



Place and Resources Overview Committee

Date: Thursday, 26 March 2026
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 12 February 2026.	
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 23 March 2026.

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 23 March 2026

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

6. CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OF MOVING TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS 9 - 22

To receive the report from Implementation Team Manager and Community Engagement Officer.

7. CULTURAL STRATEGY 2026-2031 23 - 116

To receive the report from Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services

8. PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 117 - 130

To review the Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme.

To review the Cabinet Forward Plan.

9. 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.

10. 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 12 FEBRUARY 2026

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

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Ryan Hope and Cllr Andy Todd

Also present remotely: Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Barry Goringe and Cllr Carole Jones

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

Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement) and Mike Garrity (Corporate Director for Planning)

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

31. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 24 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

34. Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

35. Working with Communities

The report on Working with Communities was set out by the Director of Public Health & Prevention who described the changes being made by Dorset council and how the approaches detailed in this report will lead to service improvements.

There was appreciation shared by members of the committee for the approach taken and to address the comments from the meeting in November where the original report was raised.

The Committee covered the role of DAPTC and the representation of it a member organisation that doesn't represent all views of town and parish councils.

The important role of elected representation and the difference between elected bodies and membership organisations were discussed along with the role of charities and community groups with the delivery of community work.

Recognition of the difference between the Town and Parish Councils in Dorset and the merits of looking at no geographical approaches.

The importance of not taking a predetermined approach to the ways of working and the iterative approach to meaningfully codesign the approached that meet the needs of local communities. The Overview Committee requested involvement in supporting the design process.

Recommended changes the paper going to Cabinet.

1. The role of DAPTC as a representative for all town and parish view when not all are members and a request for rewording to include "most" or deletion.
2. There was an addition of Ward councillors to 4.2 of the statement of reasonable expectations that was recognised and agreed by the Director of Public Health & Prevention

Recommendations in the report.

1. Place and Resources Overview Committee is asked to consider and endorse the Community Conversations approach outlined in this paper, which supports how we will work with communities to deliver the Council Plan objectives, prepare for the English Devolution and Community Empowerment legislation, and to recommend adoption by Cabinet.
2. Place and Resources Overview Committee is also asked to recommend to cabinet that the revised Statement of Reasonable Expectations between Dorset Council and parish and town councils be approved and adopted.

The Place and Resources Overview Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations above.

36. Biodiversity Duty report

The Biodiversity Duty was described by the Corporate Director Planning and the steps taken and the legal framework that the biodiversity fulfils.

Following the introduction the discussion covered off several key themes and areas of interest. The discussion covered;

- Climate resilience and nature-based solutions
- The future actions planned and the importance of clear measures and KPI's to effective monitoring.
- The integration of the biodiversity duty within work of the council and the local nature strategy as a delivery mechanism for improving biodiversity.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interests and their inclusion within the report and the Biodiversity's Duty's reporting requirements
- Specific areas of consideration such as Moors valley and the Moor river
- Litter free Dorset and enabling of their activities to improve environmental outcomes.
- The limitations of the framework and the restrictions upon the reporting requirements of Department

The Committee resolved to recommend the report to Cabinet and the recommendation passed with 8 votes in favour and 1 abstention.

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

The committee reviewed the forward plans and discussed the future items.

38. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

39. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: Times Not Specified

Chairman

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Place and Resources Overview Committee

26 March 2026

Civil Enforcement of Moving Traffic Contraventions

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s):

All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author(s) and job title(s):

Laura Russ, Implementation Team Manager; Fernao Barros, Community Engagement Officer

Email(s): laura.russ@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk; fernao.barros@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Traffic Management Act 2004

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

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

- 1.1 The committee is invited to consider the potential application of civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions in Dorset, hereafter known as Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE), and to provide feedback on priority areas and opportunities for implementation. This early feedback will be used to ascertain member priorities and will inform the development of a policy and corresponding future activity in this area.
- 1.2 MTE can be used to reduce reliance on the police to enforce moving traffic offences, such as making banned right turns, entering a yellow box junction

when the exit is not clear or driving through a bus gate or pedestrianised area. Used appropriately MTE supports council priorities on

- climate and air quality
- public transport and active travel
- road safety
- traffic flow and congestion

- 1.3 An order laid by Parliament designating Dorset as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions came into force in December 2025. This designation does not change the types of restrictions that Dorset Council can put in place but does provide an opportunity to improve compliance by increasing the council's ability to detect and penalise contraventions.
- 1.4 It is proposed to integrate moving traffic enforcement policy into the existing Civil Enforcement Policy for parking contraventions and to develop a business case setting out the costs, benefits, procurement pathway and general resource implications of introducing MTE in Dorset for consideration and approval by Cabinet.
- 1.5 In Spring 2025 Dorset Council consulted on the use of camera enforcement at the School Street in St Martins Road, Upton. The proposal was well supported by the public. It is therefore proposed that this should be considered as a pilot location for camera enforcement in the county.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Consider the ways in which the enforcement of moving traffic offences would benefit communities and residents in Dorset, and whether there are any concerns about such enforcement.
- 2.2 Review and provide feedback on skeleton proposals for a moving traffic enforcement policy
- 2.3 Support the development of a formal policy as an amendment to the existing parking policy, and a business case to cover procurement of cameras and the allocation of staff resource for Cabinet approval.
- 2.4 Endorse the selection of Upton School Street as the location for a pilot scheme to inform the policy and business case.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To encourage greater compliance with traffic regulations for the benefit of road safety, bus priority, local environmental quality and active travel.
- 3.2 To reduce reliance on Dorset Police to enforce moving traffic contraventions.
- 3.3 To increase public confidence in the enforcement regime.

4. The report

Introduction

- 4.1 Dorset Council has a statutory duty to manage its road network efficiently. Traffic regulation orders (TROs) are one of the tools available to do this. Historically local transport authorities (upper tier and unitary councils) enforced static orders on the highway, chiefly parking, while the enforcement of moving traffic offences was the responsibility of the police.
- 4.2 The Traffic Management Act (2004) enabled local authorities to be designated as civil enforcement areas for some types of moving traffic offences.
- 4.3 Moving traffic offences include:
- entering yellow box junctions when the exit is not clear
 - driving through a 'No Entry' sign
 - turning left or right when instructed not to do so
 - driving where and when motor vehicles are prohibited
 - driving on routes that are for buses and taxis only
 - going the wrong way in a one-way street
 - ignoring a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)
- 4.4 This type of enforcement is through specially certified cameras only. Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are issued to the registered keeper of the vehicle after footage of a suspected contravention has been reviewed by a trained officer. PCNs may not be issued at the time of the offence even if witnessed by a civil enforcement officer. **Speed limit enforcement remains the sole responsibility of the police.** This type of camera enforcement may not be used to enforce parking contraventions.
- 4.5 An order laid by Parliament designating Dorset as a civil enforcement area for moving traffic contraventions came into force in December 2025. This designation does not change the types of restrictions that Dorset Council can put in place but can improve compliance by increasing the council's ability to detect and penalise contraventions.

