Purpose and local context

The development plan

The Development Plan consists of the adopted Local Plan, the Minerals and Waste Local Plans and any made neighbourhood Plans. A local plan sets out a strategy for meeting the development needs of an area, it must contain strategic policies (which address the priorities for an area) and can contain non-strategic policies (which deal with more detailed matters). Whereas Neighbourhood Plans can only contain non-strategic policies. Proposals for development are considered against the policies in the development plan. This includes allocations for specific types of development, such as housing, employment, transport infrastructure, education, health or leisure.

In Dorset, there are two Local Planning Authorities, Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council. Their role is to strategically plan to meet the development needs of the area and decide whether to give permission to planning applications for development.

Find out more about the developing [BCP Local Plan or view the Adopted Local Plans](#).

Find out more about the developing [Dorset Council Local Plan](#) or view the [Adopted Local Plans](#).

Local nature recovery strategies

A local nature recovery strategy identifies shared [priorities](#) for nature recovery and the potential activities that different sectors can do to achieve those priorities. The strategy includes a [local habitat map](#) with three layers showing:

- Nature areas of national importance: sites currently recognised and protected within the land-use planning system for their biodiversity value
- High opportunity nature areas: where effort should be targeted to deliver the most for nature recovery and the wider environment
- Potential activities: a guide to the most beneficial habitat enhancement or creation activities in an area

In Dorset, the local nature recovery strategy covers the whole county and has been co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders, including planning policy officers from both Local Planning Authorities.

Find out more about [Dorset's local nature recovery strategy](#).

Tools to inform sustainable development

Local nature recovery strategies are intended as a new tool to help Local Planning Authorities continue delivering on requirements to protect and enhance biodiversity.

The local nature recovery strategy will be used alongside other planning policy documents and evidence such as:

- local housing needs assessments
- Green Belt Review
- employment needs assessment
- landscape character areas
- design codes and guides
- green infrastructure guidance
- housing and economic land availability assessments
- habitat and species data

There are some similarities between what the Dorset local nature recovery strategy provides and what the local plan must achieve.

Local nature recovery strategy	Local plan
Agree nature recovery priorities	Identify Strategic Priorities for the development and use of land, and to provide strong development management policies and guidance to support the natural environment
Map sites that are recognised and protected within the land-use planning system for their nature value (Nature areas of national importance)	Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats, sites designated for their natural or cultural importance, and wider ecological networks
Map opportunities for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals (High opportunity nature areas and potential activities)	Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of protected species. Identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The planning balance

In drafting policies and allocations for development the Local Planning Authority balances many different planning issues such as the requirement to provide houses in sustainable locations, or key infrastructure such as new roads and community facilities, against the potential impacts of that development.

Dorset's local nature recovery strategy will become part of this planning balance. It will also inform actions Local Authorities take to meet their biodiversity duty.

Local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the local nature recovery strategy. This may include:

- Considering how the areas identified in the local habitat map should be reflected in the developing local plan
- Referring to the nature recovery priorities and potential activities within local plan policies
- Deciding to use relevant evidence from the local nature recovery strategy as a material consideration to support appropriate planning decision-making, in balance with other evidence about that site
- Using the local habitat map to help in the delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG) (find out more in the BNG section below)

It is important to note the high opportunity nature areas in the local nature recovery strategy are not a planning constraint or designation, and do not prevent the development of new homes and infrastructure. Instead, the strategy helps guide nature recovery and environmental activities that can be delivered as part of sustainable development. The strategy also does not force the owners and managers of the land identified as high opportunity nature areas to make any changes, they have flexibility to identify what, if any, activities and funding options will work best for them.

Using this tool to deliver nature recovery within development

Planners, developers, agents and consultants can all use the local nature recovery strategy in their work to deliver sustainable development. This may include considering:

- how a development can contribute to achieve the nature recovery priorities and deliver some of the potential activities e.g. urban greening, sustainable drainage systems, and natural darkness.
- how a development site may impact on existing habitats, especially those in the nature areas of national importance layer in the local habitat map
- how a development site could contribute to creating or enhancing habitats and increasing habitat connectivity, in particular by referring to the high opportunity nature areas in the local habitat map
- how the activities shown in the potential activities layer in the local habitat map could be delivered within the development site. For example, if the activity shown for a development site is woodland or wood pasture, designs could make an additional effort to include native trees and wooded corridors.
- how natural features could be used within the development site design to deliver ecosystem service benefits such as flood management or cooling and shading, to benefit people and wildlife
- how any off-site biodiversity gains could be delivered in locations identified in the local habitat map

Site-specific assessments and expert inputs will continue to inform exactly what nature recovery activities would be best to deliver as part of a development, the local nature recovery strategy simply provides a new tool and evidence base to guide this across the county.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The local habitat map can be used to guide [biodiversity net gain](#) (BNG) delivery, both on-site and off-site.

Delivery of nature recovery activities in the locations proposed in the local habitat map is incentivised by an uplift in the biodiversity metric, as long as all other elements of the metric have been completed correctly.

Once the LNRS is published, a 15% “strategic significance” uplift can be applied post-intervention, but only if the intervention is:

- in a location where a potential activity has been proposed
- consistent with the potential activity proposed in that location

For example, if an applicant is proposing a broadleaved woodland intervention in an area identified with a primary activity of woodland in the potential activities layer of the local habitat map, then this uplift would apply.

Ideally the habitat type proposed by the applicant will match the primary activity proposed in the potential activities layer, but there may be cases where a slight variation is still considered to be consistent.

For example, if an applicant’s site surveys and ecological expertise have led them to propose a semi-improved grassland intervention in an area identified with a primary activity of woodland in the potential activities layer of the local habitat map, they could submit a justification for why their assessment of the conditions on the ground suggest that would be a desirable habitat in that location. The local planning authority could then consider whether the proposed habitat type would be consistent with the primary or secondary activities in the local habitat map and help deliver the overall nature recovery priorities and activities.

This flexibility reflects that the local nature recovery strategy is not definitive or exhaustive, some of the mapping is based on modelling that will not produce an exact prescription for action on the ground, and some of the important nature recovery activities included in the written strategy are not shown on the map. It is a high-level strategy to guide delivery, the finer detail of exactly what nature recovery activities will be best to deliver on the ground will come from site-based information, such as:

- ecological and environmental surveys of the site
- advice from the applicants’ ecological consultants
- wildlife data searches from Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC)
- expertise from the Local Planning Authority ecologist

If a development site is covered by multiple primary activities in the potential activities layer, the site-based assessments should consider whether a mixture of all or some of these habitats should be included in the design. This can then be considered as part of the application.

Further information

For those working across multiple local nature recovery strategy areas, the table below shows the names given to the layers in the local habitat map in Dorset, alongside the names Defra gives these layers in the statutory guidance.

Dorset name	Defra calls this layer
Nature areas of national importance	Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)
High opportunity nature areas	Areas that could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACB)
Potential activities	Potential Measures (PM)

Useful links

- [Dorset Council Biodiversity Net Gain](#)
- [Incorporating Local Nature Recovery Strategies when planning for Biodiversity Net Gain – GOV.UK Environment](#)
- [Sell biodiversity units as a land manager - GOV.UK](#)
- [Savills UK | Webinar: Local Nature Recovery Strategies: a new factor in Planning and Development](#)
- [Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice Principles for Development, a Practical Guide](#) by CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA
- The [Building with Nature standards](#)
- [Homes for People and Wildlife - The Wildlife Trusts](#)
- [BS8682:2021 Process for designing and implementing BNG](#)

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- Version 1 published Sept 2025 in the 'Response to the Dorset LNRS consultation report v4'
- Version 2 updated Nov2025 following feedback from Natural England on BNG implementation

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- High opportunity nature areas: where effort should be targeted to deliver the most for nature recovery and the wider environment
- Potential activities: a guide to the most beneficial habitat enhancement or creation activities in an area

In Dorset, the local nature recovery strategy covers the whole county and has been co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders, including planning policy officers from both Local Planning Authorities.

Find out more about [Dorset's local nature recovery strategy](#).

Tools to inform sustainable development

Local nature recovery strategies are intended as a new tool to help Local Planning Authorities continue delivering on requirements to protect and enhance biodiversity.

The local nature recovery strategy will be used alongside other planning policy documents and evidence such as:

- local housing needs assessments
- Green Belt Review
- employment needs assessment
- landscape character areas
- design codes and guides
- green infrastructure guidance
- housing and economic land availability assessments
- habitat and species data

There are some similarities between what the Dorset local nature recovery strategy provides and what the local plan must achieve.

Local nature recovery strategy	Local plan
Agree nature recovery priorities	Identify Strategic Priorities for the development and use of land, and to provide strong development management policies and guidance to support the natural environment
Map sites that are recognised and protected within the land-use planning system for their nature value (Nature areas of national importance)	Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats, sites designated for their natural or cultural importance, and wider ecological networks
Map opportunities for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals (High opportunity nature areas and potential activities)	Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of protected species. Identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The planning balance

In drafting policies and allocations for development the Local Planning Authority balances many different planning issues such as the requirement to provide houses in sustainable locations, or key infrastructure such as new roads and community facilities, against the potential impacts of that development.

Dorset's local nature recovery strategy will become part of this planning balance. It will also inform actions Local Authorities take to meet their biodiversity duty.

Local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the local nature recovery strategy. This may include:

- Considering how the areas identified in the local habitat map should be reflected in the developing local plan
- Referring to the nature recovery priorities and potential activities within local plan policies
- Deciding to use relevant evidence from the local nature recovery strategy as a material consideration to support appropriate planning decision-making, in balance with other evidence about that site
- Using the local habitat map to help in the delivery of biodiversity net gain (BNG) (find out more in the BNG section below)

It is important to note the high opportunity nature areas in the local nature recovery strategy are not a planning constraint or designation, and do not prevent the development of new homes and infrastructure. Instead, the strategy helps guide nature recovery and environmental activities that can be delivered as part of sustainable development. The strategy also does not force the owners and managers of the land identified as high opportunity nature areas to make any changes, they have flexibility to identify what, if any, activities and funding options will work best for them.

Using this tool to deliver nature recovery within development

Planners, developers, agents and consultants can all use the local nature recovery strategy in their work to deliver sustainable development. This may include considering:

- how a development can contribute to achieve the nature recovery priorities and deliver some of the potential activities e.g. urban greening, sustainable drainage systems, and natural darkness.
- how a development site may impact on existing habitats, especially those in the nature areas of national importance layer in the local habitat map
- how a development site could contribute to creating or enhancing habitats and increasing habitat connectivity, in particular by referring to the high opportunity nature areas in the local habitat map
- how the activities shown in the potential activities layer in the local habitat map could be delivered within the development site. For example, if the activity shown for a development site is woodland or wood pasture, designs could make an additional effort to include native trees and wooded corridors.
- how natural features could be used within the development site design to deliver ecosystem service benefits such as flood management or cooling and shading, to benefit people and wildlife
- how any off-site biodiversity gains could be delivered in locations identified in the local habitat map

Site-specific assessments and expert inputs will continue to inform exactly what nature recovery activities would be best to deliver as part of a development, the local nature recovery strategy simply provides a new tool and evidence base to guide this across the county.

The local nature recovery strategy is not definitive or exhaustive, some of the mapping is based on modelling that will not produce an exact prescription for action on the ground, and some of the important nature recovery activities included in the written strategy are not shown on the map. It is a high-level strategy to guide delivery, the finer detail of exactly what nature recovery activities will be best to deliver on the ground will come from site-based information, such as:

- ecological and environmental surveys of the site
- advice from the applicants' ecological consultants
- wildlife data searches from Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC)
- expertise from the Local Planning Authority ecologist

Biodiversity Net Gain

The local habitat map can be used to guide [biodiversity net gain](#) (BNG) delivery, both on-site and off-site.

Delivery of nature recovery activities in the locations proposed in the local habitat map is incentivised by an uplift in the biodiversity metric, as long as all other elements of the metric have been completed correctly.

Once the LNRS is published, a “strategic significance” uplift can be applied post-intervention, but only if the intervention is:

- in a location where a potential activity has been proposed
- consistent with the potential activity proposed in that location

For example, if an applicant is proposing a broadleaved woodland intervention in an area identified with a primary activity of woodland in the potential activities layer of the local habitat map, then this uplift would apply.

The potential activities layer is colour coded according to the primary activity, with secondary activities also provided when you click/tap on an area on the map to open a pop-up box. If the applicant is proposing an intervention consistent with the ‘habitat’, ‘rivers’ or ‘small wetland features’ sub-headings of the secondary activities, then the strategic significance uplift would also apply.

If the applicant is proposing an intervention that does not match the primary activity or the ‘habitat’, ‘rivers’ or ‘small wetland features’ secondary activities then the strategic significance uplift cannot be applied. The applicant may still be able to deliver BNG with their proposed intervention without the strategic significance uplift, as long as other required elements of the BNG metric are completed correctly.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) agrees that the applicant is proposing an intervention that is ecologically appropriate for the site, but the intervention cannot receive the strategic significance uplift because it does not match what's on the map, we will keep a record of these cases. This will be used to inform future review of the local habitat map and shared with Defra to inform the future development of BNG policy.

If a development site is covered by multiple primary activities in the potential activities layer, the site-based assessments should consider whether a mixture of all or some of these habitats should be included in the design. This can then be considered as part of the planning application.

Further information

For those working across multiple local nature recovery strategy areas, the table below shows the names given to the layers in the local habitat map in Dorset, alongside the names Defra gives these layers in the statutory guidance.

Dorset name	Defra calls this layer
Nature areas of national importance	Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)
High opportunity nature areas	Areas that could become of Importance for Biodiversity (ACB)
Potential activities	Potential Measures (PM)

Useful links

- [Dorset Council Biodiversity Net Gain](#)
- [Incorporating Local Nature Recovery Strategies when planning for Biodiversity Net Gain – GOV.UK Environment](#)
- [Sell biodiversity units as a land manager - GOV.UK](#)
- [Savills UK | Webinar: Local Nature Recovery Strategies: a new factor in Planning and Development](#)
- [Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice Principles for Development, a Practical Guide](#) by CIRIA, CIEEM and IEMA
- The [Building with Nature standards](#)
- [Homes for People and Wildlife - The Wildlife Trusts](#)
- [BS8682:2021 Process for designing and implementing BNG](#)

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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy

1. Initial information

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

Dorset local nature recovery strategy

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

strategy

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

Both internal and external

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

Local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) present a system of spatial management for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Each LNRS must:

- i. Agree priorities for nature's recovery
- ii. Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- iii. Map specific proposals and potential activities for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

Dorset local nature recovery strategy provides a 10-year framework to help everyone work together towards a shared vision for nature recovery in Dorset.

Dorset's natural environment is one of our greatest assets, but over time it has been weakened. This strategy marks a turning point - an end to the decline and a focus on recovery.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been developed with consideration for equality, diversity and inclusion. The strategy aims to benefit all communities by improving access to nature, enhancing environmental quality, and supporting health and wellbeing. Through public consultation and stakeholder engagement, efforts have been made to ensure that the strategy reflects a wide range of views and does not disproportionately impact any protected groups. The strategy promotes inclusive participation in nature recovery and seeks to address barriers to engagement, particularly for underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy draws on several key sources of data and evidence across the DC and BCP council areas:

- **Public consultation feedback** from residents, stakeholders, and community groups, which helps identify potential impacts on different population groups.
- **Health data** from public health Dorset in relation of lack of access to nature across Dorset data.
- **Engagement with equality groups and statutory consultees**, including Natural England and BCP Council, to ensure inclusive representation.
- **Policy and strategy alignment**, including Dorset Council's and BCP Council Climate and Ecology Strategy and national guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

7. What did this tell you?

- User experience was sometimes not as good as it could be as the strategy is long, maps are complex, and it was unclear how to make relevant to me / my organisation
- People wanted more opportunities to get involved and guidance on doing the activities.
- Support and input came from a range of different stakeholders including farmers, landowners, businesses etc
- That 'meaningful and sustained stakeholder engagement' would be critical to the success of the Dorset LNRS – delivery of the strategy needs to start straight away to keep those people engaged.
- Nature recovery can deliver benefits for wildlife and people
- Access to nature is also important for lots of people, but this must be in appropriate areas / balanced with landowner views about access
- Who is most and least likely to benefit from nature recovery efforts, based on geographic, socio-economic, and demographic factors.
- Barriers to access and engagement with nature, especially for groups such as disabled people, older adults, ethnic minorities, and those in deprived areas.
- Opportunities to improve equity, such as enhancing green space access, involving underrepresented communities in decision-making, and ensuring communications are inclusive.

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

- Martin Whitchurch – Strategic Lead for Greenspace & Conservation (BCP)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group – presented before the consultation to enable us to incorporate their ideas into how we delivered the consultation and understand the barriers to delivering nature recovery.

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

No

10. Is an EQIA required?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is relevant to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) because it helps ensure that the strategy is inclusive, fair, and does not unintentionally disadvantage any individuals or communities. It assesses how different groups—such as those defined by age, disability, race, gender, or socio-economic status—might be affected by the strategy's policies and actions. This is especially important in nature recovery, where access to green spaces.

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?
Age

Choose impact
Positive Impact

How
There will be a positive impact on old people, children and young people as the aim of implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, which also brings benefits for people. A healthy natural environment gives us what we need to survive, from clean air and water, to flood protection and carbon storage,

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability	Positive Impact	as well as beautiful outdoor places to enjoy. The LNRS will be a guide to other policy and project delivery that may increase direct access to nature as well as indirect health benefits from increased biodiversity and functioning ecosystems. Implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, including accessibility to nature spaces and increasing accessible opportunities for people to get involved in nature recovery activities. Mental and physical health benefits can be expected from increased nature recovery areas and accessibility.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Religion and belief	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Sexual orientation	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group

Impacts on who or what? People with caring responsibilities	Choose impact Positive Impact	How Implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, including accessibility to nature spaces which may benefit people with caring responsibilities.
Rural isolation	 Positive Impact	More access to nature areas for recreation and opportunities to help with nature recovery activities should have physical and mental health benefits. Celebrating the nature recovery activities of those in rural communities through nature recovery Dorset could have positive benefits and show how everyone's actions are connected across the county.
Socio-economic deprivation	 Positive Impact	Implementation of this strategy will include more opportunities for people to get involved in nature recovery and connect with nature.
Single parents	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected group
Armed forces communities	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected group

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

The implementation of the LNRS is expected to have positive impacts on several groups, particularly older people, children and young people, disabled people, those with caring responsibilities, rural communities, and individuals experiencing socio-economic deprivation. These benefits stem from improved access to nature, enhanced biodiversity, and associated physical and mental health outcomes. For most other protected characteristic groups—including gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and marital status—the strategy is assessed to have a neutral impact, with no anticipated negative effects. The strategy is designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that nature recovery benefits are shared across all communities.

Further environmental impact assessments and EQIAs will be undertaken for specific work packages throughout the delivery phase of the local nature recovery strategy.

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
Accessibility of the written strategy	We will maintain both a PDF and interactive website version of the strategy. The website version of the strategy was created to be compatible with assistive tech and compliant with the council's content rules. It allows people to navigate the strategy in a less traditional document form. The PDF document version will also be provided as an option for those who prefer to access in this way.	Bridget Betts, Amy Smith	Development of campaigns etc: Jan-Apr 2026
	During the delivery phase of the strategy, we will take a more targeted approach to sharing specific parts of the strategy in ways tailored to different audiences, to ensure activities and opportunities to deliver nature recovery are easily understood. This may involve videos, campaigns, and meetings.		Delivery: from Apr 2026
Accessibility of the maps	We will look to publish to final maps in a folder on the main version of Dorset Explorer if possible, rather than a separate nature recovery version, to make them easier for people to find.	Bridget Betts, Amy Smith	December 2025
	We acknowledge that detailed nature recovery maps are not accessible to all users, particularly due to their interactive online format and there being lots of layers for users to familiarise themselves with and understand what the data shows. Based on the consultation responses, we will replace the one video guide with a series of more targeted videos and explanation notes on how different user groups could use and access the different map layers. As with the videos prepared		January 2026

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	for the public consultation, closed captions will be added to make the videos accessible. There is not likely to be one single solution to meet all accessibility needs with the maps, so we will invite individuals to contact the team with specific requirements. We can then consider if we are able to provide any tailored support, for example if we can provide a printed map of a specific location of interest or written summaries for visually impaired users. We will also continue signposting to the general help documentation on how to use Dorset Explorer for those less familiar with the platform. We will keep reviewing feedback on how people are using the maps and challenges experienced, to tailor our response. Depending on what needs might be identified, we may consider developing further guidance tools, for example new written guides, hosting a webinar or exploring whether it's possible to provide training to digital champion volunteers or library staff to support residents to access the maps.		
Ways for people to get involved in nature recovery	The nature connection priority in the strategy includes a range of activities to deliver to give more people, more opportunities to get involved in nature recovery. Dorset Council could have a role in delivering these activities, along with a range of partner organisations. Our webpage will be updated to provide a sign posting service to opportunities and guidance on how to deliver nature recovery.	Bridget Betts & Amy Smith	Development of webpages: Jan-Apr 2026

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	Following a suggestion from the former EDI reference group, attend a meeting with the new EDI engagement panel for insight on how different groups in Dorset are able to actively engage in delivering nature recovery and opportunities to improve this.	Bridget Betts & Amy Smith working with Katherine Locke (EDI officer)	early 2026 (depending on meeting availability)
Governance of the delivery phase	When we transition from strategy preparation to delivery phase, Dorset Council's role will be to: • Lead and convene a delivery partnership • Embed LNRS into local decision making • Identify strategic projects and facilitate project development • Monitor and report on delivery of LNRS priorities A group will be formed to oversee this work, with group members selected from across a range of sectors to ensure different perspectives are considered. One of the groups roles will be to consider equality, diversity and inclusion.	Bridget Betts	December 2025
Delivery of nature recovery projects	Delivery of the activities in the strategy, such as enhancing existing habitats or creating new nature-rich spaces, will be delivered by a wide range of sectors across Dorset. In many cases there will be opportunities to consider how actions for nature could also deliver benefits for people and improve equality, diversity and inclusion.		
	Where Dorset Council are involved in project delivery, separate EQIA's will be needed for the specific projects to ensure they are inclusive.	Officers leading on project delivery	as required
The delivery phase of the strategy will run from January 2026 until we are instructed to review and update the local nature recovery strategy by Defra Secretary of State, this could be in 3 to 10 years from publication.			