Purpose

- 4.6 The objectives of civil enforcement of moving traffic offences are to:
- Improve traffic flow and reduce congestion
 - Enhance road safety
 - Support climate goals by reducing emissions
 - Encourage sustainable travel modes such as walking and cycling
 - Reduce reliance on Dorset Police for enforcement

Benefit to Council Priorities

- 4.7 MTE can support council priorities in the following ways, although this list is not exhaustive.

Suitable Housing Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE) can ensure the safer use and operation of new neighbourhoods whether through bus priority measures, school streets, or other traffic management measures to support accessible and prosperous places.

Grow our economy MTE can improve the town centre environment by encouraging greater compliance with traffic restrictions, for example in pedestrianised areas supporting local high streets. It can also be used to improve network efficiency and reduce localised congestion and delays.

Communities for all MTE can be used to improve road safety by supporting School Streets and other local interventions. MTE can also address local traffic concerns for example use of inappropriate roads by large vehicles.

Climate and Nature MTE can contribute to our response to the Climate and Nature crisis by supporting sustainable travel through, for example, bus priority measures or traffic restrictions to create a safer environment for walking and cycling for local journeys.

Use cases

- 4.8 The following scenarios illustrate some potential applications of MTE.

Scenario 1: Pedestrian zones. There are repeated reports of drivers ignoring traffic restrictions in a pedestrian area in a town centre. The town council does not have staff to open and close the gate at the start of every day to allow deliveries in permitted hours, therefore the gate remains open and compliance is low. The use of cameras in this case removes the need for a gate.

Scenario 2: Bus Priority. A bus gate is installed in a new development. Without effective enforcement, traffic rises on the protected route, putting vulnerable road users at risk. The police cannot prioritise these contraventions consistently. Camera enforcement would be an effective and proportionate means of ensuring compliance, without reliance on the police.

Scenario 3: School Streets. A school contacts Dorset Council about implementing a school street to achieve a calmer and safer environment at school drop off and pick up time. The school lacks the staff to enforce road closures which means the school cannot participate. By using cameras to enforce school streets, more schools and communities will be able to benefit.

Scenario 4: Town Centre Traffic Management and Road Safety. A box junction near a busy supermarket is widely ignored, causing localised congestion at

peak times and driver frustration leading to risky driver behaviour. As above, the use of cameras can improve network efficiency and road safety in the absence of police enforcement.

Draft policy framework

- 4.9 Parliament designated the civil enforcement area subject to specific conditions being met for each new location where enforcement is to take place. It is therefore proposed that these conditions should provide the basic framework for Dorset Council's approach to MTE.

National guidance

- 4.10 The conditions are that the Council should

- (1) consult the appropriate Chief Officer of Police
- (2) carry out a suitable public engagement exercise, for the requisite minimum six-week period, on the location(s) and type(s) of moving traffic restriction selected by the local authority as appropriate for enforcement action
- (3) set out rationale for, and benefits of, moving traffic enforcement to local residents and businesses, and provide the opportunity for them to raise any concerns
- (4) take appropriate steps, as it considers reasonable, to resolve all objections
- (5) carry out effective public communication and engagement, using the full range of media available, as the Council considers appropriate
- (6) Continue public communication and engagement up to the start of enforcement and for a reasonable period thereafter
- (7) Ensure that enforcement of all moving traffic restrictions will be underpinned by accurate Traffic Regulation Orders, where applicable, and indicated by lawful traffic signs and road markings.
- (8) Ensure all the relevant equipment has been certified by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) specifically for moving traffic contraventions.
- (9) Carry out all of the above steps in respect of any new camera location in the future.

Initial considerations

- 4.11 The suggested starting point is to integrate the moving traffic enforcement into Dorset Council's existing civil enforcement (Parking) policy. This will be based on steps 1-9 above, tailored to the Dorset context where appropriate.
- 4.12 The method of enforcement will be through camera equipment that has been certified for moving traffic contraventions. This equipment may be fixed or rotated between different locations.
- 4.13 The procedure for issuing or appealing a ticket is similar to that for issuing a parking ticket. Under the legislation, footage must be reviewed by a trained officer and the PCN sent to the home address of the registered keeper of the

vehicle. Typically, there is a six-month grace period for first offences when cameras are introduced to acclimatise drivers to the new system. Appeals follow the same process as for parking PCNs.

4.14 A skeleton policy for feedback from the committee is included as Appendix 1.

Proposed pilot location – St Martins Road Upton, Upton Junior School Street

4.15 The Department for Transport advises local authorities to pilot the use of these powers in a chosen location to allow processes to be refined before wider implementation, and to consult on that pilot location as part of the designation assessment.

4.16 Between 10th April 2025 and 25th May 2025, Dorset Council consulted residents and the school community on their views on using camera enforcement for the existing School Street in St Martins Road, Upton. In summary, the public showed strong support overall with 67% of the total respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposal. 27% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.17 Since that exercise was undertaken, the school has struggled to staff the barrier restricting traffic consistently, resulting in poor compliance. The School Street may be unsustainable without camera enforcement; for this reason, it is recommended that the committee endorse the selection of this location as the preferred pilot.

4.18 It is proposed that a funding be made available from the Local Transport Grant (formerly the Local Transport Plan) for the purchase of one set of cameras including maintenance package to install and operate the trial.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 The alternative would be not to implement the powers at all, or to defer a decision to a future date.

6. Legal considerations

6.1 The legal implications are consistent with that of our existing parking policy. The use of these powers, as with all civil enforcement, is highly regulated by the following acts of parliament and regulations:

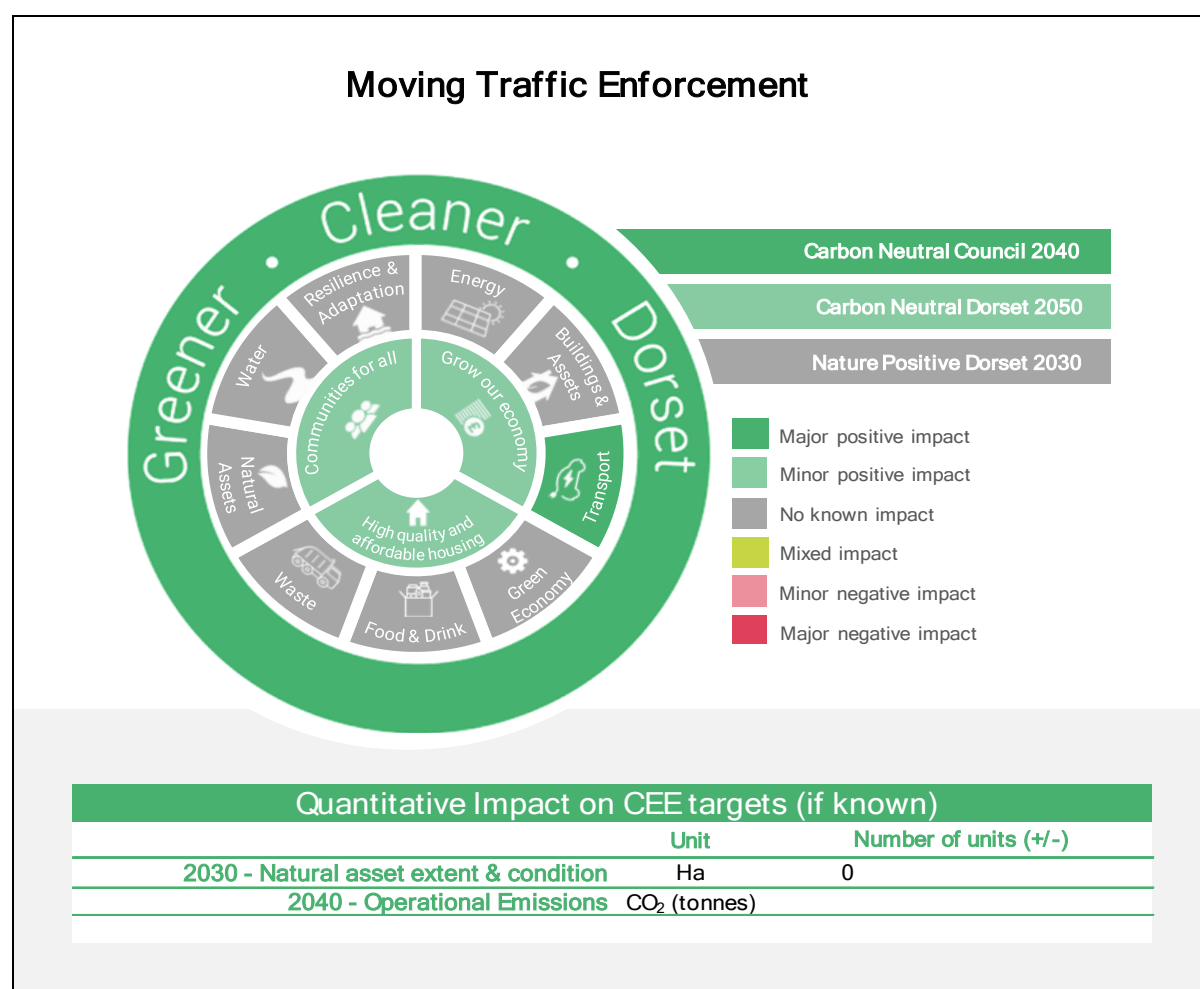
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – basis for making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Off-Street Parking Orders.
- Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004 – Part 6 provides the statutory basis for civil enforcement of both parking and moving-traffic contraventions.
- Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (England) Regulations 2022 – governs approved devices, postal Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), representations and appeals.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 It is recommended that Local Transport Grant (Local Transport Plan) funding is made available to establish the trial. This is for the purchase of one set of cameras including maintenance plus associated installation costs.
- 7.2 If the principles above are supported, it is proposed to develop a policy with accompanying business case for Cabinet approval with scalable options for investment and a detailed picture of the revenue implications.
- 7.3 It is to be noted that while contraventions will generate some income which can be used to support further enforcement activity, the purpose is to encourage compliance rather than raise revenue. The Council will need to decide what scale of enforcement it wishes to commit to and correspondingly how much resource to make available.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 8.1 MTE has potential benefits to public transport, sustainable travel, road safety and air quality supporting climate goals.



9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 MTE can be used to create safer environments in town centres, near schools and in residential areas. It can be used to support active travel, with the accompanying physical and mental health benefits. By supporting efforts to create more pleasant places, it can indirectly enhance people's sense of wellbeing.

10. Other implications

- 10.1 Public opinion on camera enforcement is mixed. In certain specific circumstances where there is clear evidence of a problem, the public can favour the use of camera enforcement, as in Upton. The enforcement regime will need to be seen to be appropriately and fairly applied if it is to retain public confidence.

11. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

- 12.1 Older and younger people, people with disabilities and those on low incomes are disproportionately impacted by the negative impacts of traffic in terms of the number and severity of collisions and the environmental and health impacts of traffic. These groups are also more likely to use public transport, walking, wheeling (including wheelchairs and mobility scooters) and cycling. Where restrictions are put in place for reasons of road safety or local environmental quality these groups will benefit.
- 12.2 While care should be taken that enforcement is fair, there are no equalities impacts from the principle of enforcement itself as the law applies equally to all.

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 Dorset Civil Parking and Moving-Traffic Enforcement Skeleton Policy

13.2 Appendix 2 Climate Wheel Accessible Table

ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	major positive impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Grow our economy	minor positive impact
High-quality and affordable housing	minor positive impact
Communities for all	minor positive impact

14. Background papers

14.1 Not applicable

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)

Appendix 1

Dorset Civil Parking and Moving-Traffic Enforcement Skeleton Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This skeleton policy sets out how Dorset could integrate moving-traffic contraventions with the existing parking policy. This document is not intended as a complete or final policy but a framework for the development of one.
- 1.2 It proposes to merge:
 - the Civil Parking Enforcement Policy – Part 1 (Dec 2024), and
 - the Moving-Traffic Enforcement Addendum (implementing Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (England) Regulations 2022).
- 1.3 This would create a single consolidated policy for all civil enforcement activities. The focus of this paper is on additions to the existing enforcement policy i.e. those relating to moving traffic offences only although reference will be made to parking policy where relevant.

2. Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of this policy are to
 - Encourage a high level of compliance with moving traffic restrictions.
 - Integrate traffic management policies with effective enforcement.
 - Improve road safety, reduce congestion and support the free flow of traffic.
 - Ensure fairness in the management of roadspace.
 - Provide a framework for managing exemptions where appropriate (residents, disabled users, businesses).

3. Legal & Technical Framework

- 3.1 The policy is framed by the following legislation, regulations and guidance
 - Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – basis for making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and Off-Street Parking Orders.
 - Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004 – Part 6 provides the statutory basis for civil enforcement of both parking and moving-traffic contraventions.

- Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (England) Regulations 2022 – governs approved devices, postal Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs), representations and appeals.
- Department for Transport Statutory Guidance (31 May 2022) – issued under s.87 TMA 2004.

4. Scope of Enforcement

4.1 It is proposed that Dorset should enforce:

- All on-street and off-street parking restrictions (as described in the original Part 1 policy)
- Moving-traffic contraventions defined in Schedule 7 TMA 2004, including
 - failing to comply with “proceed in direction” signs,
 - no-entry or banned turn restrictions,
 - vehicle-class restrictions
 - yellow box junctions,
 - pedestrian zones and active travel corridors, and
 - other prohibitions created by TROs or the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD).

5. Enforcement Method

- 5.1 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) enforce parking contraventions by patrolling and issuing PCNs. Moving-traffic contraventions must be detected by Vehicle Certification Authority (VCA) approved cameras, listed on the Approved Device Register and subject to calibration and audit.
- 5.2 For the first six months at each new moving-traffic site Dorset will issue warning notices only for a motorist’s first contravention.
- 5.3 Evidence should be reviewed by trained officers prior to the issue of the PCN and posted to the home address of the registered user of the vehicle. CEOs may not issue moving traffic PCNs on-street.

6. Lines, Signs and TROs

- 6.1 All restrictions must be supported by a valid TRO where necessary and TSRGD-compliant signage/markings.
- 6.2 Regular audits should ensure defects are recorded and enforcement suspended where signs/lines are non-compliant.
- 6.3 CEOs should report any deficiencies immediately for remedial action.

7. Parking Enforcement Practices (Part 1)

- 7.1 No changes

8. Moving-Traffic Enforcement Process

- 8.1 PCNs will be served by post with photographic/video evidence.
- 8.2 The statutory process for representations and appeals is the same as for parking PCNs and follows the following steps
 - informal representations to the Council,
 - formal representations following a Notice to Owner,
 - appeal to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

9. Data Protection & Surveillance

- 9.1 Enforcement must comply with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and ICO CCTV guidance.
- 9.2 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be completed for each camera site.
- 9.3 There must be appropriate, compliant signage at camera locations.
- 9.4 The council must define the camera evidence retention period.
- 9.5 The council must identify the Governance Lead / Senior Responsible Officer.

10. Charges and Use of Income

- 10.1 Penalty charge levels to follow those authorised under the 2022 Regulations.
- 10.2 Any surplus income will be ring-fenced for transport and highway improvements as required by Section 55 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

11. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

- 11.1 Before enforcement begins at any site the Council will:
 - Consult with Local Ward Members, town and parish councils, the Police and other emergency services, and the public.
 - Publish an Initial Enforcement Plan with site maps.
 - Provide clear information through the Council website and other communication channels and local media.

12. Training & Quality Assurance

- 12.1 Staff reviewing camera evidence receive specialist training in evidential standards and discretion.

13. Monitoring and Reporting

- 13.1 An annual enforcement report will be published detailing:

- number and type of contraventions,
- income and expenditure,
- outcomes of representations and appeals.

13.2 Internal governance arrangements for reporting to elected Members will be specified within the policy

14. Areas Needing Definition

Area	Why
List of roads/junctions to be enforced	Must be published before go-live
Penalty charge band (A or B)	Required under 2022 Regulations
Camera evidence retention period	Needed for ICO compliance
Governance lead / Senior Responsible Officer	Required by Surveillance Camera Code
Internal signage/TRO audit process	Must be documented to defend appeals
Training syllabus & Quality Assurance frequency for back-office reviewers	Needed for consistency and DfT guidance
Public communications strategy	To meet statutory consultation duties

Moving Traffic Contraventions Enforceable by CCTV (Outside London)

14.1 This table lists the contraventions enforceable by CCTV under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions (England) Regulations 2022 for authorities outside London. All CCTV-enforced contraventions use the suffix 'j'. Bus lane contraventions are also included.

Code	Description	Suffix for CCTV
29	Failing to comply with a one-way restriction	j
31	Entering and stopping in a box junction when prohibited	j
32	Failing to proceed in the direction shown by the arrow on a blue sign	j
33	Using a route restricted to certain vehicles (e.g., buses, cycles, taxis)	j
34	Being in a bus lane (bus lane contravention)	j
36	Being in a mandatory cycle lane	j
37	Failing to give way to oncoming vehicles	j
38	Failing to comply with a sign indicating traffic must pass to the specified side	j
48	Stopped in a restricted area outside a school, hospital, or emergency service station when prohibited	j
50	Performing a prohibited turn (no left/right/U-turn)	j
51	Failing to comply with a no entry restriction	j
52	Failing to comply with a prohibition on certain types of vehicle (e.g., goods vehicles, motor vehicles)	j
53	Failing to comply with a restriction on vehicles entering a pedestrian zone	j
54	Failing to comply with a restriction on vehicles entering and waiting in a pedestrian zone	j

Place and Resources Overview Committee

26 March 2026

Cultural Strategy 2026-2031

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Local Councillor(s):

All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Paul Rutter - Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services

Email: paul.rutter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

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

1.0 Executive summary

1.1 Culture has always played a role in enhancing people's lives and the places in which they live. Dorset has an incredibly high level of engagement with 93% of adults engaging in cultural activity every year.

1.2 Over the last five years, and despite considerable headwinds, Dorset's cultural life has continued to thrive. Museums are seeing increased visitor numbers, arts organisations are developing new business models and creatives are making and bringing inventive work to Dorset's towns and villages.

1.3 The new Cultural Strategy will help to support and sustain Dorset's cultural infrastructure, drive lasting social and economic benefits and leverage internal and external funding. Although the strategy will not be directly owned by Dorset Council, it has been developed to align to the Dorset Council Plan priorities and enable communities to come together; breaking down social isolation and helping build happy, empowered, and connected communities. The priorities of the strategy have also been aligned to national cultural and heritage policies.