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqlA: Bridget Betts

Officers involved in completing the EqlA: Amy Smith

Date of completion:13/10/2025

Version Number: 2

EqlA review date:

Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

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

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

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Place and Resources Overview committee 24 November 2025

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

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe, Director of Public Health & Prevention

Report author and job title: Jen Lewis, Head of Strategic Communication and Engagement

Email: Jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Statement of Reasonable Expectations (see Appendix A) between Dorset Council and parish and town councils is a partnership agreement setting out how to foster better working relationships, enhance democratic representation, and ensure effective service delivery for the benefit of local communities. It has been proposed by the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils with input and agreement from parish and town councils and jointly developed with Dorset Council.
- 1.2 The Statement of Reasonable Expectations delivers against the Dorset Council Plan priority 'Communities for All', and the council's Transformation Plan with the creation of and commitment to improved ways of working with parish and town councils.
- 1.3 Adoption of the Statement of Reasonable Expectations paves the way for greater recognition and involvement of parish and town councils in enabling resilient and thriving communities and embedding our Council Plan focus on prevention and partnership. It also provides a firm foundation for working together to achieve so-called 'double devolution' – i.e. alongside our work to

secure devolution from central government to a Wessex regional strategic authority, the transfer of some assets and services from Dorset Council as the principal council to parish and town councils, where they are willing and able to take them on.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 The Place and Resources Overview Committee recommends to Cabinet that the 'Statement of Reasonable Expectations' between Dorset Council and parish and town councils be approved and adopted.

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

- 3.1 To enable Dorset Council to strengthen and mature our partnership working with parish and town councils, resulting in a more consistent approach across the council that better meets the needs of those partners and delivers better outcomes for our communities and residents. This underpins effective delivery against the 'Communities for all' priority.

4. **The report**

- 4.1 The Dorset Council Plan sets out the requirement for a joined-up response and enhanced delivery across all tiers of local government to address social, economic, and infrastructure challenges. This also aligns with emerging national policy in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.
- 4.2 The 'Communities for All' priority commits the council to working better with parish and town councils. This is an area where 'prevention' and 'partnership' come strongly into play and where a target measure has been set to achieve a joined-up model of locality working.
- 4.3 The Transformation Plan 2025–29 commits to closer, more inclusive collaboration with communities, towns, parishes, and other partners as a key part of the council's preventative approach. It recognises that preventative practice is essential to helping people live independently, avoid crisis, and reduce demand on public services.
- 4.4 Following significant engagement in early 2025, the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) produced the 'Fresh Start' report. The report identified 14 headline findings and proposed a possible 5-year programme for transformation which would enable parish and town councils to strengthen their statutory role and capacity for sound place management.
- 4.5 Following on from the 'Fresh Start' report, a joint implementation plan was developed between Dorset Council and DAPTC. One of the priority recommendations from this joint implementation plan was to agree of a 'Statement of Reasonable Expectations' between parish and town councils

and Dorset Council. This is essentially a partnership agreement setting out how to foster better working relationships, enhance democratic representation, and ensure effective service delivery for the benefit of local communities.

- 4.6 Approval of this Statement enables the establishment of a solid and durable foundation for enhancing our partnership with parish and town councils, which will lead improved place-based working, devolution of services and assets, and joint prevention activity – all with the end goal of better meeting the needs of Dorset's local communities.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 We could continue as we are now without a single clear and consistent statement to guide our working with parish and town councils. This option has been rejected as it ignores the feedback we have received from both the DAPTC and parish and town councils and their suggestions on how we can improve our collaborative working.

6 Legal considerations

- 6.1 None.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 None.

8 Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 8.1 More effective partnership working may lead to better outcomes for climate and ecology.

9 Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 More effective partnership working should lead to better outcomes for residents in terms of health and wellbeing and reduction in inequalities.

10 Other implications

- 10.1 None.

11 Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12 Equalities

12.1 None.

13 Appendices

13.1 Appendix A: Statement of Reasonable Expectations

14 Background papers

14.1 Paper 1: 'Future Directions for Dorset's Towns and Larger Parishes. A Fresh Start?' report.

15 Report sign-off

15.1 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).

Statement of Reasonable Expectations



Introduction

This statement sets out the reasonable expectations for partnership working between Parish and Town Councils and Dorset Council. Both parties support a shared commitment to the communities and residents of Dorset. The statement aims to foster better working relationships, enhance democratic representation, and ensure effective service delivery for the benefit of local communities.

1. Mutual Respect and Recognition

- Dorset Council recognises Parish and Town Councils as statutory, democratically elected bodies with legislated roles and responsibilities, the power of taxation and a deep understanding of local issues.
- Parish and Town Councils respect Dorset Council's role as the Principal Authority in strategic planning and delivery of a range of statutory services across its jurisdiction.
- Both parties commit to a spirit of cooperation, valuing each other's contributions and responsibilities, with a view to ensuring an effective and appropriate response to the differing needs and priorities of local places and communities.

2. Communication and Engagement

- Parish and Town Councils will share local insights and concerns to inform Dorset Council's policies, projects and decisions affecting local communities. Dorset Council will to their best effort provide timely and relevant updates on policies, projects and decisions.
- Regular forums or liaison meetings will be established (and engaged in) to facilitate open dialogue and exchange of views.
- Clear points of contact will be maintained to ensure smooth communication, by both parties.
- Engagement periods will allow sufficient time for meaningful input, and each party undertakes to consider the other's views and insights before making decisions, to seek clarification where necessary, and provide meaningful feedback.



3. Support and Capacity Building

- Dorset Council, Parish and Town Councils, and DAPTC will collaborate to identify key areas for guidance and training and determine the most effective methods of delivery. This joint effort will aim to enhance the capabilities of Parish and Town Councils and support the expansion of their role within the local governance framework.
- Resources, toolkits, and best practice examples will be shared between the parties to support effective local governance.
- Parish and Town Councils will proactively seek opportunities to upskill and enhance their role in service delivery, community leadership and engagement.
- Parish and Town Councils will develop financial and strategic plans for the short, medium, and longer term to set out their ambitions for the community around them and enhance their role in place management.
- Elected members for all parties should be supported and trained to understand the benefits of co-working and partnering toward better outcomes for communities they jointly serve.
- Development of personnel in Parish and Town Councils, particularly those in senior roles like Clerks, will be encouraged to enable them to undertake broader roles and responsibilities effectively.

4. Collaborative Working

- Dorset Council and Parish and Town Councils will work together to identify, explore, and, where mutually agreed, pursue opportunities for joint initiatives and shared services, and including the transfer or devolution of assets and services.
- Partnership working and a problem-solving approach will be adopted to address challenges collectively.
- Dorset Council and Parish and Town Councils will work in partnership to ensure that any future changes in local government structures are informed by a clear understanding of their potential impacts — positive or negative — on the communities they jointly serve.
- Dorset Council will work constructively with Parish and Town Councils to facilitate changes through Community Governance Reviews where these strengthen democratic representation.
- Greater collaboration between neighbouring Parish and Town Councils will be encouraged to ensure best value asset management and service delivery.

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Future Directions for Dorset's Towns and Larger Parishes

A Fresh Start? Findings on Key Policy Issues

Graham Sansom and Gordon Morris

March 2025

Future Directions for Dorset's Towns and Larger Parishes

A Fresh Start? Findings on Key Policy Issues

Graham Sansom and Gordon Morris

Contents

Preface	ii
Headline Findings	1
1. Introduction and Strategic Overview	3
1.1 Dorset's Governance Framework	4
1.2 Drivers for Further Change	5
1.3 Structure of this Report	8
2. Capacity and Potential of Towns and Larger Parishes	9
2.1 Comparative Data	9
2.2 Democratic Community Governance	11
2.3 Funding and Services	12
2.4 Perceived Scope to Expand Service Delivery	13
2.5 Comparison with Cornwall	14
2.6 Corporate and Locality Planning	15
2.7 Weaknesses in Policy, Skills and Leadership	18
3. 2021-23 Community Governance Review	21
3.1 Limited Scope	21
3.2 The Bridport Exception	22
3.3 What Next?	23
4. Dorset Council Plan 2024-29	26
4.1 Referencing Local Councils	26
4.2 A Localist Perspective	28
4.3 Other Implementation Issues	29
5. Future Operating Model and 'Place-based Working'	33
5.1 Target Operating Model	33
5.2 Area Boards and Community Partnerships	34
6. Pathways for 'Double Devolution'	38
6.1 A Fresh Start?	38
6.2 Learning from Others	39
6.3 Shifting the Dial: 2025	40
6.4 Building Blocks: 2026-27	41
6.5 Consolidation and Enhancement: 2028-29	43
Attachment A: Towns and Larger Parishes Online Survey: Summary of Results	44
Attachment B: Research on Cornwall's Experience	54

Preface

This report presents the policy-related results of a low-key, informal research project exploring the status and prospects of towns and larger parishes in Dorset since the 2019 reorganisation of local government. Its focus is the potential for towns and parishes to play an expanded role, and the urgent need for a more effective working relationship between them and Dorset Council.

The project arose from our respective interests concerning the need to add an extra 'community level' to Australian local government, and the future of parish and town councils across England as a whole:

- Graham Sansom is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology Sydney. Previously he was Director of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government and Chief Executive of the Australian Local Government Association. In 2012-13 he chaired a major review of the local government system in the state of New South Wales.
- Dr Gordon Morris is a Research Associate of the University of Exeter and has been a part-time lecturer in Community Development at Bournemouth University. His research has focused on rural policy and governance, and in the early 2000s he worked on the Market Towns Initiative. He is a Dorset villager and a former parish councillor.

Both of us undertook this research in a personal capacity.

The project would not have been possible without the assistance of, and valuable contributions made by many people and organisations across Dorset – and in the final stages, Cornwall. We are especially grateful for the exceptional support provided by the Chief Executive of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils, Neil Wedge, and the Association's team. Special thanks are also due to the former CEO of Dorset Council, Matt Prosser, and the Council's current Leader, Councillor Nick Ireland, for their personal contributions and endorsing the research.

Given the limited time and resources available for this research, and the complex and dynamic issues to be covered, we cannot claim to have produced a definitive analysis. However, we believe that this report does offer a useful independent perspective and highlights both questions that needed to be asked, and decisions that have been 'parked' for too long.

Within our resources we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy and fairness of statements made in this report. We acknowledge, however, that in many cases these are matters of opinion, and that there might be some errors of fact or interpretation. We would willingly correct the record where necessary.

Graham Sansom and Gordon Morris

March 2025

Acronyms

BCP: Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole Council	LCs: Local councils (towns and parishes)
CALC: Cornwall Association of Local Councils	LDP: Liberal-Democrats Party
CAPs: Community Area Partnerships	NALC: National Association of Local Councils
CPI: Consumer Price Index	PC: Parish Council
CGR: Community Governance Review	SLCC: Society of Local Council Clerks
DAPTC: Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	TC: Town Council
DC: Dorset Council	TLPs: Towns and Larger Parishes

Headline Findings

1. The current relationship between Dorset Council (DC) and towns and parishes may fairly be described as ‘ships in the night’ – patchy and ambivalent, lacking shared purpose.
2. In its 2024 election manifesto DC’s LDP majority included: ‘*making decision-making as local and democratic as possible; listening more to local residents and creating a genuine partnership with town and parish councils.*’ However, there is still no policy framework in place to advance the LDP’s commitment.
3. Dorset has more than 160 parish and town (‘local’) councils, many with very small populations. But 70% of DC’s population is covered by just 25 towns and larger parishes (TLPs) that have real potential to expand their operations as valued partners for DC.
4. Cornwall’s achievements with ‘double devolution’ to local councils (LCs) since the advent of a unitary council in 2009 demonstrate what can be achieved. But in Dorset, little thought was given to the future of LCs when Districts were abolished in 2019.
5. The £26M spent in 2023-24 by just the 25 TLPs represented a 20-25% top-up of DC’s budget for its Place directorate: Cornwall’s experience shows that top-up could increase to 30-35% within 5-10 years by TLPs raising an extra £15M pa. in uncapped precepts. This would relieve pressure on DC’s increasingly stretched budget and facilitate sharing or transfer of some former District (‘municipal’) functions, as well as new local initiatives.
6. The need for DC to work more closely with towns and parishes was identified by Local Government Association peer reviews in 2019 and 2022. However, DC’s 2021-23 Community Governance Review missed the opportunity to consider systemic change.
7. While DC was intended to be a ‘district with county functions’, its budget and approach to policy development reveal a dominant ‘county culture’ that tends to relegate LCs to a peripheral role as one of many potential ‘community’ partners.
8. Similarly, DC’s Place directorate – effectively the successor to Districts and the ‘natural partner’ for LCs – appears to lack a strong presence and sense of direction.
9. Bringing about necessary change also depends on the 25 TLPs stepping up. TLPs need to establish a consistent, collective view on ways forward, promoted by a strong leadership group. Currently, without encouragement and guidance from DC, most appear to lack the confidence and drive required to chart the fresh course needed in the post-2019 era.
10. This applies particularly to a widespread reluctance to increase precepts to fund both essential upgrades to local services and facilities, and transfer of some functions from DC. In part, current low precepts reflect the lack of a requirement for medium-term

financial planning – most TLPs continue to budget only year-on-year. Precept increases should be carefully planned with community consultation, and justified on the basis that the additional revenue would be dedicated to local needs.

11. Locality planning also needs to improve: Dorset's TLPs lag well behind Cornwall's in completing statutory Neighbourhood Plans, although a number have social, economic or environmental strategies. The complex Neighbourhood Plan process is a barrier.
12. Some boundary changes will be required for TLPs to play an expanded role, especially in the emerging urban complex along the Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole border, as well as around several coastal and large market towns: Bridport has shown the way. More broadly, increased cooperation and information exchange amongst TLPs is essential.
13. Changes are also needed in the way local councils are structured and operate (numbers of councillors, use of wards, uncontested elections, community engagement) to strengthen community democracy in the face of centralist technocracy and a national devolution agenda that may shift key decision-making further away from localities.
14. DC's Council Plan 2024-29 still has little to say about TLPs, but does include several proposals that could engender real progress: a Coastal and Market Towns Strategy; regeneration of Weymouth; a Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor; and a Strategic Asset Management Plan that suggests more Neighbourhood Plans, transfer of assets to LCs, and selective 'devolution deals'. Those initiatives should be managed as a package in full cooperation with TLPs, and with a clear objective to expand their role.

Part 6 of this paper sets out a possible 5-year programme to advance the role of TLPs, 'double devolution' and DC-LCs working relations more broadly. In addition to those already identified above (points 10-14), other key proposals include:

- Adoption of an overarching policy on DC-LCs cooperation (initially TLPs), including DC offering encouragement and support for LCs willing and able to 'rise to the challenge'.
- Establishment within the Place directorate of a Local Councils Liaison Unit to promote needed change and to provide a central point of reference and coordination within DC.
- Negotiation of model 'double devolution' deals with a few high-capacity TLPs.
- A trial of several flexible, 'bottom-up' area partnerships using a 'town plus hinterland' model around *all* larger TLPs – but not necessarily covering the whole DC district.
- A 'test case' transfer of a whole category of asset management/service delivery to all TLPs (and ultimately all LCs) eg public toilets, verges, street cleaning).
- A supplementary Community Governance Review to determine boundary changes in urban growth areas, plus a later, broader review that also focuses on local democracy.
- A major effort to upgrade knowledge and skills amongst LCs' elected members, clerks and staff (starting with TLPs), and awareness within DC of what LCs can and could do.

In the final analysis, Dorset Council must decide whether it will encourage and enable local councils to strengthen their statutory role and capacity for sound place management, or whether it believes it can essentially 'go it alone', dominating all key areas of service delivery to communities and managing localities primarily from 'County Hall'. And the TLPs must decide whether to accept probably uncomfortable change in return for enhanced recognition and greater scope to advance the interests of their communities.

1. Introduction and Strategic Overview

This report presents the Principal Findings on Key Policy Issues for the Future of Dorset's Towns and Larger Parishes that arose from practice-focused research carried out over the period mid-2022 to December 2024. The purpose of the research was threefold:

- To add to the body of research on local government reorganisation and the future of parish and town ('local') councils.
- To offer an independent perspective to the unitary Dorset Council (DC) and the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) on how the role of local councils might now evolve following the abolition of District Councils in 2019.
- To identify experience and lessons learned of relevance to local governance in Australia, where there is no statutory equivalent to parish and town councils.

The analysis built on:

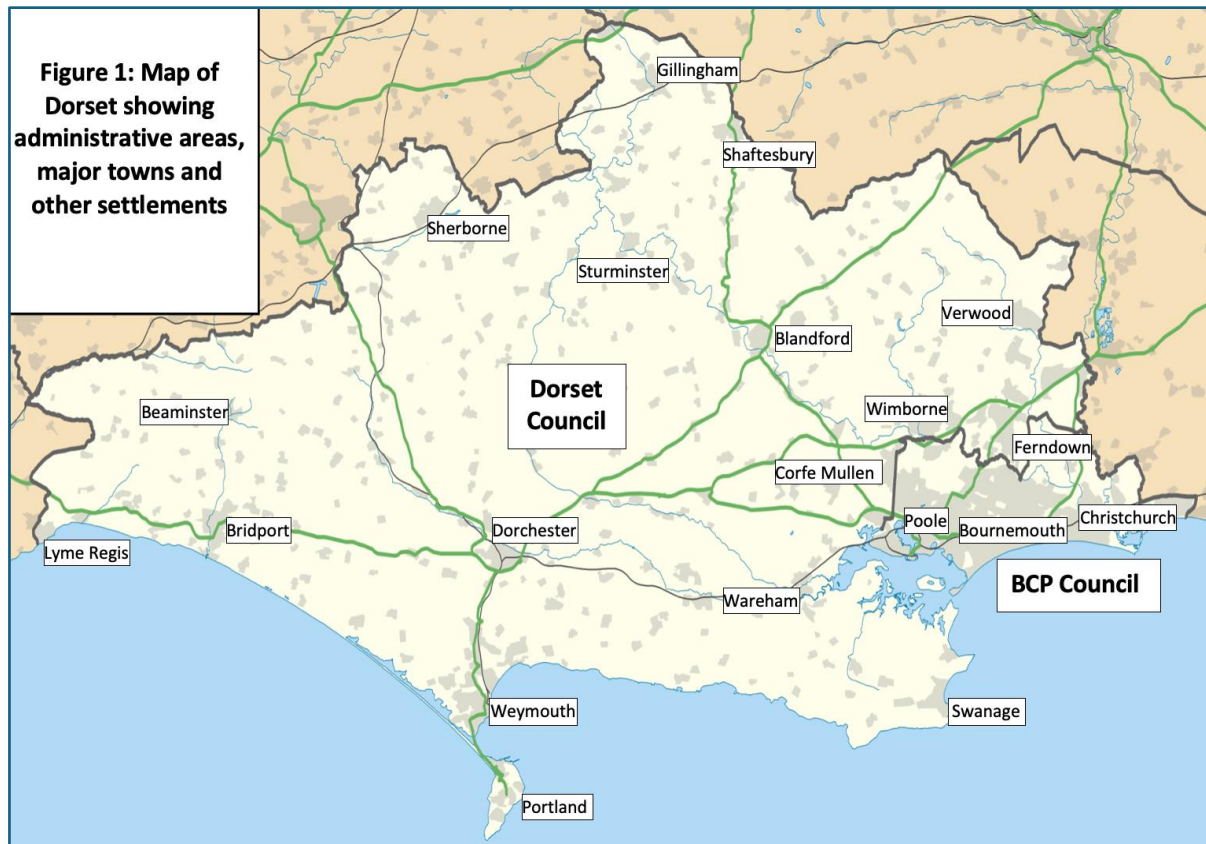
- Graham Sansom's observation of the context, process and implications of the 2019 reorganization of local government across Dorset, linked to his experience with similar processes in Australia.
- Gordon Morris's previous research into market towns, the sphere of influence of Sherborne in north Dorset, and the future of parish and town councils across England, as well as his personal experience as a parish councillor.

This was a low-key project conducted with very limited resources. Accordingly, a pragmatic decision was made to focus on the 25 member councils of DAPTC's Towns and Larger Parishes (TLPs) Committee. In addition to desktop review of relevant literature and reports, components of the research included:

- Fieldwork in May/October 2023 and June/November 2024, involving personal (and in several cases, repeated) visits to 18 of the 25 TLPs.
- An online survey in April 2024 of elected members and council clerks from the 25 TLPs.
- Two online meetings with the TLPs Committee and, in November 2024, two workshops with representatives of TLPs to explain and receive feedback on draft findings.
- Also in November 2024, meetings in Cornwall with the Association of Local Councils (CALC), several towns and parishes, and senior management of Cornwall Council, to review their 14 years' experience devolving additional responsibilities to local councils.
- Several discussions with senior representatives of DC – the current Leader, councillors, chief executive and heads of divisions.
- Conversations with academic and professional colleagues, including the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), the representative body for towns and parishes.
- Crucially, close cooperation and repeated discussions throughout with the leadership of DAPTC and the Dorset branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

1.1 Dorset's Governance Framework

Following the abolition of the former county and six¹ district councils, the unitary Dorset Council (DC) commenced operations in April 2019. It administers all the 'non-metropolitan' areas of the ceremonial county of Dorset outside the jurisdiction of the new Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole (BCP) Council, with which it shares a lengthy and complex boundary (see Figure 1). Dorset Council now has a population of around 385,000 and an annual budget of some £380M – of which more than 60% is spent on social care, health and children's services.