- 1.4 As a significant local funder, it is imperative that the strategy is closely aligned to the Dorset Council Plan, so that funding criteria can help support the delivery of the priorities.
- 1.5 This strategy will rely on strong partnership working, both internally and externally. It will enhance the existing strong relationships with national funders, particularly Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which collectively support Dorset's cultural sector with over £5m a year.
- 1.6 For the next five years, the priorities of Dorset's Cultural sector are:
- Vibrant Places
 - Healthy Communities
 - Economic Development
 - Environmental Action
- 1.7 This strategy covers the Dorset Council area and has been developed in a collaborative way; one that has given stakeholders the opportunity to influence its development and shape the ambitions and priorities.
- 1.8 The full strategy at Appendix 1 provides a level of ambition and depth of detail that would be expected by external funding bodies such as The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council. It will also provide the strategic context on which local cultural organisations and Town and Parish Councils can develop their own plans and strategies and improve their chances of achieving successful funding bids.
- 1.9 Whilst the full strategy will be readily available, the 'easy read' version set out in Appendix 9 will be the public facing strategy document.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet be asked to adopt the Dorset Cultural Strategy 2026- 2031.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation(s)

A Cultural Strategy helps to increase the opportunities of securing new investment into Dorset and maximise the leverage value of the council's own investment in arts, heritage and culture. This Cultural Strategy will be the foundation on which Dorset Council will set its own funding criteria, ensuring that all grant recipients are contributing to its priorities and ambitions.

The strategy will not only inform how Dorset Council will support the sector in the future, but it will set out a united direction for culture for other stakeholders, funders, cross sector partners, Parish and Town Councils, organisations and individuals. A

collaborative approach to cultural provision will directly benefit our communities, visitors, and the local economy.

4.0 Culture Strategy

- 4.1 Culture has always played a role in enhancing people's lives and the places in which they live. This strategy is the third iteration of a Dorset Cultural Strategy and the second since the formation of Dorset Council in 2019.
- 4.2 The previous strategy (2021-26) was broad and ambitious, showing how culture engages and intersects with a wider network of partners and stakeholders. This strategy has adopted a similar approach, building on the web of connections that make up and contribute to Dorset's cultural sector.
- 4.3 The new strategy will however be more focused and take a more targeted approach. For the next five years, the priorities of Dorset's Cultural sector are: Vibrant Places - Healthy Communities - Economic Development - Environmental Action.
- 4.4 The main strategy report is set out in Appendix 1, with additional appendices detailing the level of consultation and engagement in developing the strategy, local and national insight, governance arrangements and a delivery plan setting out the ambitions and actions.
- 4.5 Whilst Dorset Council will play a key role in the development and delivery of this strategy, it will be owned by the sector. It should be recognised that the cultural sector of Dorset is broad and diverse and partnership working and collaboration will be a key foundation of any future success. Dorset Council will align its funding criteria to support the delivery of the strategy and the wider Council Plan.
- 4.6 Appendix 5 highlights the wide level of consultation and engagement undertaken and shows how partners, organisations and the wider community have been involved in shaping this strategy. Many of these organisations are involved in cultural education, operate museums and cultural venues and are deliverers of performances, events, festivals and exhibitions to name just a few. Their contribution in the development of this strategy and their subsequent commitment to deliver on the ambitions and priorities will be vital moving forward.
- 4.7 The governance model detailed in Appendix 3 provides further clarity on how the wider cultural eco system will contribute to its delivery. Dorset Council will ensure that all its funding is closely aligned to the ambitions and targets of the strategy and will play a key advocacy role in encouraging, nurturing and supporting collaboration.

- 4.8 The Delivery Plan in Appendix 2 provides insight into the approach to meeting these ambitions, who will be involved in delivery and how success will be measured. The plan focusses on the first year and will be reviewed and updated with new priorities throughout the life of the strategy.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The importance and value of a Cultural Strategy in shaping policy making is clearly demonstrated. The consultation and engagement sessions were designed to consider and debate on what the key priorities should be. The proposed priorities will best serve the cultural sector and also align with the priorities of the Dorset Council Plan.

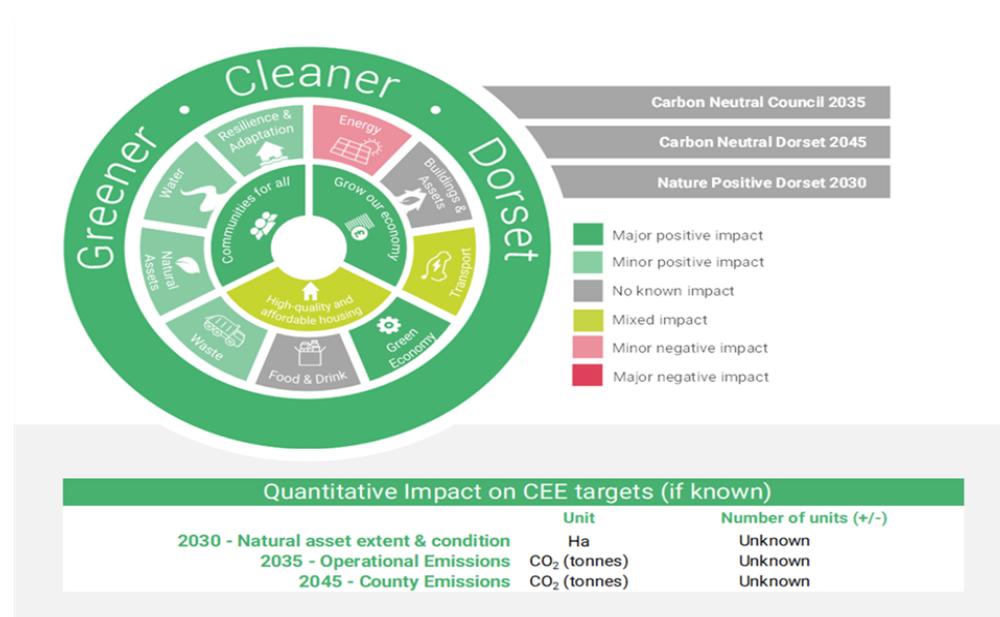
6 Legal considerations

- 6.1 There is no legal requirement to have a Cultural Strategy although it is very much considered as best practice with external funders. The EQiA considers the legal factors around equalities and inclusivity.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 Dorset Council provides annual revenue funding of around £485,000 to 28 arts, culture and heritage/museum organisations and awards additional funding to around 30 projects a year.
- 7.2 This plays a pivotal role in leveraging external funding, with Arts Council England having provided Dorset with £4m in the last year through regular funding, project grants and strategic funds. Similarly, The National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded £1.2m towards 9 projects in Dorset in the same period. that the strategy remains subject to the ongoing commitment to funding. The strategy remains subject to the ongoing commitment to funding.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications



- 8.1 The assessment identifies no significant impacts, with further details set out in Appendix 10.

9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 Arts, heritage and culture, provide a vital role in improving health and wellbeing within our communities. It can bring communities together; breaking down social isolation and helping build happy, empowered, and connected communities. The strategy will focus on those living with poor mental health, people aged 65 and over, young people and those living with dementia. It will promote the delivery of initiatives, events and programmes in areas of socio-economic disadvantage and aim to engage with those impacted by rural isolation.