Within the DC's jurisdiction, there are about 160 functioning parish and town ('local') councils.² However, the 25 TLPs house around 70% of the area's total population (close to 60% in the largest 18, and 40% in two major urban complexes – see section 1.2.2), with a combined annual expenditure of some £23M on 'municipal' services such as parks and gardens, sporting and community facilities, streets and verges, heritage buildings, locality plans, aspects of environmental management, public toilets, cemeteries, allotments and others. This represents a substantial 'top-up' of DC's own annual expenditure of £104M on the 'Place' functions previously handled by District Councils.

England's parish and town councils were established as statutory units of government by the *Parish Councils Act 1894*, later replaced by the *Local Government Act 1972*. Since then, their

¹ Five former Districts were absorbed by Dorset Council, while Christchurch District became part of the new Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole unitary.

² In 2021 this included 36 grouped parishes that together included a total of 111 small parishes. There are also around 100 parishes that have no elected council and simply convene an annual Parish Meeting.

roles, powers and duties have been modified by further legislation. Crucially, they have the authority to levy a precept (in effect, a supplementary Council Tax) on properties within their jurisdiction; but unlike Council Tax, those precepts currently remain uncapped and may be increased at the discretion of each local council. Moreover, local councils enjoy a high level of autonomy in determining the scope and management of their operations, including (subject to certain conditions) having a general power of competence (see the beginning of section 2).³

Nevertheless, despite their history, status and potential, and although the abolition of Dorset's District Councils in 2019 risked creating a 'governance gap' for local places and their communities, very little thought has been given to how the roles of Dorset's towns and parishes, and particularly the better resourced TLPs, might evolve. This contrasts markedly with what has happened in Cornwall (see section 2.5 under *Comparison with Cornwall*).

As discussed later in section 6.3, the current relationship between DC and towns and parishes could fairly be described as 'ships in the night' – patchy, ambivalent and unfocused, without an overarching agenda and shared purpose. That may be about to change. Since DC's transition from Conservative to LDP control at the May 2024 local elections, towns and parishes are beginning to receive more attention. The LDP election manifesto committed to:

'a well-run council with vision and ambition; making decision-making as local and democratic as possible; listening more to local residents and creating a genuine partnership with town and parish councils.'

That core issue is referenced throughout this report.

1.2 Drivers for Further Change

Many of the issues discussed in this report are underpinned by three critical factors:

- Dorset Council's worsening financial position and resulting questions concerning its capacity to achieve a satisfactory balance between on the one hand, increasingly expensive social services and personal support, and on the other effective place management⁴ for the many different localities across its jurisdiction.
- Emerging patterns of urban and economic development, especially urban growth along the BCP border and around Weymouth.
- The now delayed move to establish a combined Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) with BCP, Somerset and Wiltshire.

³ For a useful summary of the national legislative and policy framework for parish and town councils, see Mark Sandford (2021) *Parish and town councils: recent issues*, House of Commons Library

⁴ 'Place management' and 'place-making' are somewhat loosely defined terms that refer to the governance, management or 'making' of localities, neighbourhoods and/or public spaces in a way that enhances their physical, economic and social qualities, their identity and vitality, and the wellbeing and cohesiveness of their communities (building 'social capital'). This is seen to require a multi-faceted effort involving purposeful leadership by a responsible agency, improved coordination of public sector activity, and close working relationships with community organisations and the private sector.

1.2.1 Prospects for Dorset Council

The new Dorset Council Plan⁵, adopted in December 2024, prioritises four ‘big picture’ items – economic development, housing, environment and ‘communities for all’ (the last focused largely on addressing needs for more effective social support). The Council Plan’s proposals and their potential implications for towns and parishes are discussed in section 4. However, as its Leader has pointed out⁶, the demands on DC’s budget for social care, housing, public health, children’s services and other statutory requirements leave relatively little for everything else, including ‘municipal’ or ‘place’ services provided by the former Districts (roads, planning, waste management etc), as well as new strategic initiatives. Current forecasts point to an ongoing significant weakening of DC’s financial position⁷ and capacity to fulfil all its responsibilities, and the Plan acknowledges that there is already some dissatisfaction with the way DC responds to differing local needs and aspirations.

This raises the question of whether DC can realistically expect to ‘do it all’, combining and balancing both ‘county’ and ‘district’ functions – especially given the seemingly overwhelming demands of the former county’s role in social services. **Indeed, while DC was deliberately constituted as a ‘district council with county functions’, its operational focus suggests the opposite.** Moreover, for practical reasons the new council is based in the old County Hall (still named as such), and the term ‘county’ is often used as a descriptor. These seem to be significant influences and indicators in terms of corporate culture.

Unless DC’s budget receives a major boost, and given that increases in their council tax precepts remain uncapped, towns and parishes will almost certainly have to do more in terms of ‘municipal’ services previously handled by the districts. This will likely involve both helping to maintain local services at current levels and addressing the changing needs of their localities (see section 2.5 for a comparison with Cornwall).

1.2.2 Emerging Patterns of Development

Emerging patterns of urban and economic development appear certain to have significant implications over the medium term for the roles of towns and parishes and Dorset’s governance more broadly. There are two elements to this. Firstly, Dorset’s rural and coastal areas are increasingly attractive places to live for both retirees and commuters to London and other major urban centres. The pressure to build more housing in and around Dorset’s towns and villages is compounded by central government targets aimed at tackling a nationwide shortage. This requires sensitive planning that accommodates essential development while maintaining and enhancing established character, sense of place and quality of life. TLPs can play a significant role in achieving the right balance.

Secondly, the historic distribution of population across non-metropolitan Dorset is being changed by the emergence of two major urban complexes: one along the BCP boundary, and another around Weymouth.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-council-plan-2024-to-2029>

⁶ Address to DAPTC Annual General Meeting, 23 November 2024

⁷ See section 5.1 and <https://modern.gov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?id=4293>

As shown in Figure 1, the boundary between DC and BCP is straddled by substantial urban areas that have grown considerably in recent years and are set to see significant further expansion to meet needs for increased housing supply. Around 60,000 people now live in six urbanised towns and parishes stretching from Wimborne in the west to the Hampshire border. A further 20,000 live along the western section of the BCP boundary in Corfe Mullen and Lytchett Minster and Upton. **Individually or collectively, these eight local councils⁸ could be expected to play a considerably expanded role in managing growth.** This will likely require changes to boundaries, roles and electoral arrangements (see section 3.3).

Figure 1 also shows the growing urban complex centred on the towns of Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell, which have a combined population of about 74,000. Together, Weymouth and Portland constituted one of Dorset's former District Councils. Weymouth is now one of the largest town councils in England, but this reality was scarcely recognized during or following the 2019 reorganisation and the town council's role is considerably more limited than might have been expected.

The new Dorset Council Plan suggests a potential 'growth corridor' linking Portland, Weymouth and Dorchester. As well, DC has launched a 'Weymouth 2040' initiative, also involving Portland and Chickerell. This is apparently focused on economic growth, initially the development potential of four key DC-owned sites. However, apart from a sales brochure for the council sites, at this stage detail is lacking and it is not clear how the three town councils will be involved in either of the two initiatives. Again, there is a pressing need to address future local governance, including potential changes to town council roles and boundaries (see sections 3.3 and 4.4).

1.2.3 Potential Strategic Authority

The UK Labour Government has flagged devolution of responsibilities and funding to England's regions as a key policy for economic growth and community wellbeing. It envisages an expanded network of local government 'combined authorities' led by elected Mayors⁹, each of which would be eligible for substantially increased government funding. In December 2024 the unitary Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire councils lodged an Expression of Interest to central government to establish a 'Heart of Wessex' (later simply 'Wessex') Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). Then in January 2025, BCP council agreed to join the bid – it had previously wanted to stand alone and opposed having an elected Mayor – creating a potential region of 1.9 million people.

While the four councils argued that they would continue to operate independently within the MSA, experience elsewhere in England suggests that over time there would be significant changes in governance and service delivery. One possibility is that central government's devolution of responsibilities for major service delivery to regions could intensify the pressure on cash-strapped principal councils (districts or unitaries) to devolve some of their 'municipal' functions to larger towns so that they can focus on 'county' and/or district-level infrastructure and services. Another possibility is that concerns about

⁸ In the longer term parts of the adjoining parishes of Holt, Pamphill & Shapwick, and Lytchett Matravers could also become involved (see Figure 4).

⁹ Set out in the *English Devolution White Paper*, published 16 December 2024.

weakening of local democracy may focus more attention on the representative and community engagement roles of towns and parishes.

However, in early February 2025 the government announced that Wessex would not be included in its Devolution Priority Programme. Negotiations for a future deal could continue, but no further changes will be made until 2027 or beyond. In the case of DC, this deferral could exacerbate financial problems, and may well highlight the need for increased cooperation with BCP, including management of urban growth along the border. **It could also be seen as offering a welcome ‘breathing space’ to address the outstanding need for a policy framework on the future role of towns and parishes, especially TLPs, and to foster the ‘genuine partnership’ promised by the LDP.**

1.3 Structure of this Report

The remainder of this report focuses on the scope for expanding the role of TLPs and establishing a more productive and mutually beneficial relationship between them and Dorset Council, built on a sound policy framework to facilitate necessary change. Research findings are presented and discussed under five main headings:

- Capacity and Potential of Towns and Larger Parishes
- 2021 Community Governance Review
- Dorset Council Plan 2024-29
- Operating Model and ‘Place-based’ Working
- Pathways for ‘Double Devolution’

The experience of Cornwall Council, which became a unitary following the abolition of the former county and district councils in 2009, a decade before Dorset’s reorganisation, offers an informative comparison. ‘Lessons from Cornwall’ are presented in text boxes and reflect the authors’ understanding of Cornwall Council’s almost 15 years of experience in advancing and managing elements of ‘double devolution’.

2. Capacity and Potential of Towns and Larger Parishes

As noted earlier, local councils enjoy a range of statutory powers and entitlements. These include the right to deliver numerous services (in some cases subject to the agreement of the principal council (ie. DC), and to be consulted on various matters, notably development applications. In addition, and provided they meet certain criteria, they may exercise a ‘general power of competence’ to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.¹⁰ This could extend to commercial enterprises or contributing towards the provision of a service by another authority – both of which could enable extensive cooperative activities and shared service delivery.

2.1 Comparative Data

Information on the circumstances, capacity and potential of the 25 TLPs was collected through desktop research, the online survey in April 2024, and in-person or online meetings with representatives of local councils, DAPTC and DC, as well as informed observers.

The TLPs are a self-selected group of local councils that includes all Dorset’s ‘towns’, plus 4 of the 8 still known as ‘parishes’ that have populations in excess of 2,000. They are very diverse in terms of their geography, socio-economic characteristics and the services they deliver. Table 1 provides comparative data for population, democratic representation, revenues and expenditure. Wide variations in size of population are immediately evident, reflecting historical differences in functions and development, as well as recent patterns of urban growth. Other significant aspects are identified in the following sub-sections.

Table 2 provides limited comparative data the other 4 large parishes that do not currently identify as TLPs, nor are members of DAPTC’s TLPs committee, but have populations similar to some of the smaller towns.

- Alderholt parish is based on the large village of the same name and covers an extensive area on the eastern boundary of Dorset, some distance to the north-east of Verwood.

The other three all adjoin established Dorset TLPs and are impacted to varying degrees by population growth and development in the border zone around BCP.

- West Parley is an urban area on the BCP boundary contiguous with Ferndown.
- Wareham St Martin is a large, mostly rural parish adjoining the town of Wareham to the north, centred on the village of Sandford.
- Lytchett Matravers is a large parish immediately north-west of Lytchett Minster & Upton, surrounding a growing town of the same name.

There is no obstacle to these four parishes joining the TLPs group and committee, if they so wish. Although they sit at the lower end of the TLPs population scale, they also have the potential and likely growing needs to play an expanded role. Currently, all levy precepts well below the TLP average.

¹⁰ The criteria are that at least two-thirds of the councillors must be elected as opposed to co-opted or appointed, and the council clerk must have designated qualifications.

Final 20.3.25

Table 1: Indicative Comparative Data for Towns and Larger Parishes

Town/Parish	Population 2021	Number of Cllrs/Wards 2024	Population per Councillor*	Uncontested Elections 2024^	Total Precept £ 2023-24	Precept per Capita £ 2023-24*	Budgeted Expenditure £ 2023-24	Expenditure per Capita £ 2023-24*
Beaminster	3,154	8/0	394	U	241,935	77	292,307	93
Blandford Forum	10,607	16/5	663	U(5W)	825,250	78	913,745	86
Bridport #	8,205	18/2	456		844,484	103	1,429,031	174
Charminster	3,356	13/2	258	U(1W)	45,496	14	140,635	42
Chickerell	6,283	10/2	628	U(2W)	171,000	27	199,100	32
Colehill	7,498	12/2	698	U(2W)	125,534	17	174,729	23
Corfe Mullen	10,374	14/0	741	U	502,456	48	522,556	50
Dorchester	21,358	20/5	1,068	U(2W)	1,668,507	78	1,807,487	85
Ferndown	17,457	17/7	1,027	U(3W)	863,320	49	1,087,002	62
Gillingham	11,505	17/7	677	U(4W)	1,020,559	89	1,042,990	91
Lyme Regis	3,742	14/0	267	U	132,779	36	1,933,887	517
Lytchett Minster & Upton	8,649	12/2	721	U(2W)	345,637	40	505,457	58
Portland	13,558	14/3	968		544,751	40	598,924	44
St Leonards & St Ives	7,901	13/3	608	U(3W)	105,086	13	123,526	16
Shaftesbury	9,160	15/2	611	U(1W)	560,156	61	1,027,115	112
Sherborne	10,361	15/2	691	U(2W)	906,076	87	1,029,486	99
Stalbridge	2,668	11/0	243	U	135,500	51	256,746	96
Sturminster Newton	4,408	11/0	401		385,030	87	404,328	91
Swanage	9,426	12/0	786		849,030	90	3,354,730	356
Verwood	15,172	19/4	796	U(4W)	383,600	25	486,910	32
Wareham	5,877	16/0	367		495,945	84	623,265	106
West Moors	7,403	12/0	617	U	175,355	24	223,455	30
Weymouth	53,416	25/11	2,137		3,348,840	63	4,238,700	79
Wimborne Minster	9,059	14/2	647	U(2W)	530,829	59	630,085	70
Wool	5,374	15/2	358	U(2W)	94,240	18	96,803	18
TOTAL/AVERAGE	265,971				£15,301,365	Average £58	£23,142,999	Average £87

* Based on 2021 population. ^ U (...W) indicates uncontested seats, either at large or in some wards. # Major changes took effect on 1 April 2024. There are now 20 councillors across 5 wards. Applying the new boundaries, the 2021 population would have been about 13,500, around 675 people per councillor.

Table 2: Selected Comparative Data for Other Large Parishes

Parish	Population 2021	Total Precept £ 2023-24	Precept per Capita £ 2023-24	Total Expenditure £ 2023-24	Expenditure per Capita £ 2023-24
Alderholt	3,171	96,376	30	143,511	45
Lytchett Matravers	3,424	108,009	32	138,766	41
Wareham St Martin	2,774	35,000	13	54,448	20
West Parley	3,585	83,500	23	149,066	42

2.2 Democratic Community Governance

Of critical importance to their future potential is the simple fact that all TLPs are statutory, elected bodies and thus provide an extra layer of democratic governance for their communities. While Dorset ward councillors also play an important representative role for localities, towns and parishes are ideally placed to provide exceptionally rich and responsive community governance, with major benefits in terms of quality of life, local identity and sense of place. Nevertheless, several issues need attention.

- First and foremost, the democratic value of local councils is frequently questioned because many councillors do not face contested elections. This applies particularly to a high number of smaller parish councils outside the TLPs group, but as Table 1 shows, in 2024 nearly 80% of the TLPs had an uncontested election in at least one ward. This occurred even amongst some councils with the highest ratio of population per councillor. To fill the resulting vacant positions, councils had to hold costly by-elections¹¹ or seek volunteers for co-option.
- There are marked variations in the ratio of population per councillor, and in the use of wards within local councils. These lack any consistent pattern and appear questionable. Some survey respondents and interviewees commented that wards may create unwarranted divisions within communities: it is worth noting that almost a third of TLPs, including one with a population of nearly 10,000, operate satisfactorily without wards.
- Excluding Weymouth TC, the average number of councillors per town/parish is around 14, and the average population per councillor is only a little more than 600. This pattern is broadly consistent with national practice¹², and having a large number of councillors may provide volunteer labour to ‘get jobs done’ when staff resources are limited – evidently that remains something of a tradition in local councils. Nevertheless, is attracting sufficient candidates to elect one councillor for every few hundred people – and especially to have enough for a truly contested election – realistic in the modern era? The data suggest that in many cases a substantial reduction in the number of elected councillors may be warranted, typically around 25% or more. This, coupled with the abolition of wards where appropriate, would increase the likelihood of contested elections. The reduced number of elected councillors might be offset by appointing non-voting members – especially people with needed skills and energy.

¹¹ The high cost of elections in general is a significant issue for many parishes with small budgets.

¹² As advocated by NALC. However, the legal minimum is just 5; there is no legislated standard ratio of councillors to electors; and official government guidance suggests a ‘large number’ is not usually required.

- Concerns were expressed by some respondents to the online survey that in many instances local councils are failing to inform and/or effectively engage their communities, and thus to garner needed support for their role and activities. If accurate, this observation is disturbing given local councils' fundamental democratic purpose and the high number of councillors per capita. It perhaps suggests an 'autocratic' approach on the part of some elected bodies, and/or that a lack of skills and ambition results in them simply 'going through the motions'.

The damaging impact of uncontested elections was demonstrated early in the 2019 reorganisation process, when the 'Case for Change' report commented as follows:

.... in the most recent elections in 2015, only 9% of town and parish member elections were contested. This does raise questions about the capacity of some of the town and parish councils to take on additional functions. Careful consideration should be given to this issue before a localism strategy predicated on delegation is considered.¹³

The report failed to explain that the great majority of uncontested seats were in small rural parishes where it may be unrealistic to expect contested elections whatever the number of councillors, given the cost involved, low numbers of permanent residents, and perhaps a tendency to reach a pre-election 'community consensus' on suitable councillors. Nevertheless, subsequent events suggest that the report's observation reflected an influential perspective amongst those who later finalised and implemented the reorganisation, perhaps leading to a 'lowest common denominator' approach by DC to the role of local councils generally.

All these matters should be addressed by a future Community Governance Review, which is needed sooner rather than later (see section 3.2).

2.3 Funding and Services

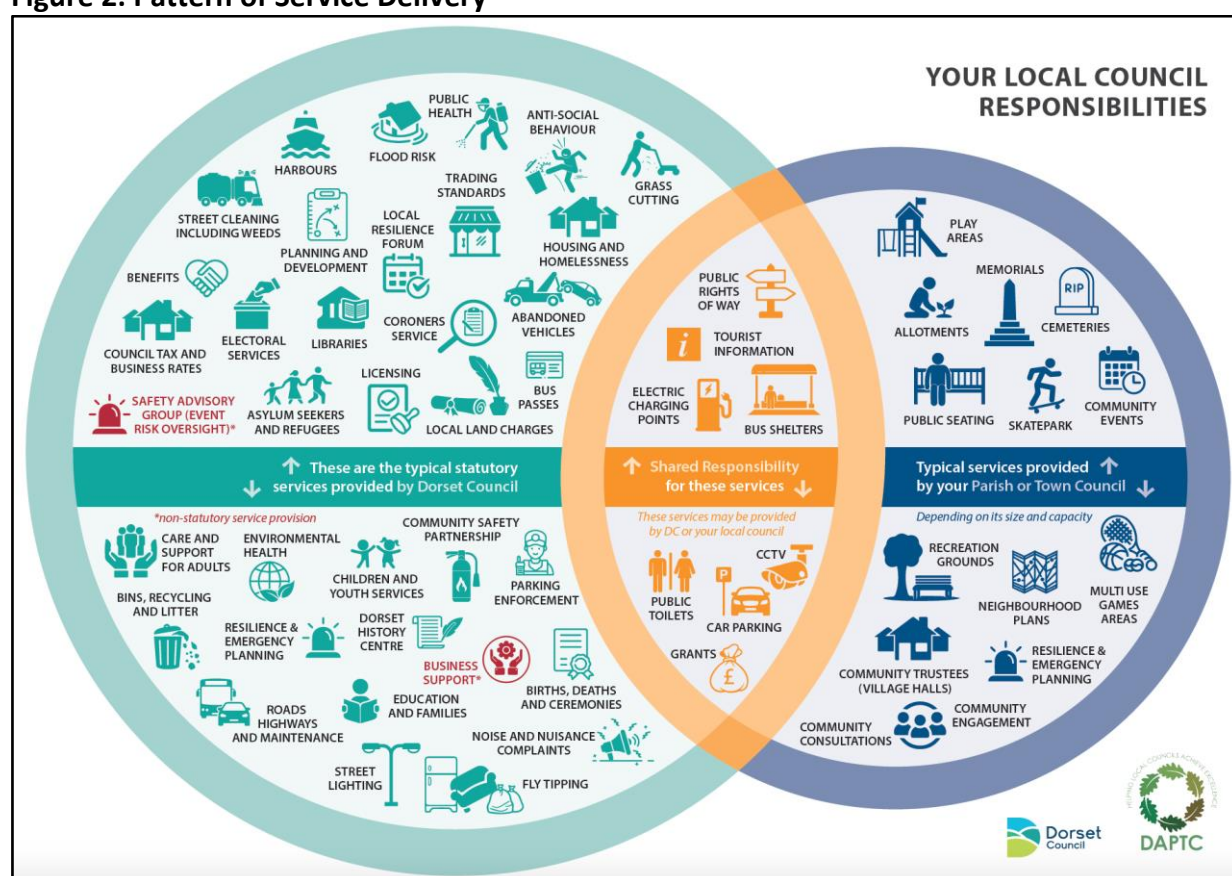
The variations in own-source revenue (the council tax precept) and expenditure shown in Table 1 are important in three respects, reflecting:

- Current differences in capacity and effort to deliver services. Some local councils appear to do very little and rely on services in neighbouring towns – in 2023-24 seven TLPs raised less than £30 per capita in precepts, and spent less than £40 per capita.
- The ability of some councils to raise large amounts of revenue from other sources, perhaps suggesting that options to do so could be explored more widely.
- Untapped potential for local councils both individually and collectively to raise considerably more revenue, deliver a wider range of services and expand their role in the governance of Dorset – precepts well above the current TLPs group average are evidently acceptable to Cornwall taxpayers, and the same may well apply across much of the DC area.