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 An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 8) has been carried out to inform the development of the strategy. Priority groups have been identified within the assessment and will form part of any developing action plans. This is currently being reviewed by Equalities Officers.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix 1 Dorset Cultural Strategy
- Appendix 2 Delivery Plan
- Appendix 3 A Framework for Governance
- Appendix 4 Viability of Dorset's Cultural Sector in 2026
- Appendix 5 Engagement and consultation
- Appendix 8 Equality Impact Assessment.
- Appendix 9 Dorset Cultural Strategy – easy read
- Appendix 10 Natural environment, climate & ecology impacts

14. Background papers

14.1 Appendix 6 - Links to other strategies

14.2 Appendix 7 - Sources

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 Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

DORSET CULTURAL STRATEGY

2026-2031

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Foreword

Dorset is a place rich in culture. Throughout our towns, villages and natural landscape, that cultural life is evident. From civic museums to community arts centres, national festivals to public libraries, culture is never far away, and yet there's an opportunity to do even more. That's where the Dorset Cultural Strategy comes in.

Created through wide engagement with the sector, community and external partners, the strategy positions culture to play an even greater role for those who live in and visit Dorset.

Dorset Council plays a key role in supporting culture. It core funds 28 organisations, alongside its project funding. Its cultural officers and funded services provide advice, guidance and development for hundreds of smaller organisations, creatives and producers every year. It is a champion of the benefits of culture in improving people's lives and fostering greater community cohesion.

This strategy will create places that are more vibrant, whether in our market and seaside towns, historic villages or rural landscape. It will enable culture to strengthen our communities and improve the health of those who live here. It will champion inclusive economic development as the cultural sector plays its part in the wider growth of Dorset, and it will support environmental action, communicating and demonstrating ways of changing behaviour in response to the climate and ecological emergency.

This is an ambitious strategy but it is achievable. It will be realised through partnership and collaboration. It requires Town and Parish Councils, strategic health bodies and environmental partners to work alongside the cultural sector. It requires cultural organisations to work collectively to create things that are greater than the sum of their parts. Critically it requires Dorset Council to play the role of enabler and facilitator, connecting the cultural sector to the wider strategic priorities that benefit society as a whole.

The Dorset Cultural Strategy sets the direction for change. Together, we can realise that change.

Cllr Ryan Hope

Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Executive Summary

This is an ambitious but realistic strategy that builds on the brilliance of Dorset's cultural sector to create a shared purpose for the next five years.

In 2021, the newly formed Dorset Council adopted its first Cultural Strategy, setting a shared direction for the sector. Over the last five years, and despite considerable headwinds, Dorset's cultural life has continued to thrive. Museums are seeing increased visitor numbers, arts organisations are developing new business models and creatives are making and bringing inventive work to Dorset's towns and villages.

The 2021-26 Cultural Strategy set a broad range of targets. Amongst these were creating an accessible and open cultural offer and valuing the innate creativity of communities. In response, Dorset pioneered a Town of Culture initiative, celebrating the cultural offer of Dorset's towns and increasing engagement with culture.

Another achievement has been the deepening of relationships with external partners, particularly those in the health sector, leading to the first Creative Health Strategy for Dorset. This will see culture and creativity used more widely to improve the physical and mental health of residents across the county.

Underpinning all this has been a committed and supportive local authority. Dorset Council continues to invest in culture, supporting 28 organisations with core funding and awarding project funding to around 20-30 projects a year. Both are delivered through an open process, allowing Dorset Council to support both essential cultural institutions as well as new organisations and ideas. In 2023-24, over 500,000 people visited Dorset's core-funded cultural organisations and every pound of funding from Dorset Council leveraged £15 in additional income.

But culture isn't just about attending shows, festivals or exhibitions. It's also about taking part – singing, reading and creating. Here, Dorset has an incredibly high level of engagement: 93% of adults in Dorset engage in cultural activity every year.

This new strategy, covering the period from 2026 to 2031, recognises this rich cultural life and seeks to build on the strengths of the sector to make significant change.

It has been developed through hundreds of conversations, with engagement from over 250 people. It considers opportunities for cross-sector partnership and focuses consistently on the difference culture makes to the residents of Dorset.

The new Dorset Cultural Strategy takes a bold approach. It sets out just four outcomes – things that will be measurably different at the end of five years. To achieve these, there will be a series of outputs – three for each outcome – which will be reviewed and reset on an annual basis.

The strategy coalesces around four themes – Vibrant Places, Healthy Communities, Economic Development and Environmental Action. Each theme places the cultural sector alongside others, exploring how a shared approach can have the biggest impact.

Consequently, this strategy relies on strong partnership working, both internally and externally. It benefits from strong relationships with national funders, particularly Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which collectively support Dorset's cultural sector with over £5m a year.

It has the best chance of success when collaboration is encouraged, and organisations and individuals are able to look beyond their own work to seize greater opportunities.

Through this strategy, Dorset will be more an even more dynamic, distinctive and rewarding place in which to live, work and visit.

Process

This strategy is the third iteration of a Dorset Cultural Strategy and the second since the formation of Dorset Council in 2019.

The previous strategy (2021-26) was a broad and ambitious document, showing how culture engages and intersects with a wider network of partners and stakeholders.

This document has adopted a similar approach, building on the web of connections that make up and contribute to Dorset's cultural sector.

Following feedback from the sector and partners, this strategy is also more focused. It takes a more targeted approach. Consequently, the strategy has four priority areas and four measurable outcomes.

It was created through an iterative process beginning in April 2025. As the principal stakeholder, Dorset Council was involved in setting the initial scope for the strategy.

Engagement has taken place across the county, across the sector and with key stakeholders and partners. In total, over 250 people have directly fed into this strategy. Details of those consulted can be found in Appendix 4.

This document takes into consideration local and national strategies from the cultural and other sectors. This strategy seeks to align with these. Relevant strategies can be found in Appendix 5.

The strategy is also informed by local and national evidence and data. All data sources can be found in Appendix 6.

It considers neighbouring places and opportunities for collaboration across geography, particularly with neighbouring Councils in Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP).

A Shared Vision

Dorset is where culture and creativity pioneer ambitious change.

In a fast-moving world, Dorset embraces the new and diverse. Culture is a force for positive development, creating radical improvements in health and the environment. It supports sustainable economic development, attracting new income to Dorset. Throughout its towns, villages and rural areas, cultural activity takes place all year-round, providing life-enriching experiences for residents and visitors.

To achieve this, individual cultural expression will be celebrated, the cultural sector will be supported to enable sustainability, collaboration will be encouraged, and innovation and ambition will be championed.

What Do We Mean By Culture?

UNESCO defines culture as “the distinct spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features characterising a society. It encompasses arts, lifestyle, human rights, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. Culture shapes individuals and societies, fostering unity through shared values and traditions”.

For this strategy, we’ve divided culture roughly into two parts: arts and heritage.

Heritage includes museums, archives, historical sites, reenactments and heritage customs.

Arts includes music, theatre, dance, literature, film, gaming, visual art, circus and craft.



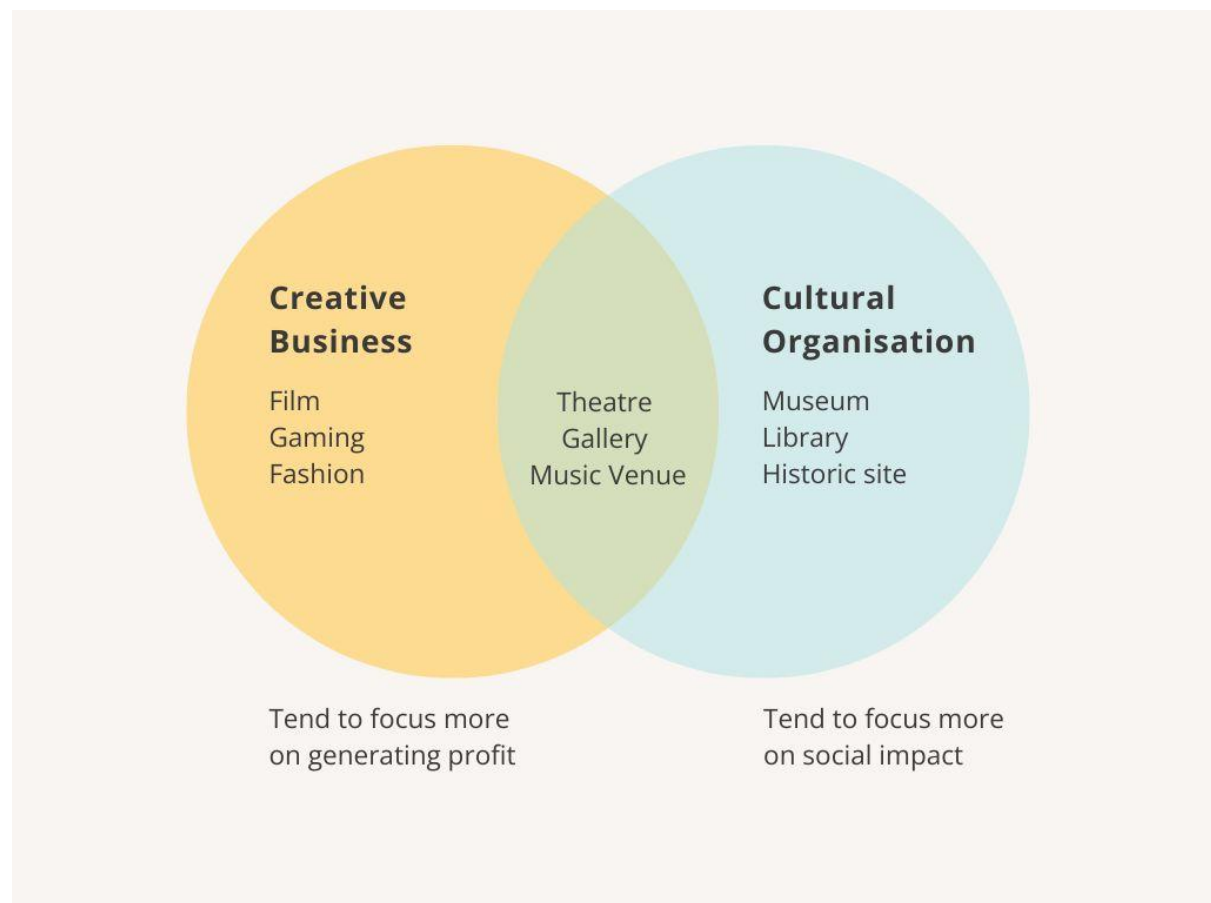
Culture sometimes takes place in dedicated cultural spaces – such as arts centres, theatres, museums. Sometimes culture takes place in spaces that have other functions, like pubs, community centres and town squares and sometimes culture takes place in private, at home reading a book, listening to music or watching a drama on TV.

Culture is often created by professionals who are paid to create work and who are usually trained to some degree. But culture is created by everyone, sometimes at

home, sometimes in public, through whistling a song, dancing on a night out or passing on traditions and customs.

Culture has historically been supported by the state going back to ancient times, by philanthropists and, most recently, by the public paying to experience cultural activity.

There is a subtle distinction between cultural organisations and creative businesses. The former tends to focus on social impact whereas the latter tends to focus on profit. That said, many organisations straddle these worlds and others defy the trend.



In this strategy, the word “culture” covers all aspects of the sector, embracing creative businesses and cultural organisations. It also recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn’t take into consideration the variety and diversity of the cultural sector, from start-ups to cultural institutions, community groups to statutory services, one-off projects to historic collections.

Inevitably a strategy that looks to embrace and unify the entirety of culture can tend towards generalisation. To adopt a more specific approach, however, can lead to exclusion, making it less relevant to certain parts of the cultural sector. To be inclusive, this strategy leans more on the general than the specific. It aims to set a clear strategic direction that benefits as many individuals, organisations and partners as possible.

The Value of Culture

Culture has always played a role in enhancing people's lives and the places in which they live. Some of this value is tangible. It can be clearly counted and measured. Other value is intangible. Whilst harder to quantify, it is equally meaningful.

Tangible value

There is a wealth of research nationally and globally on the tangible value and impact of culture, both socially and economically. The following links provide a good overview of some of this research:

- Arts Council England, [The Value of Arts & Culture to People and Society](#)
- Historic England, [Understanding the Social Value of Heritage](#)
- The Resurgence Trust, [Nature and Culture](#)
- UK Government, [Creative Industries Sector Plan](#)
- OECD, [Economic and social impact of cultural and creative sectors](#)

Social

Culture helps bring society together, creating communities of place and communities of interest. It fosters greater belonging. It can make places more attractive to live in or visit, and combat antisocial behaviour. It can enable people to lead happier and healthier lives, increase our capacity to learn and empower us to be more active and responsible citizens. Culture can enhance our connection to place, making us more considered custodians of both the natural and human-made world.

Economic

Culture plays a role in driving economic development. Directly, it creates products for consumption and employment for those who create or enable this production. Indirectly, culture brings people to places who tend to spend on activities related to their cultural experience. Culture can teach new skills and raise aspiration. When culture is made locally, it can create a more inclusive economic ecosystem with wealth benefitting citizens in places where culture is made rather than generating profits that leave the community.