¹³ *Case for change: Local government reorganisation in Dorset*. PWC, December 2016, p.78. Available at: <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/Data/359/201701121830/Agenda/Appendix%201%20-%20PwC%20Case%20for%20Change.pdf>

Figure 2 shows the range of services delivered by towns and parishes in general, and by DC. Local councils have very few statutory *obligations* (as opposed to powers) for service delivery, and many small parishes do not provide some or most of the typical 'core' (blue) services. However, all those services are provided to varying degrees by TLPs, together with some in the (orange) group for which delivery is shared with DC, and even in the (green) category of DC's statutory services. Notably, there are numerous examples of TLPs already taking partial or full responsibility for roadside verges, street cleaning, car parks, waste and litter collection, grass cutting, local markets, major/historic buildings, economic development, tourism, beaches, environmental protection, community resilience etc.

Figure 2: Pattern of Service Delivery



2.4 Perceived Scope to Expand Service Delivery

The online survey of local council clerks and elected members included several questions that explored the needs and scope for TLPs to expand their range of service delivery, and their likely willingness to do so (see Attachment A for a summary of survey findings).

Currently, the dominant areas of service delivery by TLPs (in terms of expenditure) are parks, gardens and play areas; community facilities (including halls, community centres, other buildings, allotments, cemeteries); sporting facilities (outdoor and indoor); community development (including events, grants, transport, social support, youth services, information and advice); and public toilets. Expenditure on most of those services has been increasing faster than inflation and that is expected to continue.

Key pressures for change in roles and priorities were seen as growth and (re)development; dealing with an ageing population; addressing threats to environmental quality; ensuring community participation and local democracy; and upgrading services and facilities to meet changing community needs. **This suggests an ongoing agenda for TLPs that blends managing growth and environmental concerns with a strong focus on local democracy and upgrading services to meet changing community needs (notably an ageing population).**

Large majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements that:

- *Our council will have to make significant changes to its functions and priorities over the next decade to address local needs and maintain quality of life.*
- *Our council can and should become a more robust advocate on behalf of the local community.*
- *Parish and town councils generally should establish a broader role in ‘place making’ and community development.*

These views were accompanied by a willingness to consider ‘downloading’ of a range of functions from DC, notably parks and gardens; streets (minor maintenance, lighting, cleansing, footpaths, verges etc); parking areas; public toilets; community facilities and community development. However, that willingness was laced with caution about financial implications and arrangements, and evident reluctance to contemplate large increases in precepts (discussed further in section 2.6) or structural change (amalgamation of towns and parishes or formalised shared services). **In part, this caution about accepting more responsibilities may reflect ambivalence about the quality of working relationships with DC, and the extent to which it really wants to see an expanded role for, and closer cooperation with, TLPs (see section 2.7).**

2.5 Comparison with Cornwall

Table 3 compares the finances of Dorset’s TLPs with their counterparts in Cornwall.

Table 3: Dorset and Cornwall Compared

	Dorset	Cornwall
No. Towns & Larger Parishes (TLPs)*	25	34
2021 Population of LGA	380,000	570,300
TLPs as % Total LGA Population	70%	62%
2021 Population Range	2,668 – 53,416	2,240 – 23,830
2021 Populations 10-20,000	8^	14
2021 Populations >20,000 (>30,000)	2 (1)	6 (0)
2021 Total Population in TLPs	265,971	353,036
2023-24 Total Precepts of TLPs	£ 15,301,365	£ 27,039,548
2023-24 Precepts Range	£ 13 – 103	£ 37 – 138
2023-24 Average Precept Per Capita #	£ 58	£ 77

* Defined in Cornwall as towns/parishes with precept income >£140,000; Self-defined in Dorset (in 2023-24 six raised less than £140,000). ^ Includes Bridport following recent boundary changes

Based on 2021 populations, so perhaps by 2023-24 a little less than shown.

Since 2010 Cornwall Council has implemented a series of ‘double devolution’ policies to encourage local councils to do more, in part to relieve some of the financial pressures on itself, which have become severe. Attachment B presents extracts from one of several research papers analysing Cornwall’s experience. Discussions held during this project with representatives of Cornwall Council, the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC), and several town and parish councils indicate that the trend to devolution is likely to continue.¹⁴

Box 1: Lessons from Cornwall #1

While there some differences in context, the comparison between TLPs in Cornwall and Dorset is instructive. In response to Cornwall Council’s policies:

- Many larger towns have already taken on numerous – and costly – additional functions.
- Total revenue from local council precepts has increased by around 300% over 15 years.
- On-the-whole, residents appear to have accepted those increases with relatively little opposition or backlash – most likely because the result has generally been to save and/or improve services and to exercise greater local control, both of which are valued.
- It appears that towns and larger parishes are generally willing to do still more – Cornwall Council’s ongoing financial difficulties may leave no other option. Already, the budgeted increase in total precept revenues for Cornwall’s 34 TLPs in 2024-25 is 13.4% (still a relatively low amount in actual money).

If the average precept per capita of Dorset TLPs had matched Cornwall’s level of £77, they would have raised an additional £5.25M (34%) in 2023-24. And at Cornwall’s projected average per capita precept for 2024-25 (£87), the total precept income of Dorset TLPs would now exceed £23M – an increase of 50%. Moreover, this increase would represent only a small fraction of those accepted by residents in Cornwall. With the right policy settings and the endorsement of DC, Dorset’s TLPs could more than double their precept income over the next 5-10 years.

2.6 Corporate and Locality Planning

An expanded role for TLPs in service delivery and place-making/place management¹⁵ would need to be underpinned by effective corporate (including financial) and locality planning. Currently, however, the applicable legislation imposes only minimal demands for budgeting, financial reporting and audit, even in the case of larger towns and parishes. There are no requirements for multi-year financial plans (‘forward estimates’), nor for broader corporate or locality strategies.

As part of the online survey, local council clerks were asked; *What Town/Parish plans has your council completed, or are under way, or may be prepared in the next term?* Table 4 shows their responses (17 of the 25 clerks completed the survey).

¹⁴ For a recent re-statement of policy, see *Localism in Cornwall: The Power of Community* (2020)

¹⁵ Defined earlier in footnote #3 on p.5

Table 4: Corporate and Locality Planning by TLPs

Type of Plan	Completed	Under Way	Maybe Soon	Most Unlikely
Council corporate/strategy plan	7	4	6	-
Statutory Neighbourhood Plan	4	4	4	5
Social/community plan	4	-	8	4
Environment/conservation plan	6	-	9	1
Climate action plan	8	2	6	1

Clearly, TLPs are doing – and/or intending to do – a fair amount of planning for their localities. The number of completed plans for environment/conservation and climate action appears noteworthy, and supplementary comments also mentioned plans for seafront and beach improvements, access (disability?) and movement, streetscape and heritage. This activity reflected widespread concerns about the need to address population growth and urban (re)development; maintaining local character; environmental challenges (including climate change); and economic development. On the other hand, relatively few TLPs had completed or were preparing corporate/strategy plans for their operations or statutory Neighbourhood Plans to guide development.

2.6.1 Corporate and Financial Plans

The paucity of corporate and financial planning might simply reflect the relatively small-scale operations of most TLPs and the absence of any legal requirements beyond annual budgets and audited financial statements. But it may also point to deficiencies in terms of skills, and of awareness on the part of staff and/or councillors about the need for a more professional approach (see section 2.7.1). In part, this may well reflect low expectations around the role and performance of local councils.

As noted above, this is reflected particularly in a reluctance to increase precepts, which remain uncapped but are still comparatively low. Responses to the online survey showed a widespread acceptance that expenditures should grow marginally or substantially faster than CPI to meet unmet, increasing or emerging needs. Yet the majority felt it was at best ‘just possible’ or ‘quite likely’ that their community would support such an increase, citing current cost of living pressures. Discussions also revealed a concern that increased revenue from precepts might be ‘siphoned’ for use elsewhere. **Precept increases would need to be carefully planned with community consultation, and justified on the basis that the additional revenue would be dedicated to local needs.**

In some ways the concerns being expressed are unremarkable. **What is alarming, however, is the extent to which increases in precepts in some towns and parishes are being held below CPI and even below the cap on council tax.** Zero increases are not uncommon, sometimes for successive years and even amongst large towns struggling to maintain a demanding range of services and lacking the funds to undertake essential improvements to infrastructure and facilities.¹⁶ This somewhat ‘cavalier’ attitude to financial management is

¹⁶ See for example news releases *Budget agreed by Weymouth Town Council*, dated 15.1.25: comms@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk, and *Shaftesbury Town Council Announces Council Tax Precept Adjustment to Sustain Services and Develop Community Assets*, dated 21.1.25: office@Shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk

enabled by the lack of a statutory requirement for medium-term financial planning and, it could be argued, any guidance from DC. Year-by-year budgeting allows difficult or contentious decisions about the adequacy of revenues and expenditure to be repeatedly deferred until a crisis looms. Questions also need to be asked about the adequacy of audits that may be conducted by people with limited qualifications and experience, or that fail to assess whether council finances are being managed responsibly and are on a sustainable trajectory.

2.6.2 Neighbourhood Plans

Preparation and adoption of a statutory Neighbourhood Plan offers towns and parishes the opportunity to ensure that the Dorset Local Plan properly addresses the issues facing their locality; to play a stronger role in guiding growth and change, and improve the quality of development proposals; and to receive an increased share of developer contributions for community infrastructure and facilities. Given widespread concerns about the impacts of urban development, maintaining local character and environmental issues, it might have been expected that statutory Neighbourhood Plans would feature prominently.

However, survey results and a check of council websites confirms that only 6 of the 25 TLPs have completed a Neighbourhood Plan, with two others underway. (This compares with 21 of 34 in Cornwall.¹⁷) Several of the largest TLPs apparently have no intention of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in the short-medium term: two started but then deferred further work. None of the local councils along the BCP boundary have one, although in the other urban complex, Portland and Chickerell have adopted plans and Weymouth's is well advanced.

Survey responses pointed to two key factors that may explain this situation: the length and complexity of the statutory process, and what are seen as excessive demands imposed on council and community resources, including financial costs. The delay in completion of the new Dorset Local Plan and hence uncertainty around the parameters for town and parish plans was raised as another significant factor (although the delay could be seen as an opportunity to 'get in first', engage residents and stakeholders, and draft a Neighbourhood Plan that advances community aspirations). As well, there is a view in some quarters that the benefits of Neighbourhood Plans could be achieved in other ways, such as non-statutory locality plans or gaining a more influential role in processing development applications. (How the latter can be achieved consistently without a Neighbourhood Plan is unclear.)

There is no doubt that preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is complex and imposes heavy demands on local councils and their communities. In the final analysis, the question is whether the benefits outweigh the costs. Viewed simply in terms of financial gain – the increased share of developer contributions – the answer may be 'no'. However, the value of a Neighbourhood Plan may also lie in the town or parish achieving more influence in local planning and a higher profile in decision-making across a broader range of issues. In that regard, Bridport's experience points to key elements of neighbourhood planning that warrant more attention in the wider Dorset context:

¹⁷ See <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/xdadmvmxz/neighbourhood-planning-activity-map-a3.pdf>

- A Neighbourhood Plan may be prepared and implemented *jointly* by several towns and parishes, and thus provide a basis for cooperative action on a wide range of interlocking issues (eg across Dorset's two major urban complexes).
- It may include *detailed* objectives, standards and guidelines that *must* be given due weight by applicants and by DC in the formulation and assessment of development proposals – and in the implementation of DC's Local Plan.
- It may address not only 'conventional' elements of land use planning and development control, but also broader environmental, economic and social issues and challenges (albeit with less statutory backing, but nonetheless persuasively).

In short, a sound Neighbourhood Plan may help to position the town or parish concerned as a more substantial player in Dorset's system of governance, and a more capable partner.

2.7 Weaknesses in Policy, Skills and Leadership

Realising the potential of Dorset's TLPs and other large parishes will not be easy, even if there is broad agreement that it is a goal worth pursuing. This assessment reflects weaknesses in policy, skills and leadership across both TLPs and Dorset Council.

2.7.1 Failings amongst Local Councils

With some notable exceptions, Dorset's local councils have yet to rise to the challenges of the post-2019 era. With the loss of District Councils, and in the absence of encouragement and guidance from DC (see below) many towns and parishes appear to lack the confidence and drive needed to chart a fresh course – even though (according to the survey results) they know more needs to be done to manage their 'place' and support its community. Without a concerted effort to increase resources and expertise most local councils will find themselves unable to do more than simply keep up with the day-to-day pressures of their current activities.

Previous sub-sections have highlighted weaknesses in corporate and locality planning, community engagement and financial management – notably the failure to increase precepts just to keep pace with inflation and ensure basic services, let alone fund an expanded role.

Another factor is insufficient communication and cooperation. Despite the efforts of DAPTC, it is evident that many local councils operate largely in isolation from each other – there is a distinct lack of common purpose that weakens DAPTC's ability to advance concrete policy proposals and advocate effectively. Survey respondents expressed a widespread belief that TLPs should exchange information and ideas and work together much more than they do currently.

A stronger skills base will be critical. There was broad agreement among survey respondents that: *both councillors and senior managers will need to substantially upgrade their skills to*

lead the [town or larger parish] council effectively and respond to changing needs. This requires joint action by DAPTC, SLCC and DC (see section 6.4).

Also, stronger leadership is needed to advance cooperative efforts and tackle thorny issues around funding and governance. TLPs need to bring together some of the most experienced elected members and council clerks to formulate and promote sound proposals for ‘bottom-up’ change. **There are more than enough talented people within the TLPs to provide forceful collective leadership, but some of the most capable are not in leadership positions at present, or contributing as much as they could.**

In summary, TLPs are doing a lot of valuable work, but if they do not broaden their horizons and ‘lift their game’ they are likely to become increasingly peripheral in Dorset’s system of local governance. **The TLPs must decide now whether to accept probably uncomfortable change in return for enhanced recognition and greater scope to advance the interests of their communities.**

2.7.2 Dorset Council’s Policy Blindspot

After nearly six years, DC still has no policy framework around the role it expects towns and parishes could or should play in the system of local governance, nor for how it will work with them collectively.¹⁸ During this research, the relationship between DC and TLPs was described by survey respondents as ‘generally productive’, but in practical terms it was revealed as patchy and inconsistent.

In October 2019 an initial peer review of DC by the national Local Government Association found that:

*The council has clearly made significant progress with its leadership of place agenda...[but] ... there is further work to be done with parishes and towns to fundamentally develop a strong and sustainable partnership plan...*¹⁹

A follow-up review in 2022 returned to that finding:

*Once more we heard about a willingness to engage between Dorset Council and its parish and town councils ... However, we also heard that **Dorset Council had a disposition to take the key issues away and look to solve the issues on behalf of, not necessarily with, partners. The feeling was that contributions from external partners were not necessarily being sought or encouraged** [emphasis added] ... the overriding sense we had, was that the concept of ‘co-production’ needed a turbo charge, so that everyone can work together on a common purpose and to collectively make progress.*²⁰

Subsequently, in February/March 2023 DC endorsed proposed actions to advance ‘Place leadership’, including to: *Enhance ‘co-production’ in relation to town and parish councils.*

¹⁸ In fairness, it should be noted that DC is not alone in this regard, and that there appear to be widespread gaps nationally in policy and guidance concerning how the role of parishes and towns may need to change when unitary councils replace districts.

¹⁹ Dorset Council 2022: [Progress review and reflections on impact of sector led improvement](#). Local Government Association, September 2022, p.7.

²⁰ Ibid., pp.12-13

However, this research found little progress on that front. The shortfall in policy and effort appears to reflect, among other things:

- Lack of interest on the part of the Conservative majority in office from 2019 to 2024. Among other things, it decided not to proceed with 'area boards' (see section 5.2), partly on the basis that Dorset ward councillors would provide the required 'bridge' to towns and parishes – an approach that appears to have fallen well short of expectations.
- The dominance within DC of former 'county' functions and objectives, notably around social support and welfare, coupled with the failure (or disinclination?) of the Place directorate (in effect the Districts' successor) to champion localism and the work of local councils.
- Management's intense focus on its 'One Council' theme (perhaps taken too literally?) around building a new organisation, which seems to have fostered a somewhat inward-looking, centralist bureaucracy that has only recently begun to highlight the need for effective relations with external partners (see section 5).
- Disruption caused by the COVID epidemic during the first two years after reorganisation.
- The absence of collective action and effective advocacy by local councils discussed above.

The challenge of creating 'genuine partnerships' between DC and local councils may now prove much more difficult than if, as in Cornwall, a substantial start had been made soon after reorganization. A considerable amount of 'corporate memory' about how to work effectively with towns and parishes appears to have been lost since the demise of the Districts 2019 due to disruption, loss of experienced staff and the focus on other priorities.

It is not DC's job to 'spoon feed' local councils: they are statutory bodies in their own right and must behave accordingly. But they are a 'lower tier': DC can exercise a large measure of control or influence over their activities, and they will look to DC for guidance and encouragement. **DC has to decide whether it will work with DAPTC to formulate policies and strategies that enable TLPs to strengthen their status and capacity for sound place management (including by raising more revenue); or whether it prefers to 'go it alone', dominating all key areas of service delivery to communities, and managing localities directly from 'County Hall'.**

3. 2021-23 Community Governance Review

In Dorset, the lack of policy development around how the role of LCs might evolve under the new unitary framework was particularly evident in the conduct and outcomes of the Community Governance Review (CGR) begun in 2021. **The CGR can be seen as an important – but missed – opportunity for DC to consider the underlying issues involved.**²¹

3.1 Limited Scope

The Consultation Paper for the 2021 CGR²² referenced selected sections of the Guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in 2008²³, as well as informal advice provided by NALC. In broad terms, the purpose of a CGR is to update or improve the system of local councils in a local government area. The goal is to identify the most suitable ways of representing the people in a locality, ensuring that any proposals for change reflect the identities and interests of the community and enable ‘effective and convenient’ governance.

A CGR may therefore consider options for creating, merging or abolishing parishes or towns; adjusting their external and ward boundaries; establishing, changing or abolishing grouped parishes that share a council; and altering electoral arrangements (number of councillors, use of wards). It cannot *determine* financial or administrative matters (eg precepts, staffing or the scope of services a parish delivers), but the principal council (in this case, DC) can exercise considerable discretion regarding the way it conducts a review, and what factors it takes into account when determining necessary changes. Alongside a CGR it can also set out framework policies, such as the devolution strategy adopted by Cornwall Council.

The Consultation Paper for the 2021 CGR asserted that it was ‘an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove any parish boundaries anomalies that may exist.’ Those words might have pointed to a strategic analysis of population and development trends, as well as related changes in the operating environment for both DC and local councils. However, no such analysis was undertaken and there was no contextual discussion of the need for fresh thinking or desirable future roles and directions for towns and parishes.

Instead, the CGR adopted a ‘passive’ approach that relied on submissions lodged individually by local councils, and focused on the legal and technical aspects of adjusting boundaries and electoral arrangements. As a result, it essentially endorsed the status quo.

Moreover, even though the recommendations relied on electorate projections for only the minimum 5 years, it was suggested that another review would not take place for a decade or more. This may accord with official guidance, but a long delay would impede timely adjustments to boundaries and governance as circumstances change.

²¹ This should be read as corporate failure, not personal criticism of those managing the CGR.

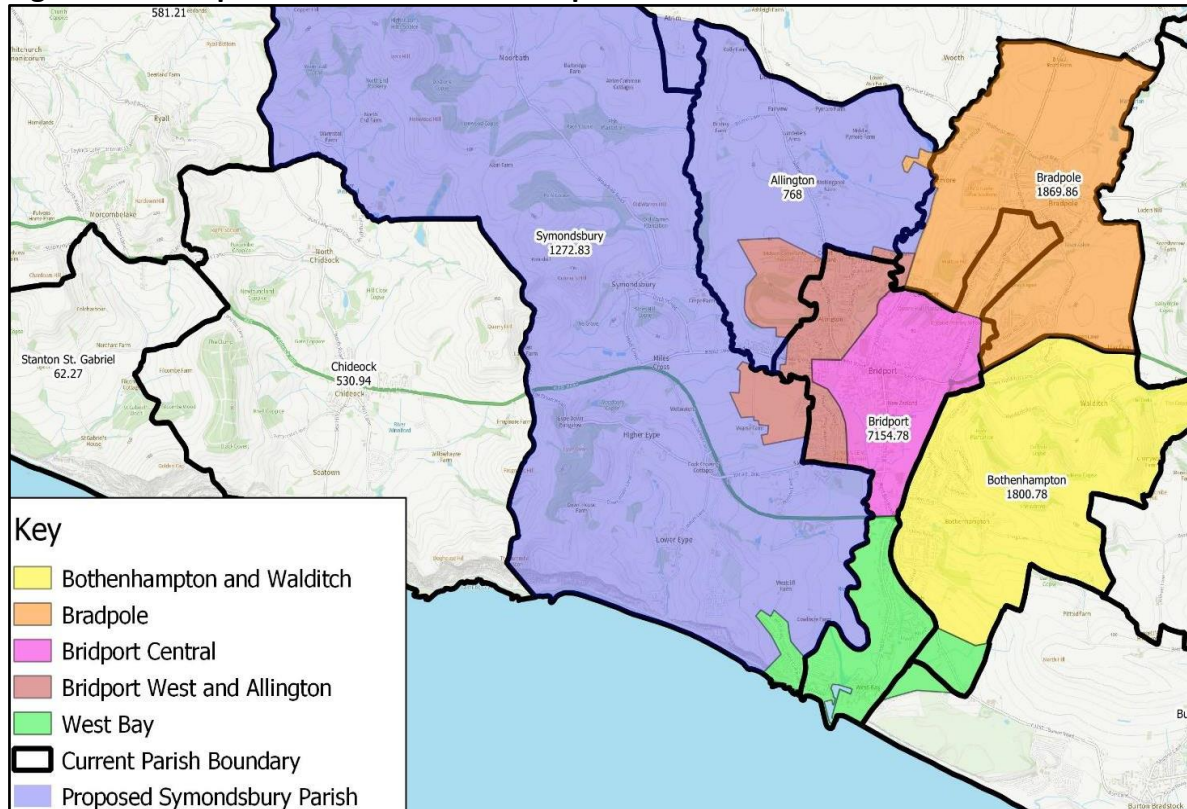
²² [Dorset Council Community Governance Review Consultation Paper \(undated\)](#)

²³ It could have referenced additional material from the amended version released by the [Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010](#), which reflects an expansive view of the future of LCs.

3.2 The Bridport Exception

The limited vision of the 2021 CGR was highlighted by the one exception to what might be termed its 'minimalist' approach – the Town of Bridport and its 'suburban' parishes (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Expanded Boundaries of Bridport*



* The Town of Bridport now comprises the five wards coloured light and dark brown, purple, yellow and green. Most of Allington Parish was merged with Symondsburry.

Bridport TC had a history of cooperating with adjoining parishes through a Local Area Partnership, a joint Neighbourhood Plan, shared service delivery and economic development initiatives. However, despite population growth and urban expansion, the extensive use of Bridport's services by parish residents, and inequities in the respective precepts paid by town and parish property owners, there had been no boundary changes for 25 years.

The TC therefore seized the opportunity to make a detailed CGR submission advocating strategic change. It also consulted and negotiated directly with neighbouring parishes so as to present the CGR with a 'ready-made' package, notably based on an agreement with the Symondsburry PC. The case for change included lack of capacity in the parishes to deal with ongoing change and provide adequate services; uncontested elections in some instances; the precedent of adding major urban development at Poundbury to the Town of Dorchester; and the opportunity that would be created for more devolution of services and assets to the expanded Bridport TC. It also noted that resistance to boundary changes by a parish council does not necessarily equate to majority opposition amongst residents.

The CGR accepted Bridport's proposals, which have now been implemented, seemingly without turmoil. This appears to offer conclusive evidence that far-reaching changes can be

pursued successfully given sufficient time, careful preparation and political will. **When there is a demonstrable need and the opportunity presents itself ‘to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries’ that will facilitate more ‘effective and convenient’ governance, tweaks and half-measures are not enough. Thorough preliminary analysis and consultation should be undertaken before future CGRs are launched.**

3.3 What Next?

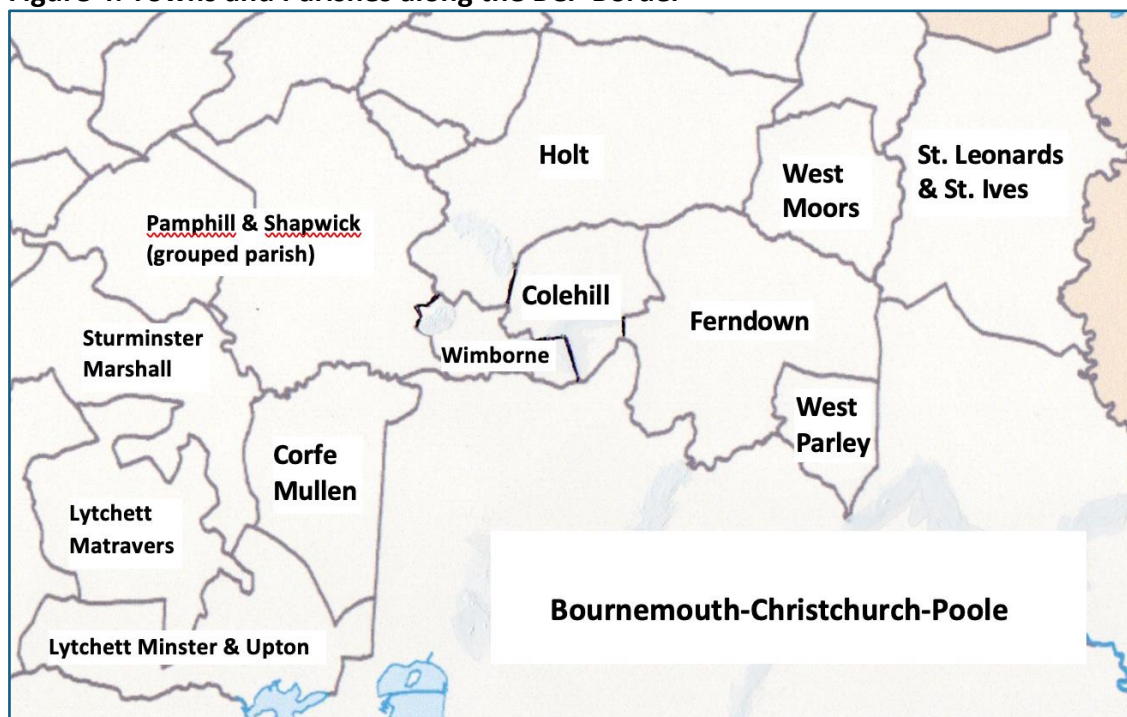
The example of Bridport, coupled with development trends and problematic town and parish boundaries in several key locations across Dorset, indicate that a follow-up CGR cannot sensibly be left for another decade or more (see section 6). The 2010 Guidance on CGRs makes it clear that a CGR may be conducted at any time if required.

The Guidance also states that local councils: *‘increasingly have a role to play in urban areas. We propose to build on the existing parish structure, so as to improve its capacity to deliver better services and represent the community’s interests’* (p.19).

With those provisions in mind, a selective CGR should be undertaken in the near future to examine options for future governance in at least the following four locations.

- The northern section of the BCP border area (see Figure 4), which comprises functional groupings of Wimborne/Colehill and Ferndown/West Parley/West Moors/St Leonards & St Ives. These are more or less contiguous urban areas requiring coordinated planning and management, but where no significant boundary changes were canvassed in the 2021 CGR and unwarranted variations in precepts need to be addressed.

Figure 4: Towns and Parishes along the BCP Border



- The proposed Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor, including the medium-term future of the Winterborne Farringdon grouped parish between Weymouth and

Dorchester, as well as the Weymouth-Chickerell boundary. Although adjustments were made in 2024, a longer term assessment is required as the towns become increasingly inter-dependent – an outcome that may well be hastened by the current ‘Weymouth 2040’ initiative (see section 4.3.2).

- Blandford Forum, which unsuccessfully proposed substantial boundary changes in its submission to the CGR – a key factor being the lack of prior analysis and consultation. As in Bridport, a contiguous urban area is divided and the town pays for services also used by residents in adjoining parishes, with inequitable precepts.
- Dorchester/Charminster – although the urban areas are physically separate, they are closely inter-related and the issues involved (notably the extreme disparity in precepts and per capita expenditures) are similar to those in Bridport and Blandford Forum (see Table 1).

In all those locations, a future CGR needs to begin by considering medium-term strategies for managing growth and asking: **Is there a case for boundary changes, mergers or ‘tightly’ grouped towns and parishes (see Box 2) to create more substantial towns that are governed by a single or grouped council?**

The CGR should also ask: in the medium term, what would be the most realistic and productive division of responsibilities between DC and the TLPs, taking into account DC’s financial challenges? To what extent would larger ‘new’ towns have the capacity to play an expanded role as a partner to DC, carrying more of the financial burden of place management? Should they be seen as somewhat akin to previous urban districts – but using the current legislation for local councils?

Box 2: Legislative Scope for Grouped Parishes/Towns

Section 91 of the *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007* provides for a CGR to recommend grouping of parishes (including towns) under a single council. The 2010 CGR Guidance then states: ‘such proposals are worth considering and may avoid the need for substantive changes to parish boundaries’.

The Guidance also indicates (by default) that a principal council (viz. DC) may exercise considerable discretion in establishing a grouped parish/town council provided it meets the fundamental objective of ensuring effective and convenient governance; reflects a genuine community of interest; is not ‘artificially large’; and each existing parish/town has at least one councillor on the joint council.

Grouping can only take place with agreement of a parish meeting of each affected parish (section 11 of *the Local Government Act 1972*). Given the understandable wish of many communities to retain their identity, this may be an obstacle, but provisions to respect local identity can be built into the operations of a grouped council. Also, it needs to be understood that in some cases the only viable alternative could be an enforced merger. Again, this underlines the likely need for careful analysis and preliminary consultations before the formal stages of a CGR begin.

The legislation gives a principal council broad discretion to exercise its authority and/or influence as necessary to ensure a satisfactory outcome in the best interests of all concerned; and that the grouped parish/town is effectively structured and resourced as a ‘tight’, coherent operation under a single, professional administration in order to address the challenges facing its combined area.

As well, there is a pressing need to take a fresh look at the community democracy issues identified in section 2.2: stark inconsistencies in the ratio of population to councillors and the use of electoral wards; doubts concerning the need for and value of wards in all but the largest towns; whether Dorset's local councils are seeking to elect simply too many councillors, resulting in uncontested elections; and the need for more effective, ongoing community engagement.

These inconsistencies and concerns offer ready ammunition for those who question the democratic credentials of towns and parishes, but were not addressed as such by the 2021 CGR. It referenced unofficial advice from NALC on the ratio of councillors to population, which seems to have contributed to maintaining the highly variable number of electors per councillor; along with the preferences of individual councils (or maybe just the status quo?) regarding the use of wards. If councils as diverse as Beaminster, Corfe Mullen, Lyme Regis, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton, Swanage, Wareham and West Moors can operate successfully without wards, why can't others? **There may be sound answers to that and other questions, but the 2021 CGR did not provide them.**

Further steps are proposed in section 6 (Tables 8 and 9). There appears to be ample scope for follow-up CGRs that are more strategic and 'adventurous', with a view to creating a robust, sustainable and capable system of local councils for the medium-longer term. This could include a number of expanded towns; increased use of high-functioning 'tightly' grouped parishes in both urban and rural areas; and a considerable reduction in the overall number of rural parishes by means of mergers and/or other groupings.

4. Dorset Council Plan 2024-29

Dorset's new Council Plan 2024-29 was adopted in December 2024. It nominates four 'big picture' priorities – economic development, housing, environment and 'communities for all'. The last appears driven largely by issues around social welfare and disadvantage: provision of social care, children's services, housing and public health account for around two-thirds of the council's annual budget. By contrast, 'municipal' services that are managed by DC's Place directorate and represent 'core business' for local councils, receive very little attention in the Plan. This section of the report discusses how the Plan and its implementation could both advance and benefit from further consideration of DC's relationship with TLPs.

4.1 Referencing Local Councils

Table 5 identifies elements of the Plan that could offer, or might have explored, opportunities to work more closely with towns and parishes, capitalize on their potential, and create a 'genuine partnership'.

Table 5: Extracts from Dorset Council Plan 2024-29

Council Plan Statements		Comments
Priority: Provide affordable and high-quality housing		
p.8	...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.	This is the only reference to local councils under the Housing priority, but there is no detail or explanation. Nor any mention of statutory Neighbourhood Plans.
Priority: Grow our economy		
pp.9	...develop and implement a strategy which...considers an approach to growth regardless of location but also plays on localised strengths and opportunities.	The notion of 'growth regardless of location' needs to be clarified. Is DC proposing to steer growth or not? If yes, how – and would TLPs have a role to play? (eg. Bridport's economic strategy).
p.10	Key Action: 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.	
p.10	Target Measure: support <i>community-led</i> [emphasis added] masterplans in at least 70% of the coastal and market towns by 2029.	Is this a target for the coastal and market towns strategy proposed below?
p.10	Key Action: 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.	How do these initiatives relate to the coastal and market towns strategy? What is the 'wider area' and the expected role of TLPs?
p.11	Key Action: 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	The only specific reference under this priority to partnering with TLPs, but they are not mentioned in its later section on 'Leadership and partnership'.

Priority: Communities for all (see also section 5.1)		
p.12	"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...shaped through co-design with partners and communities themselves.	What is the intended scope of co-design and how would it be implemented? Is 'co-design' the same as 'co-production'? Are local councils 'partners' in this?
p.12	"Dorset has many strong communities, with an active voluntary and community sector and over 160 town and parish councils...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."	One of only two specific references to local councils under this priority – the primary focus seems to be partnerships with health and care services, plus voluntary sector and community organisations.
p.14	Key Action: Thriving Communities – work more closely with town and parish councils and with voluntary and community sector organisations to support residents, investing in the infrastructure (sic).	What do 'work more closely', 'support residents' and 'investing in the infrastructure' actually mean?
p.14	Key Action: Commissioning and Procurement – co-design and deliver with communities and partners on a locality basis, devolving funding to neighbourhoods where appropriate.	Devolving funding for what precisely? Again, are local councils seen as 'partners' for this purpose?
p.15	Key Action: devolve or transfer more assets to communities to enable creation of local hubs where people can access support and care.	Local councils are best placed to accept assets – they are already in the business of asset management and local hubs ²⁴
p.15	Leadership and Partnership: play a clear role in building new health and care teams in neighbourhoods, working with the NHS, residents and communities.	Are 'neighbourhoods' the same as 'localities' and places'? Would local councils also be partners or a base for the new teams?
p.15	Standing up for Dorset: 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 [local] training opportunities...	A rare statement under this priority that acknowledges some positives and goes beyond the focus on social care and health.
Priority: Responding to the climate and nature crisis		
p.17	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.	Some TLPs are already active in this space and need to know DC's expectations re future work they could undertake.
p.17	80% of our urban verges will be managed to enhance their value for nature by 2030 (currently 50%).	Local councils can play a greatly expanded role in managing verges and green space.
p.18	Key Action: helping residents and organisations to improve energy efficiency and use renewable energy in their homes and buildings.	What 'organisations' might be involved? Do local councils have a role to play?
p.18	Key Action: help communities adapt for climate change impacts and recover nature, working with town and parish councils and other partners.	Again, TLPs need to understand DC's expectations re their role (eg in community leadership)

²⁴ By contrast, devolving to 'communities' can be very complex as each asset needs its own governance, which may mean creating a new local group or Community Interest Company to manage it.

How this Council Plan will be delivered		
p.29	Principal Strategies: Climate; Local Nature Recovery; Economic growth [to be developed]; Communities [also tbd.]; Children, Young People and Families Plan; Adults 'A better life' strategy; Local Plan [in development]; Local Transport Plan [in development].	A broader policy on the future of local councils is needed urgently as context for several of these strategies, the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
p.31	Transformation: "We are undergoing a major transformation programme...It includes establishing and embedding a new operating model...to streamline our operations and become more efficient and effective...[working] with partners and communities to achieve change together."	See section 5 for further discussion of the operating model.
p.31	Budget priorities and financial strategy: "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."	Indeed, but the Plan does not specify <i>expenditure</i> priorities nor those functions most likely to face budget cuts. Nor does it consider whether local councils could do more (cf. Cornwall).

4.2 A Localist Perspective

The Plan presents a wide range of significant ideas and proposals that might involve TLPs, but in many instances further detail is required to explain precisely what is intended. **Three critical gaps in the Plan's coverage are immediately apparent:**

- While the Plan references towns and parishes in several places, it treats them mostly as 'just another' set of bodies that need to be consulted or could make a contribution to implementing DC's priorities, like voluntary sector organisations and community groups. Little or no weight has been given to local councils' statutory roles and functions as a formal level of elected local government, including their general power of competence and their authority to raise and spend large sums of public money to pursue their own priorities or contribute to joint initiatives.
- Flowing from that, the Plan fails to consider the potential for towns and parishes to relieve some of the financial and management pressure on DC by expanding their range of activities, as has occurred in Cornwall.
- The Plan does not identify the challenges associated with urban and population growth, demands on service delivery and complex governance relationships that impact both DC and towns and parishes along the boundary with BCP. These issues may be reflected in the upcoming Dorset Local Plan, but require a response well beyond land use planning.

Also of significance for TLPs is the Plan's tendency to talk more about Dorset's problems than how to build on its advantages. The Leader's 'Welcome' message notes that 85% of Dorset residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, compared to the national average of 75%, but then immediately turns to 'complex challenges' – the climate and nature emergency, scarcity of affordable housing, poor economic growth, health inequalities, and lack of social mobility. It is not until the very end of the 'Communities for all' section that Dorset is described as a great place to live and work with a strong 'grey economy'. What many people in Dorset and elsewhere would regard as *positives* – a healthy,

skilled older population; high weekly earnings; rising house prices; falling greenhouse gas emissions and an exceptionally low crime rate – are not documented until the attachments.

There are, of course, downsides to some of these positives, and very real issues of socio-economic disadvantage that must be addressed. The cost of housing is a pervasive concern across Dorset; several urban localities display high levels of multiple social deprivation (education, employment, housing, health/disability); and disadvantaged people are scattered across rural areas too. Physical access to services is a widespread problem in rural Dorset due to dispersed settlements and inadequate public transport. A rapidly ageing population may well exacerbate those concerns, although indications are that older people are increasingly in paid employment, healthy, independent and active in the community well into their seventies or early eighties.²⁵

Nevertheless, and without disregarding or understating the pressure on DC to maximise provision of what might broadly be termed ‘social care’, most indices of deprivation are around or below the national average. It seems probable that for most Dorset residents, a complementary strategy to the four nominated priorities would be to maintain and capitalise on the current quality of life and places – which is precisely where TLPs have a vital role to play. At the same time, the Plan has very little to say about DC’s ‘municipal’ functions undertaken by the Place directorate – functions that overlap extensively with the work of TLPs. While those functions may not be ‘headline’ priorities for the new administration, they remain critical in terms of the quality of life enjoyed by Dorset residents. **Maintaining that quality of place surely warrants its own strategic framework, including closer cooperation with TLPs – not just ad hoc references under other priorities.**

As discussed in section 2.7, the new Council Plan was prepared without the benefit of a DC policy on the role, functions and potential of LCs – specifically the better resourced TLPs that could offer a significant ‘helping hand’ in realizing the Plan’s priorities. Better use could be made of Neighbourhood Plans (which are not mentioned in the Council Plan) and other locality strategies to help achieve the Plan’s key priorities in line with the expectations of residents. TLPs can also help to address social disadvantage by providing community facilities and ‘hubs’ for decentralised services, improving disability access, supporting volunteer programmes, holding community events, disseminating information, and so on.

However, a concern for the short term is that several of the Principal Strategies needed for effective delivery of the Plan – and which would underpin a complementary strategy around ‘Place’ and working with TLPs – are as yet incomplete. They include the Economic Growth and Communities strategies, the Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan.

4.3 Other Implementation Issues

As a general observation, the Plan has very little to say about implementation mechanisms or how the many ‘key actions’ will be prioritized and, where necessary, linked with each other. This applies in particular to the emphasis on building and strengthening partnerships.

²⁵ See [State of Dorset 2024 report](#) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

Despite recognizing the importance of partnerships, much of the Plan conveys the impression of an organization focused on its own view of the world and agenda. Is there sufficient understanding across the DC organization of how to go about engendering and sustaining partnerships, especially the likely need to negotiate and compromise on priorities, and to make complementary changes internally to roles and structures? Will there be a central point of reference for potential partners, particularly TLPs?

A related overarching issue is the lack of detail on the cost of achieving the Plan's priorities and DC's financial capacity to do so. As indicated at the end of Table 5, the Plan acknowledges 'a challenging financial position' (which seems set to worsen), but there is no indication as to the potential implications for achieving the Plan's priorities. Which of the many proposed actions are deemed essential, and which might reasonably be set aside if resources prove insufficient – a possibility identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan²⁶ adopted alongside the Council Plan? Prospective government, private sector and community partners will be looking for answers to those questions, and for a consistent approach based on a realistic assessment of what DC can achieve over its 2024-29 timeframe.

As a sphere of local governance in their own right, but inextricably linked with DC as the principal council, LCs have a special need to know more about DC's thinking around implementing the Plan. They need to be consulted about proposed implementation processes; how they can engage in a coordinated way with all relevant areas of DC; and how they can add value through leadership in local communities, building on their statutory role, functions in place management, and potential area-based groupings (see section 5.2).

4.3.1 Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan

The Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan is an additional 'Enabling Strategy' that is well advanced.²⁷ Box 3 contains some key statements around 'place-making' and local planning.

Box 3: Strategic Asset Management Plan Commentary re 'Place Making'

Taking a holistic approach to asset management in a locale can support place-making and lead to improvements in the quality of public spaces and communities... this strategic asset management plan provides an asset management framework which supports and enables regeneration in market towns, working with local partners to develop bespoke regeneration solutions embedded in local need and opportunity, and building on key themes associated with each market town.

This collaborative approach will link with neighbourhood plans and the local plan, including the opportunities and potential of local devolution deals. We will work with town and parish councils... to consider devolution and locally managed assets through asset transfers where appropriate.

In the case of market centres, the local plans set out town centre boundaries, (subject to review as part of the creation of the Dorset Council Local Plan), and these will be used as the boundaries for area-based asset reviews with regards future use of assets (included at appendix 6). These area-based reviews will seek to include other public sector partners and private sector landowners and partners where appropriate.

²⁶ See: [Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Strategy Report](#)

²⁷ See: [Dorset Council - Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-2030: For Review and Consultation](#)

Crucially, the draft Asset Management Plan identifies three key ways forward that are not mentioned in the Council Plan: making more use of Neighbourhood Plans; further (and speedier) transfers of assets to TLPs; ‘devolution deals’ with selected larger towns. This perhaps reflects an emerging willingness to move in the same direction as Cornwall and to pursue the ‘genuine partnership’ envisaged by the LDP. A jarring note, however, is the suggestion that area-based asset reviews would only *seek to include other public sector partners and private sector landowners and partners ‘where appropriate’*. Surely it would *always* be appropriate in some way, certainly as far as TLPs are concerned.

4.3.2 Coastal and Market Towns Strategy and Weymouth 2040

The draft Asset Management Plan alludes to three important initiatives flagged in the Council Plan – the Coastal and Market Towns Strategy, the regeneration of Weymouth (also termed ‘Weymouth 2040’), and the Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor.

A Coastal and Market Towns Strategy would presumably encompass most of the TLPs. The concept echoes the ‘Market and Coastal Towns Initiative’ implemented by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA) in the early 2000s. That was a localised variant of the nation-wide Market Towns Initiative developed by the then Countryside Agency and implemented from 2000 to 2006. Valuable lessons for DC’s proposed strategy can be drawn from the experience gained, notably the value-adding leadership and democratic role that town councils can play (Box 4).

Box 4: Lessons from the Market Towns Initiative (MTI) 2002-06²⁸

- The MTI was available to any country town with a population between 2,000 and 20,000. As noted above, a matching programme was implemented by the south-west RDA.
- Its purpose was to help ‘local people to appraise strengths, weaknesses, future demands and opportunities’. This reflected the increasing popularity of small town living in the second half of the 20th century, plus a concern to safeguard and enhance the quality of life towns offered.
- The MTI sought to leverage partnerships led by local stakeholders, many of whom were volunteers. Assessments found this to be a valid approach, but that often there was insufficient time to build partnerships, ensure effective leadership and assemble required information.
- More broadly, the MTI’s lifespan was too short to draw conclusions about the durability of a community-led model of development, although burnout amongst volunteers was a concern.
- The MTI appeared somewhat diffident about the role of local government. But assessments point to the considerable value added by town and district councils – especially the former, and particularly where town councils participated strongly and forged partnerships with their ‘hinterland’ parishes (eg Bridport, which was also selected as an exemplary ‘Beacon Council’).
- Careful consideration should be given to ensuring sufficient democratic accountability for decisions taken and expenditures made – another important role that town councils can play.

²⁸ Based on Morris, G. *Leading Communities: Community-led Development in England’s Small Towns: the Market Towns Initiative*. Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, Issue 11, December 2012; and The Countryside Agency. *Assessment of the Market Towns Initiative: a summary*. September 2004

To facilitate progress with the Council Plan's proposed initiatives, three points need clarification:

- The precise scope of each initiative – are they seen primarily as economic development projects (they sit under the 'Grow our Economy' priority) limited for the most part to town centres and/or other commercial and industrial sites; or more broadly in terms of urban (re)development and place management?
- How will they be coordinated and where necessary integrated with the new Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and other locality plans prepared by TLPs? Could they be fully integrated?
- Is there a priority order for involvement of the dozen or so towns that would be included in one or more of the initiatives? Work is already under way on at one aspect of 'Weymouth 2040', namely the marketing for redevelopment of four major sites owned/controlled by DC.²⁹

A holistic Coastal and Market Towns Strategy, approached from a localist perspective, and effectively integrated with other elements of the Council Plan, could go along way towards filling the gaps in policy around 'Place' and the future role of TLPs (see Table 7). It should encompass and be managed under the same umbrella as Weymouth 2040, the Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor, and a further strategy to guide urban growth, service delivery and governance along the BCP border.

²⁹ See *Regeneration in Weymouth*: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/regeneration-in-weymouth>

5. Future Operating Model and ‘Place-based’ Working

This section looks at two further issues flagged by the new Council Plan: DC’s ‘transformation’ programme, including formulation of a new ‘target operating model’; and as an adjunct to that, how to frame ‘place-based working’.

5.1 Target Operating Model

Under the priority of ‘Communities for all’ (and only there) the Council Plan introduces the concept of a ‘target operating model’ for DC focused on ‘joined-up’ and ‘place-based’ working with communities (Box 5). The inclusion of these ideas under ‘Communities for all’, and the lack of complementary proposals under other priorities, conveys an impression that the ‘target operating model’ is being driven primarily by DC’s statutory role and relationships around social care and health, and by concerns about socio-economic inequality.³⁰

Box 5: Proposed Elements of Target Operating Model (page numbers refer to Council Plan)

We need to reduce the various inequalities between different groups...supporting more cohesive communities...This requires a different way of working with partners and in localities across our area...a comprehensive and joined-up response across public sector, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), with local businesses, and other partners... 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. (p.13)

Target Measure: *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. (p.14)*

Key Action: *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. (p.14)*

The wording of the proposed ‘Target Measure’ appears telling. In one sense the thinking is understandable, given that social care, children’s services and health absorb such a large proportion of the budget, and a more effective approach to tackling disadvantage would be admirable, assuming it can be funded. However, an operating model that fits those services may well prove inappropriate or irrelevant when applied to building new housing, economic development or nature conservation, let alone highways, land use planning and waste management. It may also prove to be inconsistent with the needs and expectations of the majority of Dorset’s population, who are not (or do not see themselves as) ‘disadvantaged’.

Consequently, it may cut across – or distort – the concept of ‘holistic’ place management. **‘Care’ services may indeed contribute to broader community wellbeing, resilience and prosperity, but unlike local planning and provision of essential community infrastructure**

³⁰ Under DC’s ‘Our Future Council’ project, cost-cutting, including reductions in staffing, is an additional key factor.

and municipal services, their essential purpose is *not* to create better ‘places’ or ‘neighbourhoods’ as such. Moreover, by definition place management requires quite different mixes of priorities, planning and services from one locality to another.

In this regard, a further risk that an increased emphasis by DC on working *directly* with local voluntary sector organisations concerned primarily with welfare and disadvantage could sideline both TLPs and other community bodies that have a different focus. In turn, this could result in failure to make the best use of available facilities and resources (see ‘Lessons from the Market Towns Initiative’ in Box 4). Moreover, the cost to DC of a stronger presence in localities could be considerable, and on current indications, unaffordable (see Box 6).

Therefore, before a new operating model is finalized and adopted, there needs to be careful consideration of its *scope*, *precisely* what it is intended to achieve, and *all* the key players that need to be involved. At present, the language on pp.13-14 of the Council Plan is ‘muddy’ and open to various interpretations. For example:

- Does the phrase: *We want to build on, accelerate and enhance our approach to place-based working* imply that DC already has such an approach? If so, what is it?
- Do the terms ‘locality working’ and ‘place-based working’ convey the same or somewhat different meanings (‘neighbourhood’ is also used on p.15 of the Council Plan)?
- Is the proposed *joined up model of locality working* under the Target Measure focused the same as the Key Action of *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?*
- What is meant by ‘existing arrangements’? Is there sufficient awareness across the DC organisation of local councils’ widespread activities in various aspects of community development (facilities, events, information and advice etc)?

Pursuing *a comprehensive and joined-up response across public sector, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), with local businesses, and other partners*, is a highly ambitious agenda. By definition, DC will need the willing cooperation of many parties, and the desired outcome cannot be achieved solely on DC’s terms: it must also accommodate the priorities of others. **This requires a flexible overarching framework that enables participants to join-up in somewhat different ways for different activities and localities as circumstances require. Imposing a uniform model is unlikely to deliver the desired outcome.**

Again, TLPs ought to be involved in a dialogue about how DC intends to proceed. The overarching question here is: **why not consider the option of a strengthened system of towns and parishes, especially TLPs, as an efficient vehicle for the Plan’s goal of ‘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?’**

5.2 Area Boards and Community Partnerships

This leads to the question of whether, and if so, how DC should go about establishing formal ‘area boards’ or ‘community networks/partnerships’ across its jurisdiction, as did its unitary

counterparts in Wiltshire and Cornwall following their formation in 2009. Key features of those arrangements are summarized in Table 6. Box 5 presents some lessons from Cornwall.

Table 6: Comparison of Wiltshire and Cornwall Models of Area-based Governance

Wiltshire	Cornwall
- Population (2021) 510,000; 255 local councils 18 Area Boards - Purpose: ‘to bring local decision making into the heart of the community’ - Membership includes Wiltshire councillors, towns and parishes, key agencies (NHS, police, fire and rescue, housing associations) and a diverse range of community organisations - Significant delegated authority and funding, but Wiltshire councillors sitting on the boards lead decision-making - Wiltshire Council staff support and guidance	- Population (2021) 570,000; 212 local councils - Initially 19 ‘community networks’ but later consolidated into 12 ‘community area partnerships’ (CAPs), largely due to costs - Broad membership, but focus is on partnership between Cornwall Council and towns and parishes – CAPs operate within Cornwall’s double-devolution framework - Principal roles: prepare Community Priority Action Plans, <i>recommend</i> grants for place-shaping, community projects, highways; provide broader policy advice - Cornwall Council staff support, but less centralized control

Prior to Dorset’s reorganization in 2019, the *Case for Change* report³¹ referenced the approaches taken by Wiltshire and Cornwall in establishing ‘area governance arrangements’ and noted a critical difference between the two (p.77):

However, in Cornwall the networks have been used as the principal vehicle through which the local authority has engaged town and parish councils in discussions about the delegation of service responsibilities [emphasis added]. *The council has also set up a framework to facilitate partnership working with local councils, enabling them to negotiate the basis on which they choose to take on any service responsibilities...*

There were widespread expectations that a similar set of area-based partnerships would be established in Dorset, in part to fill the ‘District gap’. No action was taken during DC’s first term, but the new LDP administration has revived interest in exploring options and some preliminary work has been undertaken. Once more, that work appears to have been heavily influenced by concerns about social disadvantage and inequality, as well as integration reforms linked to the 2022 Health and Care Act, and the concept of asset-based community development (ABCD), already embraced by DC’s Adults and Children’s directorates. In other words, the same thinking as that around a ‘new operating model’ discussed in section 5.1.

What is not clear is whether the same area-based model can or should be applied to both ‘social services’ and ‘municipal’ services delivered by the Place directorate and TLPs. As noted earlier, arrangements dominated by social care, children’s services and public health may divert attention from partnering with towns and parishes, relative to the NHS and voluntary sector. It may well make more sense to design two separate but connected models, with different primary objectives, key partners and lead directorates within DC.

³¹ See footnote on p.13

A second key question is whether to divide the *whole of DC's district* into 'areas' with boards/partnerships, or instead to focus available resources on coordinating planning and service delivery within larger towns and their hinterlands? Would it matter if some small parishes and more 'remote' rural areas did not participate? Liaison with them might cover a narrower range of issues and be handled Dorset-wide, through DAPTC.

Box 6: Lessons from Cornwall #2

- Operating a district-wide system of area boards/partnerships is costly, especially in terms of staffing. This was a key factor in the decision to consolidate 19 community networks into 12 CAPs (and current discussions about a possible reduction to just 6).
- Dividing a population approaching 600,000 and more than 200 local councils into just 12 CAPs is unsatisfactory. In some cases there is now a lack of shared communities of interest, and the number of attendees at meetings may become unworkable.
- The key relationship is between Cornwall Council and the larger towns and parishes involved in devolution initiatives, and in practical terms (eg agreeing transfers of assets and services) this is conducted to a large extent **outside the CAPs processes** [emphasis added].
- There is probably no need to divide the whole council district into formal area partnerships.
- While there is some overlap in terms of community development and overall quality of life, the 'municipal' agendas of local councils and the social care agendas of voluntary sector organisations are often quite different and better handled separately.

Figure 5 shows a hypothetical division of the DC's district into 16 'local areas', based on 'top-down' combinations of DC electoral wards.³² The difficulties involved are self-evident. Even setting aside the exceptional case of Weymouth-Chickerell with more than 60,000 people and 13 Dorset councillors, there are inevitably wide variations in geographical scale, populations and numbers of councillors, and in several cases the defined areas cut across functional communities of interest between towns and parishes.

The likely cost of such an approach will be a key factor. Cornwall's experience showed that a comprehensive network of area boards/partnerships is very costly in terms of both staffing and expenditure on meetings, projects etc. Also, trying to save money by having fewer, larger areas may be counterproductive because their diverse communities lose a sense of connection and shared interests. **This strengthens the case for a selective approach and/or one based on larger towns and facilitated by their councils.**

Currently, at a political level DC has endorsed a low-key 'pilot area board' based on Sherborne and built on voluntary cooperation with nearby parishes. This mirrors the Local Area Partnerships that existed in some parts of Dorset before the 2019 reorganisation,³³ and the 'town plus hinterland parishes' model that proved successful under the Market Towns Initiative (Box 4).

All this again underlines the need to define precisely what a place-based operating model and area-based cooperation are intended to achieve, their likely effectiveness in realising desired outcomes, and the level of resourcing required and available.

³² This was prepared informally by DC staff and carries no legal or official status.

³³ The former West Dorset District Council developed a [Local Area Partnership Policy 2012-16](#). At least two partnerships (Bridport, and Beaminster and Villages) brought together a town and neighbouring parishes.

Figure 5: Hypothetical Division of the Dorset Council District into ‘Local Areas’



6. Pathways for ‘Double Devolution’

There is a strong case for Dorset Council to pursue a ‘double devolution’ agenda, initially focused on TLPs, along similar lines to Cornwall. This case rests on:

- A similar settlement pattern, with a dispersed rural population and a large number of established coastal and market towns with a long history of self-governance.
- The need to address and build on Weymouth’s capacity as a ‘super town’, as well as the demonstrated potential of towns such as Bridport, Dorchester, Sherborne, Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Blandford Forum and Swanage to play a larger role.
- Ensuring effective planning and governance of the urban complex along the BCP border.
- The evident scope for TLPs to raise additional local revenues, easing the pressure on DC’s finances (noting that uncapped precepts may not last forever), and make a substantial contribution to achieving the objectives of the new Council Plan.
- The importance of securing and strengthening community democracy in the face of an ongoing tendency to centralising technocracy and an English devolution agenda that seems set to shift the locus of making major decisions further away from localities.

Given those drivers, sections 6.3-6.5 outline a *possible* 5-year programme to bring about a substantial expansion of the roles and responsibilities of TLPs, together with closer and more productive relations with DC. The proposals build on the information and analysis presented in previous sections of this report. Nevertheless, they will need to be carefully reviewed against the evidence, and fine-tuned where necessary through engagement and debate.

6.1 A Fresh Start?

The research has found significant potential – and willingness – amongst Dorset’s TLPs to play a substantially expanded role, both in their own right and as a statutory partner of DC. Yet as things stand, apart from a few proposals in the new Council Plan, as well as the personal support of the Leader, some other councillors and the former chief executive,³⁴ it has been hard to find enough impetus within DC to join with TLPs in exploring that potential.

Understandably, DC is currently preoccupied with its looming financial problems, especially the funding of adult social care, children’s services and public health; the challenges associated with housing needs, economic development and environmental concerns; and securing benefits under central government’s agenda for devolution. Towns and parishes, especially small parishes, may be seen to have relatively little to contribute to addressing those problems and challenges. Several key factors contribute to this perception:

- Inattention to the role and potential of local councils during DC’s first 5 years, exacerbated by the narrow brief pursued by the 2021 CGR, has left a policy vacuum.

³⁴ The Leader, Cllr Ireland, encouraged towns and parishes to consider expanding their role when addressing the DAPTC Annual General Meeting, 23 November 2024; and the CEO until February 2025, Matt Prosser, convened regular meetings with the clerks of TLPs, albeit with limited tangible outcomes to date.

- A dominant ‘world view’ within DC that sees government agencies (especially the NHS) and the voluntary sector as key partners; and seeks stronger *direct* links between DC, ‘neighbourhoods’ and ‘communities’, potentially bypassing town and parish councils.
- The apparently limited influence of the Place directorate at DC’s ‘top tables’ (the Senior and Corporate Leadership Teams), compared to the social care and health directorates.
- Evident concerns that partial devolution of assets and services to local councils would leave DC with a ‘patchwork quilt’ of service delivery – which may or may not be a significant issue given that 20+ better-resourced TLPs collectively serve 60-70% of DC’s constituents and could facilitate cooperative service delivery with neighbouring parishes.

As semi-autonomous statutory entities the higher capacity TLPs will necessarily continue to adjust their operations in response to *their own* assessment of community needs and priorities, so their potential to do more does need to be factored into DC’s decision-making, regardless of its own, in-house assessment of the ‘bigger picture’. Moreover:

- As noted in sections 1.1 and 2.5, the £26M spent in 2023-24 by just the 25 TLPs represented a 20-25% top-up of DC’s budget for its ‘Place’ directorate, and Cornwall’s experience shows that top-up could increase to 30-35% in the medium term.
- Achieving satisfactory outcomes to the challenges facing DC (and perhaps in future a regional authority) will require broadly-based community awareness and support that local councils could and should help to engender.

So, can the clock be turned back to 2019 and a fresh start made on moving towards a mutually beneficial partnership between DC and local councils – initially the TLPs – that underpins a better quality of life and place for their constituents?

6.2 Learning from Others

While Dorset’s geography, history, society and politics display many distinctive traits that must influence future policy around localism and devolution, there is no need to ‘reinvent the wheel’. Indeed, a belief that bespoke policies and programmes are essential carries grave risks – not least wasting valuable time, energy and money.

This research included discussions in Cornwall and background reading on Cornwall Council’s approach to ‘double devolution’, specifically transfer of a wide range of assets and services to local councils, thus reducing its own costs and management pressures (see Box 7).

Of course, Cornwall is by no means the only example of a new unitary council seeking a productive working relationship with local councils, especially larger towns, and further comparative analysis would be well worth the effort. However, Cornwall’s experience has been well documented and independently researched (Attachment B). Also, it spans all three dimensions of devolution and partnership-building that appear necessary in Dorset:

- Policy development and coordination of implementation within Cornwall Council, including ongoing consultation and cooperation with the Association of Local Councils.

- A concerted effort by dedicated staff to *negotiate* transfer of packages of assets and service delivery to towns and larger parishes, with ongoing expenditure to be funded largely by (increased) precept revenues.
- Flexible and evolving area-based partnerships focused principally on working with groups of towns and parishes.

Box 7: Lessons from Cornwall #3 (based on Attachment B)

- Cornwall's 2015 devolution deal included a commitment to 'double devolution', driven in part by financial necessity and reflected in a concerted effort to devolve multiple services (libraries, public toilets, parks, community centres etc), which in many cases prevented their closure.
- In the circumstances, most local councils saw acceptance of devolution as 'the right thing to do' and part of a new 'social contract' with communities, supported by Cornwall Council (CC).
- This resulted in large increases in staffing in local councils (eg in Falmouth TC from 5 to 40) but also opportunities for efficiencies, multi-skilling and a stronger public profile.
- In the case of libraries – a statutory service – CC maintained ultimate responsibility but in most places (26 of 31 libraries) buildings, staff and operational decisions were devolved.
- Local councils needed to undertake case-by-case negotiations with CC, requiring the development of new skills.
- As noted in Box 1, consultation with communities and careful management of the change process led to a predominantly positive response, despite hefty increases in precepts.
- Resistance in some quarters, notably a vocal minority of elected members, was inevitable but can be managed: among other things, ensuring continuity of purpose and effort requires a focus on careful induction of new councillors and effective forward planning.

6.3 Shifting the Dial: 2025

Currently, Dorset Council and the TLPs could fairly be described as 'ships in the night'. Their relationship looks ambivalent and unfocused, without an overarching agenda and shared purpose. Each addresses its own immediate pressures and priorities and there is a dearth of truly cooperative effort. Agreements between a town and DC on transfer of an asset or new arrangements for managing a service have occurred more by chance than strategy.

Importantly, weak and ineffectual relationships also apply in many cases to those amongst towns and parishes, manifested in unwarranted parochialism. This needs to be addressed as a priority in further CGRs (eg by exploring options for more grouped parishes and possible mergers – see Tables 8 and 9).

Another key factor is the tendency to 'lowest common denominator' thinking on both sides. As noted above, DC sees well over a hundred small parish councils with very little capacity to do more, and focuses on the problems that might arise if it 'lets go', rather than the untapped potential of the largest 20 or so that house two-thirds of its population. At the same time, many towns and parishes feel comfortable with their current limited roles and worry about the risks involved in taking on greater responsibilities.

The new Council Plan includes several proposals that could spark systemic change, but they need to be articulated in much more detail and pursued in cooperation with affected

town councils from the outset. In particular, an overarching policy on ‘Place’ and future directions for TLPs, including *whole of DC-TLP* working relationships, will be essential to ‘shift the dial’. This could build on packaging the proposed Coastal and Market Towns Strategy, ‘Weymouth 2040’ and the Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor, to create much closer links with the larger towns.

Table 7: Shifting the Dial 2025

Steps Required	Who Leads?
1. Establish an agreed DC policy on ‘Place’ and Future Directions for TLPs, ³⁵ including a ‘Statement of Mutual Expectations’, to clarify and follow-up references and omissions concerning TLPs in the Council Plan 2024-29; and to set out what DC and TLPs could reasonably expect of each other by 2029 in terms of a more productive working relationship, expanded activity by TLPs, ³⁶ and DC’s recognition of their role and status.	DC Leader, responsible Cabinet Member; DAPTC/SLCC leadership
2. <i>Until Step 1 has been completed, defer implementation of any aspect of a new DC operating model, and/or area-based working, that would impede or limit the scope of a ‘genuine partnership’ with TLPs.³⁷</i>	DC Leader and CEO, DAPTC Executive
3. In parallel, make the proposed Coastal and Market Towns Strategy a top priority; combine it with Weymouth 2040 and the Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor; broaden its scope to reflect a wide-ranging place management and community leadership role for TLPs; and apply the ‘town plus hinterland parishes’ model from the Market Towns Initiative.	DC Executive Lead for Place; Strategic Director of Weymouth 2040; DAPTC/SLCC leadership
4. Arising from #3, DC creates a small unit <i>within the Place directorate</i> , to lead and coordinate policy development for – and partnerships with – LCs (initially TLPs), to initiate and manage priority actions, and to provide a central point of communication (internal and external).	DC Executive Lead for Place, responsible Cabinet Member
5. DAPTC establishes a specialist leadership group (‘coalition of the willing’) of TLPs committed to exploring an expanded role (individually or through area-based partnerships). This group engages in both the strategic and policy work, and negotiations on mutual expectations.	DAPTC leadership, TLP Clerks and Mayors/Chairs
6. DAPTC compiles a register of ‘success stories’ and exemplars, including where TLPs have taken on additional functions, and/or transfers of asset/services from DC to a local council.	DAPTC CEO
7. DAPTC and SLCC strengthen arrangements for information exchange and shared learning amongst TLPs, and with counterparts in other counties.	DAPTC/SLCC leadership

6.4 Building Blocks: 2026-27

Once the essential foundations of a supportive policy framework and strategy are in place, more detailed planning and specific actions to expand the role of TLPs can begin. Those actions need to demonstrate tangible progress in terms of changes to ‘who does what’;

³⁵ A similar policy for all towns and parishes should follow in due course, but a more limited agenda is needed to secure a timely ‘win’ in the shorter term.

³⁶ Including necessary increases in precepts, which DC should validate where appropriate.

³⁷ This deferral would not affect action taken solely for the purposes of social care, children’s services and other ‘county’ functions (education, fire etc).

include ‘stretch targets’ that require a firm commitment on both sides to ongoing efforts to deal with difficult issues; and establish models that can be applied more widely in future.

Proposed examples of this approach include negotiating wide-ranging ‘Double Devolution Deals’ with larger towns that have demonstrable capacity and willingness to take on more responsibilities; formulating joint strategies for both the Weymouth and BCP borders urban complexes; and initiating more ‘bottom-up’ area partnerships that draw on the current ‘trial’ involving Sherborne and nearby parishes.

Another essential ‘building block’ will be a supplementary CGR where necessary to facilitate the outcomes of ‘Double Devolution Deals’ and/or effective management and governance of development in growth areas. As well, this second phase of the programme should also address identified needs for capacity building within TLPs, including corporate, financial and locality planning, and improved knowledge and skills (individual and collective) amongst elected members and staff.

Table 8: Building Blocks 2026-27

Steps Required	Who Leads?
8. DC negotiates exemplar ‘Double Devolution Deals’ with some of the most able and willing town councils (most likely Weymouth, Bridport and 2-3 others) – reflecting the agreed policy on Future Directions, Statement of Mutual Expectations and expanded Coastal and Market Towns Strategy. Such deals could cover any area of service delivery other than ‘county’ functions.	DC Executive Lead for Place and LCs Liaison Unit, affected TLPs, DAPTC leadership
9. DC and the relevant town councils develop strategies for the proposed Portland-Weymouth-Dorchester growth corridor and the emerging urban complex along the BCP boundary – encompassing both management of development and governance issues (see #10 below).	As above
10. DC undertakes a selective supplementary CGR to give effect to boundary changes and/or creation of new grouped parishes needed for effective growth management (section 3.3) and/or arising from steps #3, 8 and 9, as well as associated measures to enhance their democratic status (section 2.2).	Democratic Services in consultation with DAPTC and LCs
11. DC and DAPTC implement a small number of trial ‘area partnerships’ (in addition to Sherborne) using a bottom-up ‘town plus hinterland’ model that brings together larger towns and surrounding parishes (section 5.2).	As above
12. DC and DAPTC launch a major effort to expand and improve locality planning by all TLPs, including preparation/updating of corporate and financial plans, ³⁸ plus more statutory neighbourhood plans and associated tools to advance local place management (section 2.6).	DC Executive Lead for Place and LCs Liaison Unit, DAPTC leadership
13. Linked to #12, DAPTC, SLCC and DC increase support and incentives for knowledge and skills improvement amongst elected members (especially mayors/leaders), clerks and staff.	DAPTC/SLCC leadership, DC Executive Lead for Place, LCs Liaison Unit

³⁸ This might need to extend to legislative change to *require* the adoption of 3-5 year financial plans, but in the first instance DC should use its leverage over towns and parishes – and the practical support it can offer – to achieve the desired outcome. The same applies to more widespread preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

6.5 Consolidation and Enhancement: 2028-29

The ‘final’ two years of this concerted effort would focus on consolidating gains made and extending them as widely as possible across DC’s jurisdiction. As well as implementing further ‘Double Devolution Deals’ and ‘area partnerships’, this will require action on a broader front to strengthen community democracy and engagement, and to improve the quality of governance in local councils.

In particular, a district-wide Community Governance Review will be needed to deal with remaining ‘loose ends’ arising from other elements of the programme (notably boundary issues and possible mergers); to ensure the system of towns and parishes is as robust as possible (including in particular consideration of additional and more ‘tightly knit’ grouped parishes and an overall reduction in the number of small rural parishes); and to strengthen the democratic credentials of LCs by addressing weaknesses and inconsistencies in electoral and governance arrangements (eg. uncontested elections, use of wards, deficient community engagement).

Table 9: Consolidation and Enhancement 2028-29

Steps Required	Who Leads?
13. As an exemplar and ‘test case’ for broader devolution, DC and DAPTC negotiate the staged transfer of almost all public toilets – and the costs involved – to TLPs and, later, smaller parishes (noting that this will require increased precepts and mergers of small parishes or creation of new grouped parishes). ³⁹	DC Executive Lead for Place and LCs Liaison Unit, affected TLPs, DAPTC leadership
14. DC and DAPTC negotiate similar ‘universal’ transfers of assets/service delivery (but only to TLPs) with respect to street cleaning/minor maintenance, verges and grass cutting – these all being services in which TLPs are increasingly active.	As above
15. DC negotiates further wide-ranging ‘Double Devolution Deals’ with willing TLPs (individually or in formal collectives for service delivery eg grouped towns and parishes).	DC Executive Lead for Place and LCs Liaison Unit, affected TLPs, DAPTC leadership
16. DC and DAPTC implement a network of ‘area partnerships’ using the ‘town plus hinterland’ model around <i>all</i> TLPs (individually or in groups) – but not necessarily covering the whole DC district (see section 5.2).	As above
17. DC undertakes a district-wide Community Governance Review to finalise further boundary changes/grouped parishes as required; to make changes to electoral arrangements that would enhance the democratic status of local councils eg by reducing the number of uncontested elections (see section 2.2); and to ensure the system of local councils is robust and sustainable ⁴⁰ for the next 10-15 years (including a potentially substantial reduction in the number of rural parishes).	DC Democratic Services in consultation with the LCs Liaison Unit, DAPTC and SLCC

³⁹ A proposal for transfer of public toilets was advanced some years ago and preparatory work completed, but it was abandoned by the then administration. The new Leader has indicated a willingness to revisit that initiative. However, other areas of service delivery could be considered for the ‘test case’ eg street cleaning or verges and grass cutting.

⁴⁰ Taking note of the ‘upbeat’ tone of section 3 of the [Guidance on community governance reviews](#) issued by the Boundaries Commission in 2010

Towns and Larger Parishes Online Survey: Summary of Results

Introduction

The survey was conducted in March-April 2024 and covered the 25 member local councils of DAPTC's Towns and Larger Parishes Committee. It was administered online using the Survey Monkey platform, and open to all Clerks, all Mayors/Chairs/Leaders, and to other councillors who represent their town or parish on the Committee. Questions were formulated based on issues raised at previous face-to-face interviews with representatives of 11 of the member councils.

Returns were received as follows:

- 17 fully completed returns from Clerks (68%)
- 15-19 fully or mostly completed returns from elected members (about 50%).

The number of returns was somewhat disappointing, but while it was certainly insufficient for rigorous statistical analysis, overall the responses provided some useful indicative data and insights into prevalent perspectives of Clerks and elected members.

Representativeness of Responses

Table 1 records responses from the 17 Clerks regarding the population, expenditure and precept income of their councils. The numbers in parentheses show how many of the 25 towns and larger parishes fall into each category. Overall, the distribution of responses from Clerks appears reasonably representative of the councils surveyed. However, the representativeness of the responses from elected members is unknown.

Table 1

Population 2021		Total Expenditure 2021-22		Band D Precept 2021-22		Total Precept Income 2021-22	
<5,000	2 (5)	£ <400K	5 (6+)	£ <60	3 (6)	£ <250K	6 (9)
5-10,000	9 (11)	£ 400-800K	4 (4+)	£ 60-120	5 (6)	£ 250-500K	3 (7)
10-15,000	2 (5)	£ 800-1,200K	3 (5)	£ 120-180	2 (5)	£ 500-750K	2 (3)
>15,000	4 (4)	£ >1,200K	5 (5)	£ >180	7 (8)	£ >750K	6 (6)

+ Actual number of councils in this category is higher, but there are gaps in the data

Adequacy of Revenues

Most respondents considered that current levels of expenditure met the 'reasonable' needs and expectations of their community. However, most also saw a need for the budget to grow marginally or substantially faster than CPI to meet unmet, emerging or increasing needs. The majority view was that it was 'just possible' or 'quite likely' that their community would support such an increase. Less than a quarter felt there 'no chance' of support, but a substantial majority indicated that there was 'very little' or no scope to increase the precept by more than the CPI without significant adverse impacts on the majority of households' standard of living.

Local Democracy

Almost all respondents agreed that: *A fundamental purpose of parish and town councils is local democratic representation and advocacy for our community.* However, a majority were concerned

that: *A low turnout of voters (less than 50%) in elections undermines our council's democratic and representative role*; and agreed that:

- *Most of the community does not engage with our council most of the time;*
- *We need to increase community consultation and report-back more often on current issues and the council's activities and achievements; and*
- *We could make better use of formal Parish/Town Meetings to engage the community.*

There was strong support for the view that: *Dividing parishes / towns into wards creates unnecessary complications and rivalries*; and a bare majority agreed that: *The legislation should define a stronger leadership role for the Mayor / Chair / Leader*. But most respondents (especially among Clerks) were opposed to: *a thorough governance review into our council's area, ward boundaries and the number of councillors*.

Supplementary written comments referred to the need for more delegations to officers; problematic councillor behaviour; the difficulty of gaining support for changes to town/parish boundaries; and a concern that the direction of a governance review had been 'hijacked' politically by Dorset Council.

Service Delivery

Clerks were asked three questions about levels of expenditure on services (Table 2).

Table 2

Categories of services	Most costly areas of expenditure	Expenditure grew by significantly more than CPI over last 5 years	Expenditure declined by more than 5% over last 5 years
	Number of times mentioned: Top 5 shaded		
Parks and gardens including play areas	15	11	
Community facilities (halls, community centres, other buildings, allotments, cemeteries etc)	12	12	
Sporting facilities (fields, indoor centres etc)	10	9	
Community development and wellbeing (events, grants, transport, social support, youth services, help desk and advice etc)	10	6	1
Planning (development applications, control and enforcement, statutory Neighbourhood Plans or similar informal locality plans)	1	3	2
Economic advancement (including economic/tourism plans and facilities, business partnerships etc)	4	1	3
Streets (maintenance, lighting, cleansing, footpaths, verges etc)	5	5	
Parking areas (including management and enforcement if applicable)	3	2	1
Waste management (litter bins, recycling)	6	8	
Public toilets	9	7	
Environmental issues (climate action, countryside)	3	4	

All respondents were asked a further two questions about the relative importance of different categories of service delivery in terms of benefit to the local community, and to identify categories of service delivery that are likely to require the largest increases in expenditure over the next five years (Table 3).

Table 3

Categories of services	Greatest benefit to local community	Need for increased expenditure over next 5 years
	Number of times mentioned: Top 5 shaded	
Parks and gardens including play areas	33	20
Community facilities (halls, community centres, other buildings, allotments, cemeteries etc)	28	23
Sporting facilities (fields, indoor centres etc)	17	16
Community development and wellbeing (events, grants, transport, social support, youth services, help desk and advice etc)	22	14
Planning (development applications, control and enforcement, statutory Neighbourhood Plans or similar informal locality plans)	12	3
Economic advancement (including economic/tourism plans and facilities, business partnerships etc)	8	4
Streets (maintenance, lighting, cleansing, footpaths, verges etc)	10	6
Parking areas (including management and enforcement if applicable)	3	6
Waste management (litter bins, recycling)	9	5
Public toilets	13	14
Environmental issues (climate action, countryside)	9	12

The results presented in Tables 2 and 3 suggest that most respondents saw the future in terms of a continued focus on the ‘traditional’ functions of town and parish councils, except perhaps for increased attention to environmental issues. The views of Clerks and elected members were similar except that a higher proportion of elected members:

- saw community benefit in the planning roles of towns and parishes; and
- identified needs for increased expenditure on community facilities, community development, streets and public toilets.

Transfer of Services to/from Dorset Council

All respondents were asked two questions about firstly, any attempts made by Dorset Council to ‘download’ or ‘cost-shift’ assets or service delivery to their town or parish; and secondly, whether in their opinion some assets or services could reasonably be devolved to towns or parishes (Table 4)

As would be expected, Clerks and elected members identified mostly the same areas where Dorset Council was said to have attempted cost-shifting, although a significantly higher proportion of elected members referred to the category ‘streets’. In supplementary comments mention was made of licensing and flood management in addition to the categories nominated in the table.

With respect to services that might reasonably be downloaded, it was notable that ‘planning’ was nominated by a higher proportion of members than Clerks; while the reverse applied to ‘streets’, ‘parking areas’ and public toilets.

From supplementary comments and responses to later questions it was evident that support for more devolution was to a significant extent dependent on matching changes to funding arrangements. One respondent emphasised the need for a ‘blank sheet’ review of ‘who does what’.

Of the 17 clerks, six indicated that their council and/or other local organisations had recently discussed possible transfer of assets and/or service delivery with Dorset Council. Only two considered those discussions fruitful. Discussions had variously covered sports fields, toilets, car parks, allotments, other parcels of land (including one for social housing), a town centre building and a heritage item.

Table 4

Categories of services	Services subject to attempted cost-shifting	Services that could reasonably be devolved
	Number of times mentioned: Top 5 shaded	
Parks and gardens including play areas	6	15
Community facilities (halls, community centres, other buildings, allotments, cemeteries etc)	9	14
Sporting facilities (fields, indoor centres etc)	5	12
Community development and wellbeing (events, grants, transport, social support, youth services, help desk and advice etc)	15	15
Planning (development applications, control and enforcement, statutory Neighbourhood Plans or similar informal locality plans)	3	10
Economic advancement (including economic/tourism plans and facilities, business partnerships etc)	6	9
Streets (maintenance, lighting, cleansing, footpaths, verges etc)	17	15
Parking areas (including management and enforcement if applicable)	5	16
Waste management (litter bins, recycling)	8	4
Public toilets	9	14
Environmental issues (climate action, countryside)	3	8

Working Relationships with Dorset Council

Survey questions looked at the overall relationship between towns and parishes and Dorset Council, cooperation in service delivery, and the need for mechanisms to advance the relationship.

A substantial majority of respondents considered that: *On the whole, our council has a generally productive working relationship with Dorset Council*. However, respondents were noticeably less convinced that: *Dorset Council respects and supports the role played by towns/parishes*, or that: *All things considered, our council's relationship with Dorset Council is as good as we had with the previous District Council*.

Similarly, there was a widely held view that: *Usually, we know which officer to contact at Dorset Council when we need assistance*, but less confidence that: *Access to senior management and Cabinet members is usually available within a reasonable timeframe*.

A clear majority agreed that: *Our council's 'Twin Hat' councillors facilitate effective liaison with Dorset Council as and when required*.

Taken together, these results point to inconsistent, patchy and ambivalent relationships between towns and parishes and Dorset Council. That impression is reinforced by responses to the following questions.

Turning to cooperation in service delivery, respondents were asked to identify three categories of services in which their town or parish had the best working relationship with Dorset, and three in which that working relationship most needed to improve (Table 5).

Table 5

Categories of services	Best working relationship	Relationship most needs to improve
	Number of times mentioned: Top 3 shaded	
Parks and gardens including play areas	5	5
Community facilities (halls, community centres, other buildings, allotments, cemeteries etc)	2	4
Sporting facilities (fields, indoor centres etc)	4	3
Community development and wellbeing (events, grants, transport, social support, youth services, help desk and advice etc)	7	10
Planning (development applications, control and enforcement, statutory Neighbourhood Plans or similar informal locality plans)	14	21
Economic advancement (including economic/tourism plans and facilities, business partnerships etc)	6	8
Streets (maintenance, lighting, cleansing, footpaths, verges etc)	21	14
Parking areas (including management and enforcement if applicable)	6	6
Waste management (litter bins, recycling)	21	4
Public toilets	4	7
Environmental issues (climate action, countryside)	6	11

The views of Clerks and elected members were broadly similar, except that Clerks clearly identified 'streets' as the category in which working relationships were best, while elected members saw it as the area most in need of improvement.

In supplementary comments, Dorset Council's 'property team' received a favourable mention, while particular concern was registered in relation to 'cultural indifference' to the role of parishes and towns in development control. The latter perhaps explains why 'planning' was identified as the category in which relationships most need to improve.

There was widespread agreement that: *New mechanisms are needed to improve the working relationship between Parish and Town Councils and Dorset Council*, and that: *Towns and parishes*

need to work more closely in area- and/or interest-based groups in order to exert more influence on Dorset Council.

In terms of specific mechanisms to facilitate improved working relationships, *Community Area Partnerships (similar to those in operation in Cornwall)* ranked highest, followed by a *Formal Charter*, with lesser support for *Area Boards (similar to those in operation in Wiltshire)* and *Formal district groups of parishes/towns*. Supplementary comments included the desirability of including representatives of towns and parishes in Dorset Council's induction programmes.

It is worth noting that five 'Local Area Partnerships' comprising market towns and surrounding parishes were active under the former West Dorset Partnership, and that the former West Dorset District Council developed a Local Area Partnership Policy.

Local Planning

Clerks were asked: *What Town/Parish plans has your council completed, or are under way, or may be prepared in the next term?* (Table 6).

Table 6

Type of Plan	Completed	Under Way	Maybe Soon	Most Unlikely
Council corporate/strategy plan	7	4	6	-
Statutory Neighbourhood Plan	4	4	4	5
Social/community plan	4	-	8	4
Environment/conservation plan	6	-	9	1
Climate action plan	8	2	6	1

The substantial number of completed plans for environment/conservation and climate action appears noteworthy, as does the relatively small number of council corporate/strategic plans and of statutory Neighbourhood Plans.

Other types of plans mentioned in supplementary comments included those for seafront and beach improvements, access (disability?) and movement, streetscape and heritage, and investment in local projects and improvements.

All respondents were asked to nominate the three most important issues of concern for local planning in their town or parish (Table 7).

Table 7

Issues of Concern	Number of Mentions
Population growth and new development	21
Redevelopment in existing urban/village areas	10
Maintaining local character	18
Environmental conservation/climate change	16
Economic development	10
Impacts of tourism	4
Social issues	9

Similar priorities were indicated by Clerks and elected members, except that Clerks placed relatively more emphasis on environmental conservation/climate changes responses and economic development.

Other issues mentioned in supplementary comments included affordable housing (linked to the increasing number of second homes); lack of land, infrastructure and community facilities to service growth; flooding; and overly restrictive heritage and conservation provisions that restrict sympathetic refurbishment of old buildings.

It might be expected that several of the identified areas of concern would be addressed by the preparation of statutory Neighbourhood Plans, but Table 6 indicates that is unlikely to be the case. Table 8 may provide an explanation: respondents from councils that have completed or nearly completed a statutory Neighbourhood Plan were asked to identify five phrases from the following list that best summarised their experience.

Table 8

Options	Number of Mentions
Complex and lengthy process	13
Excessive demands on council and community resources	10
Very costly	7
Valuable contributions by community volunteers	4
Productive community consultation	6
Community consultation yielded little essential input	4
Difficulty in finding suitable consultants	1
Useful advice and technical/financial support from 'Locality' program	8
Excessive delays by District/Dorset Council in completing its tasks	-
Lack of effective cooperation from District/Dorset Council	1
In the end, a worthwhile exercise with real benefits for the town/parish	3
Ultimately a wasted effort – benefits could be achieved in other ways	4

Clerks expressed particular concern about the complexity, cost and resource demands of the statutory process. There were mixed views regarding the benefits of community engagement and the ultimate value of completing a statutory Neighbourhood Plan: about half of respondents from councils that had done so considered it 'ultimately a wasted effort'.

Two further questions looked at particular aspects of the relationship in planning with Dorset Council.

First, respondents were asked: *To what extent has the delay in completing a new Dorset Local Plan been a problem for your town/parish?* A substantial majority (about 75%) expressed moderate or major concern that their local planning had been hindered by *that delay*.

Second, they were asked: How would you describe Dorset Council's responses to your council's submissions on development applications? Please select up to three boxes (from the table below) that together best reflect your experience (Table 9). Overall, there was a roughly even balance between positive and negative views. However, a relatively high proportion of Clerks ticked the boxes for 'Too often dismissive' and 'Rarely helpful'. Again, this points to inconsistent and ambivalent working relationships between towns and parishes and Dorset Council.

Table 9

Options	Number of Mentions
Reasonably prompt	6
Typically slow	10
Mostly respectful and constructive	13
Too often dismissive	12
Usually clearly explained with sufficient detail	9
Rarely helpful	9

Future Role and Prospects

The final section of the survey sought views on pressures and pathways for change in the roles played by towns and larger parishes, and how the 2019 reorganisation of local government in Dorset might play out.

First, respondents were asked: *What are the key pressures for change in the role and priorities of your council? Please select up to 5 major issues/concerns in the list below* (Table 10).

Table 10

Options	Number of Mentions
Managing growth and (re) development	19
Addressing threats to environmental quality (inc. climate change)	17
Promoting local jobs/economic development (inc. tourism)	9
Tackling social disadvantage	12
Dealing with an ageing population	18
Upgrading services /facilities to meet changing community needs	16
Filling gaps in services/facilities provided by Dorset Council	12
Ensuring community participation and local democracy	18
Providing stronger community leadership	7

The top 5 issues/areas of concern stand out quite clearly and suggest an agenda for towns and larger parishes that blends growth and environmental management with a strong focus on local democracy and upgrading services to meet community needs (notably those of an ageing population). Compared to elected members, Clerks placed particular emphasis on the need to upgrade services and facilities.

In supplementary comments, housing affordability was again mentioned as a source of concern, along with dealing with government on environmental issues.

A series of questions followed on action needed to address those pressures for change.

Large majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- *Our council will have to make significant changes to its functions and priorities over the next decade to address local needs and maintain quality of life;*
- *Our council can and should become a more robust advocate on behalf of the local community;*
- *Parish and town councils generally should establish a broader role in 'place making' and community development;*

- *Both councillors and senior managers will need to substantially upgrade their skills to lead the council effectively and respond to changing needs;*
- *To improve their performance, all Dorset parish and town councils must greatly increase exchanges of information and expertise in areas of mutual interest; and*
- *Parish and town councils need more formal, legislated powers to enable them to perform their functions effectively and address future challenges.*

These results suggest an awareness of the need for change that contrasts with the picture painted in Tables 2 and 3. A particularly high proportion of Clerks agreed on the need for significant changes to functions and priorities.

On the other hand, responses to two other propositions were less positive:

- *Given that the precept is uncapped, parish and town councils have a responsibility to do more to fill gaps in service delivery; and*
- *To meet future needs, we should seriously consider amalgamation or a formal shared services agreement with adjoining town/parish councils.*

Only a third of all respondents agreed that towns and parishes should do more (implicitly with their own funds) to help fill gaps in service delivery. Clerks were evenly split on the issue. A substantial majority of Clerks, but only a third of elected members (most were 'not sure'), were favourably disposed to considering amalgamation or formal shared services agreements.

Finally, responses were sought to the propositions that:

- *Over time, the 2019 reorganisation of local government in Dorset will prove to be a success; and*
- *To make the 2019 reorganisation a success, there will need to be a marked shift in the balance of roles, responsibilities and funding from Dorset Council towards larger towns and parishes.*

Nearly half of all respondents agreed (only one strongly) that the 2019 reorganisation would prove successful, and few disagreed, but a third were unsure. Results were similar for both Clerks and elected members.

Large majorities of both Clerks and elected members endorsed the need for a marked shift in the balance of roles with Dorset Council, but supplementary comments made it clear that for many this depended on funding being devolved along with responsibilities.

Further Comments from Respondents

Responses to the open-ended ('any further comments') question at the end of the survey for the most part underlined matters already raised under previous questions, but in doing so offered some clearer perspectives. Comments clustered around the following three broad issues.

'Central-local' relations

- Dorset Council was seen as excessively centralist – it has 'lost touch' with residents and needs to 'let go' to give towns and parishes more scope to address community issues.
- The needs to be a thorough review of respective roles and relationships, not only in terms of service delivery and funding, but also community consultation/engagement. Local people do not know 'who does what'.

Quality of Local Democracy and Governance

- Parish and town councils need to rid themselves of a ‘Vicar of Dibley’ image. This requires greater professionalism on the part of both councillors and officers.
- Particular attention needs to be paid to: numbers of councillors (in some cases too many, in others too few); the level of support they receive; the heavy demands placed on mayors/chairs of larger councils (becoming ‘an unpaid, full-time’ job’); respective roles of councillors and clerks (need for more oversight on the one hand, increased delegations on the other); councillors’ behaviour.
- Councillors should be ‘paid to perform’ with reasonable allowances.
- The quality and effectiveness of community consultation demands attention – towns and parishes have difficulty capturing people’s attention, but some are successful and more use could be made of community expertise.

Financial Management

- Some/many parish and town councils are approaching a financial crossroads – demands for services and facilities are outstripping potential growth in revenues (whether from new development or increased precepts).
- Larger councils need specialist finance managers, and/or all clerks need demonstrated financial expertise.
- Larger towns/tourist centres should receive a share of business rates.
- Surrounding parishes should be required to increase precepts to support services and facilities provided by a central town/larger parish.

Research on Cornwall's Experience

Extracts from: Jane Wills (Environment and Sustainability Institute, University of Exeter) The geo-constitution and responses to austerity: Institutional entrepreneurship, switching, and re-scaling in the United Kingdom. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 2020, pp.1-16

These extracts are drawn from pp.6-12 of Professor Wills' paper. Other than selecting the material to be extracted (which has omitted a considerable amount of the paper), no changes have been made to the text except for deleting references to academic papers, some very minor edits and re-formatting.

The Research

....Cornwall Council has been on a journey towards greater partnership working with its town and parish councils for more than a decade. The council's bid for unitary status, submitted in 2007, had to provide alternative ways for working with local people if the six intermediate district councils were to be abolished, as planned. Even at this time, the would-be unitary council envisaged a greater role for the lowest tier of local government saying that: "The new authority for Cornwall will, in consultation with the relevant councils, consider the case for the delegation of certain responsibilities to the local councils" (Cornwall County Council, 2007, p. 40).

These early efforts were subsequently boosted by Cornwall's nationally agreed devolution arrangement, signed with Government in 2015.... That agreement also reflected ambitions to increase the role of local councils, and the submission declared "We are committed to the idea of double devolution; many of the increased powers and freedoms that we are seeking will allow us to work with partners to empower local communities to address their needs" (Cornwall Council, 2015, p. 8).

While support for "double-devolution" has been about the principle of subsidiarity and working in partnership with local councils, it only really took off once austerity started to bite. Cornwall Council's revenue support grant was reduced by 90% between 2013/14 and 2019, falling from £105 million to just £14 million.... The new financial reality triggered major staffing reductions as well as cuts in support for the voluntary sector, while also accelerating efforts to devolve greater responsibilities to town and parish councils.

A very ambitious ongoing programme of asset transfer was developed to shift management and financial responsibility for important services such as public toilets, libraries, parks, and community centres to local councils. These councils have, in turn, been able to raise their council tax precept to pay for them, moving the financial burden away from the unitary authority. This institutional switching has saved almost all public toilets, parks, and libraries from closure, cuts, and/or sale....

Asset Transfer to Town and Parish Councils in Cornwall

.... a large number of assets have been devolved to the local councils included in this research. However, there was no uniformity on the ground and each arrangement reflected a bespoke settlement, reflecting the interests of each party, the state of the assets concerned, and considerations of finance.... As might be expected, assets that cost money to maintain were more likely to move than ones attached to an income and a number of respondents bemoaned the fact that car parks were generally not on the table for negotiation, at least in the initial phase of the process.

All the [case study] councils had seen considerable increases in their size and responsibilities as a result of devolution. As an example, Falmouth Town Council had increased its staff numbers from 5 to 40 in just 8 years and almost all aspects of public services in the town had been transferred over to them. Even smaller parish councils, like St Agnes, had more than doubled their staffing and income in a very short time. St Austell Town Council was only created in 2009 and yet it had 19 staff in 2019.

As an example of these changes by service area rather than place, the library service remained the responsibility of the unitary pan-county council (and this is a statutory requirement) but most of the buildings and staff as well as day-to-day service decisions had been devolved to local organisations. In 2015, Cornwall Council provided 31 local libraries for local people, but only five of these were left by early 2019....

As would be expected, each council had increased its budget to pay for [transferred assets and services], and in some cases they had increased the precept (or taxation) by more than 100% over a very short space of time.... Each local council had engaged in long, sometimes difficult, negotiations over the terms of each transfer, and respondents reported having to learn a range of new skills to take on this work. This included being able to scrutinise the offer being made to them and the legal, management, and financial risks involved. Many felt that Cornwall Council had been trying to “pass the buck,” particularly in the early stages of the process, and it was only when the local councils developed more ability to scrutinise the process that relationships began to improve.

Despite such problems, however, almost all the respondents argued that devolving these assets was the “right thing to do.” When confronted with the potential closure of public toilets, the degradation of green spaces and parks, or the closure of the local library, clerks and councillors argued that they had to respond. As a councillor from Helston explained:

You can't not have a public toilet, it's as simple as that ... A town like Helston that has, you know, several big events over the year such as Flora Day, and tonight, the Christmas lights turn-on where the town is really stretched to capacity ... You need to ensure that there is a proper facility for the people to use.

.... Going further than this, however, a number of respondents also felt that devolution provided an opportunity for local councils to ensure that “the destiny of the community ... is not dictated from county hall” (clerk from St Agnes). As the clerk from Launceston put it:

We should be cutting the grass in the town, it's our town; they're our verges, our parks. We should be running the library. If we're going to have public toilets ... they're all of ours and I think all towns have to do that but we have to balance that with explaining to local people that it's only ever going to cost you more money.

In this regard, respondents had consulted their residents about devolution before taking things on. Camborne Town Council consulted local people about its parks and green spaces, St Agnes held a public consultation about the toilets and library, and St Austell hired a firm to conduct a formal consultation process, prior to proceeding with any devolution. In every case, local people supported the moves, albeit that they raised obvious concerns about having to pay more in taxation. Although framed in a different language, the councils recognised that asking for more money demanded a new conversation with local residents, and that this amounted to a new “social contract” with their community.

....A number of the councils had sought to rationalise their use of public spaces, combining local management of services in the town rather than leaving them as standalone services, as was done in the past. A good example was in St Ives, where the town council had taken over the tourist

information centre and its four staff but could then merge this service with the newly devolved library service, in one building, with longer opening hours. As the town clerk explained: “The staff are going to train and cross over disciplines, so [it will be] a better use of resources and hopefully, better for staff as well because they’re having new opportunities and upskilling with a more satisfying job.” In Truro, the transfer of the library and staff similarly provided an opportunity to bring the City’s Business Improvement District team, Citizens Advice Centre, and adult education into one building, with the library, managed by the council on site.

In Falmouth, the council had brought its outsourced labour in-house, arguing that this increased staff flexibility while also improving the quality of jobs as well as productivity rates. Given that Falmouth Town Council now needed to manage a number of parks, public toilets, public spaces, and a large cemetery, they could use generic grounds staff more efficiently than was possible before when each was subject to separate contracting agreements managed by the particular private firm contracted by a separate staff team employed by Cornwall Council.

Given that the larger towns like Camborne, Falmouth, and St Austell were now employing larger numbers of their own grounds and library staff, they had also sought to foster a stronger local branding for their services. They had bought uniforms for grounds staff, branded their vans, and improved their signage, seeking to ensure that local people knew who was doing the work.

The Challenges of Budgets and Boundaries

.... While all the councils included in the research had majority support for devolution and localism, a minority reported serious, and in some cases growing, divisions of opinion among elected representatives. A councillor on St Ives Town Council, for example, was concerned about the scale and speed of devolution, saying that: “I think we’ve done too much, too quickly.” He also objected to the increase in costs when the services were largely the same, arguing that residents “are still getting the same toilets, the same library, the same service provided ... and that wouldn’t be too bad if there was a corresponding reduction in the Cornwall Council tax but there isn’t.”

.... In this regard, the research highlighted the extent to which devolution is vulnerable to changes in council representation and the outcomes of local elections. While the clerks and associated staff were critical to ensure continuity in vision, the increased importance of council operations made it more important to support any newly elected councillors. As part of his work in Falmouth, for example, the clerk had started to do a lot more work to induct new councillors when they got elected.... Now that Falmouth Town Council had started forward planning, they needed to ensure that there was continuity in vision and delivery despite any potential changes in elected representation.

The research also exposed a number of concerns about perceived injustices in relation to paying for devolved services. Whereas all Cornwall’s residents had previously paid for services like libraries, parks, and community centres, devolution meant that the burden for those facilities was falling on a smaller number of residents – within the boundaries of the town or parish – even if they were used by people from a much wider hinterland.

.... The research in Cornwall found that local councils had risen to the challenge of taking on services and paying for them, demonstrating that they could improve provision and find efficiencies in the process. However, this had to be carefully managed. There were dissenters within every council, and concerns about the injustice of taxation and access to services could have easily derailed the process. While councils had established a new social contract with their taxpayers, this was vulnerable to dissent, and hinged on satisfaction with the new management regime and service provision.

References

Cornwall Council. (2015). *The Case for Cornwall*. Available at <https://cornishassembly.org/CaseForCornwall.pdf>

Cornwall County Council. (2007). *One Cornwall, One Council*. (Apparently no longer available online)

Professor Wills' research is also reported in *A new geography of local government: The changing role of Town and Parish Councils in Cornwall, UK*. Centre for Geography and Environmental Science, University of Exeter, 2019. Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/37848>

Place and Resources Overview Committee Draft Work Programme

Meeting Date- 5 February 2026

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Councillors	Other Information
E-scooter hire scheme: Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester; and, Upton and Corfe Mullen	To consider and agree any recommendations that come out of the February Place overview committee. The paper going to Overview Committee considers whether or not the Authority should take advantage of the DfT's offer to local authorities to allow e- scooter rental trials. Both papers are dependent on permission being granted by DfT. An application has already been made and it is expected the results will be known by then.	Christopher Whitehouse (Environment/Policy/Partnership Manager) Jon Andrew, Place Services;	To be considered by Cabinet on 9 December 2025

Future items requested-

20mph speed limits in partnership with town and Parish Councils

Hedge to hedge

Informal work of the committee:

Date	Topic	Format	Councillors	Lead Officers	Other Information

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The Cabinet Forward Plan - December 2025 to March 2026 **(Publication date – 11 NOVEMBER 2025)**

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions of the Cabinet which are likely to -

- a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

Cabinet Members and Portfolios 2024/25

Nick Ireland	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding
Richard Biggs	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth
Jon Andrews	Place Services
Shane Bartlett	Planning and Emergency Planning
Simon Clifford	Finance & Capital Strategy
Ryan Hope	Customer, Culture and Community Engagement
Steve Robinson	Adult Social Care
Clare Sutton	Children's Services, Education & Skills
Gill Taylor	Health and Housing.
Ben Wilson	Corporate Development and Transformation

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
December					

Council Plan Progress Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open bi-annual report to Cabinet on Council Plan delivery.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Liz Crocker, Head of Strategy</i> <i>liz.crocker@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive</i>
Partnership Principles and Statement of Reasonable Expectations Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To approve a set of Partnership Principles with Community Partners and To approve a Statement of Reasonable Expectations with Town Councils	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 24 Nov 2025	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Sustainability</i> <i>steven.ford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jennifer Lewis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement</i> <i>jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To seek Cabinet's approval for the final Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, prepared in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and associated regulations. The Strategy sets out a spatial framework and priorities for nature recovery across Dorset, developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering. Approval will enable formal publication and implementation, supporting biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience and alignment with national and local environmental objectives.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 24 Nov 2025	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset National Landscape Management Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To adopt the Management Plan 2025-30, which sets out a strategic framework for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, biodiversity, and culture heritage of the Dorset national Landscape, in alignment with national guidance and local priorities	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership Closure Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To gain Cabinet approval for the final closure arrangements of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) including the receiving of legacy funds held by DLEP and the resignation of Cabinet Members from DLEP directorships.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Regeneration nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Average Speed Cameras - A30 Sherborne dual Carriageway Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open The introduction of new average speed cameras on the A30 Sherborne dual carriageway is aimed at improving road safety. Due to the significant overall cost, this initiative constitutes a key decision.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Tony Burden, Road Safety Manager</i> <i>tony.burden@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
New Forest Heaths Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy Key Decision - No Public Access - Open Adoption of New Forest Heaths Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Sue Bellamy, Senior Planning Policy Officer</i> <i>sue.bellamy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning</i> <i>mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Report to Change Cabinet decision of delegations for Highway Service Contract (HTSC) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To make a minor amendment to the Cabinet decision of 20 May 2025 regarding the scheme of delegation governance for the forthcoming Highway Service Contract.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Jack Wiltshire, Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering jack.wiltshire@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Adoption of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Cabinet is asked to agree the final adoption of the revised Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan, following its approval by the Partnership Board. The Council is part of the Partnership Board, and all the constituent local authorities need to approve its adoption. The management plan needs to be reviewed every five years.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Hilary Jordan, Service Manager for Spatial Planning hilary.jordan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Acquisition of Land Neighbouring Dorset Innovation Park Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt The acquisition of land, currently in Homes England ownership, located at Winfrith, South Dorset and neighbouring the existing Dorset Innovation Park. Purchase of the land would enable a range of potential future employment related uses and secure the long-term future of the Innovation Park as a strategic employment site serving the South Dorset Geography.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth	<i>Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Regeneration nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Future Leisure Management Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt The report sets out proposals to extend the existing leisure contracts until March 2028, to develop a leisure contract procurement strategy and agree to procure a single leisure operator contract subject to the finalisation of the Leisure Strategy in March 2026.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	<i>Paul Rutter, Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services paul.rutter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact

2026

January

Quarter 3 financial management report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open Quarter 3 financial management report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 27 Jan 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Strategy report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 10 Feb 2026	Cabinet 27 Jan 2026 Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 19 Jan 2026 People and Health Scrutiny Committee 21 Jan 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
March					

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Proposed revisions to the councils Housing Allocations policy, which governs how social housing is allocated to applicants on the housing register. The revised policy update aims to ensure fairness, transparency and compliance with legal requirements while addressing local housing need. Key changes may include amendments to priority criteria, eligibility requirements, changes to relevant legislation and operational procedures.	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 16 Apr 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 2 Feb 2026 Cabinet 3 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Sarah How, Service Manager for Housing Solutions</i> <i>sarah.how@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Tenancy Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open A tenancy strategy to set out the kinds and circumstances for different types of tenancies that should be provided to social rented housing tenants, including arrangements for fixed term tenancies, for registered providers which hold stock in the Dorset local authority area, to pay attention to when formulating their tenancy policies.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 3 Mar 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 2 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Sharon Attwater, Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance</i> <i>sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk,</i> <i>Andrew Billany, Corporate Director for Housing</i> <i>andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>
Housing Standards Enforcement Policy & Statement of Principles for Determining Financial Penalties Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To agree the adoption of a new Housing Standards Enforcement Policy & Statement of Principles for Determining Financial Penalties to account for legislative changes being enacted under the Renters Rights Act 2025.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 3 Mar 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 2 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Steven March, Service Manager for Housing Standards</i> <i>steven.march@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Andrew Billany, Corporate Director for Housing</i> <i>andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i> <i>(Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Towards a new model of day opportunities Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the results of the consultation on the future of day services in Dorset and use this information to shape a way forward for these services. The consultation was launched on a set of proposals across Dorset arising from Cabinet's agreement in principle to the new model for these services at its meeting on 10 September 2024.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 3 Mar 2026	Health and Wellbeing Board 11 Feb 2026 People and Health Overview Committee 2 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Sarah Perrett, Commissioning Manager - Micro Provider & Voluntary Sector Development</i> sarah.perrett@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, <i>Karen Stephens, Interim Head of Service - Market Relationships, Major Contracts, and Over 65's</i> karen.stephens@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
E-scooter hire scheme: Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester; and Upton and Corfe Mullen Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider any recommendations from February Place & Resources Overview Committee on whether the Council should take advantage of the DfT's offer to local authorities to allow e-scooter rental trials. The	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 5 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Christopher Whitehouse, Projects Team Manager</i> christopher.whitehouse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
paper is dependent on permission being granted by DfT and an application has already been made, the results of which would be known soon.					
May					

Financial Provision for the Voluntary Community Sector Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open The current 5-year financial agreement for the VCS will be coming to an end in October 2026. This paper will propose the new support for them.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date TBC	People and Health Overview Committee 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	<i>Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships Laura.cornette@dorset council.gov.uk, Jennifer Lowis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement jennifer.lowis@dorsetc ouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer</i>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

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