Intangible value

The cultural sector also creates value that is harder to measure but that which is recognised as being beneficial to us both individually and collectively. The following links give a taste of some recent thinking in this area:

- UKRI/AHRC, [Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture](#)
- Hasan Bakhshi, Alan Freeman and Graham Hitchen, [Measuring Intrinsic Value](#)
- UNESCO, [Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

Soulful

Culture makes life worth living, creating joyful experiences that enrich our lives. It connects us to ourselves, often through showing us the experience of others and developing empathy. It helps us to better understand who we are and what we value. At its most profound, culture helps us to make sense of our place in the world or in the universe. It can help deepen our sense of self and renew our sense of purpose.

Historic

Often culture is about the present, experiences that happen in a moment within our lives. But culture is also about carrying and preserving things through generations of human existence and even pre-existence. There's a purpose in caring for things not just of value to our own times, but for all time. This collective memory, whether through objects, stories or traditions, deepens our connection to human society through the ages and to the world in which we've always lived.

Local context

People

Dorset is home to 385,000 people in 170,000 households. It has one of the oldest demographics in the UK – 30% are over 65 (19% nationally) and the average age is 51 (40 nationally). Dorset has an old age dependency ratio of 537 (vs. 297 nationally), meaning there are 537 people aged 65+ for every 1,000 working-age adults.

94% of people in Dorset are White British (74% nationally). In line with national averages, 17.5% live with a disability. 80% of working age people are in employment (75% nationally). 15% of working age people are self-employed (13% nationally).

There are six Lower-layer Super Output Areas in lowest (most deprived) decile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This represents 11,500 people (3% of the population). Five of these are in Weymouth, one in Portland.

Dorset welcomes almost 13 million visitors to Dorset every year, with total visitor spend of £924 million. Tourism is highly seasonal with 51% of visits taking place between June-September.

Geography

Dorset is predominantly rural. There are 152 persons per square mile (a fifth of national average). 53% of Dorset is an accredited National Landscape. It is home to England's only natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast. Dorset has 17 towns and over 300 villages. The largest town, Weymouth, is home to 53,000 people whilst the smaller, Beaminster, has just over 3,000.

As with other rural areas, Dorset is comparatively less well-served by public transport than urban areas, particularly in the north. Two train lines connect to London but connectivity within Dorset is a challenge with people reliant on cars.

Governance

Dorset Council is a unitary authority formed in 2019 from a merging of five Districts and the County Council. There are 17 Town Councils and 278 Parish Councils. Dorset is part of the proposed Wessex devolution partnership with Somerset, Wiltshire, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils.

Dorset's Cultural Sector

There's a high level of engagement with culture in Dorset. 93% of residents engage with the arts, 78% visit a heritage site, 45% visit a museum or gallery and 26% visit a public library. 79% of people use a car to travel to cultural experiences.

There are 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses in Dorset. The cultural sector employs 4,200 people (2,900 in creative, arts and entertainment; 1,300 in libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities). Nationally, 28% of people working in creative industries are freelance – it is likely to be higher in Dorset due to the size of cultural organisations.

There are 32 museums in Dorset, 24 of which have Arts Council England accreditation. There are 22 National Trust and 12 English Heritage sites. Most towns in Dorset have a theatre, arts centres or public building that hosts live performance. There are over 25 public and private exhibition spaces across Dorset, including galleries in museums and arts centres. Dorset Art Weeks features 250 studios and galleries.

Dorset also celebrates performance in non-culture-specific spaces. There are 115 village halls with a mixed community and professional programme. Dorset has 385 pubs, many of which hold cultural events. Performances and public art also take place in temporary spaces – in town squares, village greens, gardens and large-scale festival sites. Each summer, Dorset welcomes over 100,000 visitors for music festivals. The community sector is strong, with radio stations, amateur dramatics and community choirs.

Dorset is a location for national and international film production with the Dorset Film Office managing licences for filming on the Dorset Council land and liaising with film companies.

Some elements of the cultural sector are supported directly with public funding. Dorset Council provides revenue funding totalling £486,000 to 28 organisations and awards additional funding to around 20-30 projects a year. Arts Council England is the largest single funder of culture in Dorset providing £4m in 2024-25 in regular funding (to six National Portfolio Organisations), project grants and strategic funds. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the second largest single funder of culture, awarding £1.2m in 2024-25 to 9 projects. Most Town Councils and some Parish Councils provide funding for culture through a combination of project and regular funding.

There are 31 libraries in Dorset, of which 23 are run directly by Dorset Council with the remaining 8 run by the community. Libraries are community cultural hubs that play a

key role in supporting children and young people's cultural engagement supporting Dorset Council's Best Start in Life strategy, Creative Health – including social prescribing – and digital inclusion.

Dorset's archives are managed by Dorset History Centre and contain 1,000 years of historical records. Dorset's archaeology is the most significant in the region. As the depository for the county, Dorset Museum and Art Gallery holds over 3 million objects, making up 70% of its collection.

Dorset's cultural sector provides opportunities for volunteering. The 28 revenue-funded organisations in Dorset alone work with 1,377 volunteers who contributed a combined 84,288 hours a year.

Despite being a distinct local authority area, many artists and organisations based in the Dorset Council area work in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) and vice versa. Creatives benefit from opportunities on both sides of the border. Audiences also travel from one to the other. BCP is home to larger venues such as Poole Lighthouse which includes a 1500-capacity Concert Hall and the Bournemouth International Centre which can host up to 10,000 people.

Similarly, creatives and producers at the edge of the Dorset Council area often work beyond the borders, with Southampton, Salisbury, Yeovil and Exeter, in particular, providing cultural opportunities.

The cultural sector overlaps with many other parts of society, particularly health and education. Across Dorset and BCP, a joint Creative Health strategy has been developed with partners in health to increase the use and impact of cultural activity that improves health and wellbeing. Culture plays a key role in the development of young people. Many of Dorset's schools and colleges have excellent cultural facilities, some of which are used by professionals and community groups as well as students. Further education institution Coastland College specialises in courses for the cultural and creative industries, whilst Arts University Bournemouth (based in BCP) has a global reputation for its creative courses.

The cultural sector is supported by various regional and national sector-specific bodies covering museums, libraries, visual art, live music, outdoor arts and theatre. In Dorset, the museums are supported by South West Museum Development with a dedicated officer for the county of Dorset. Arts Development Company provides support to the rest of the sector, providing bespoke advice and training.

The cultural sector in one image

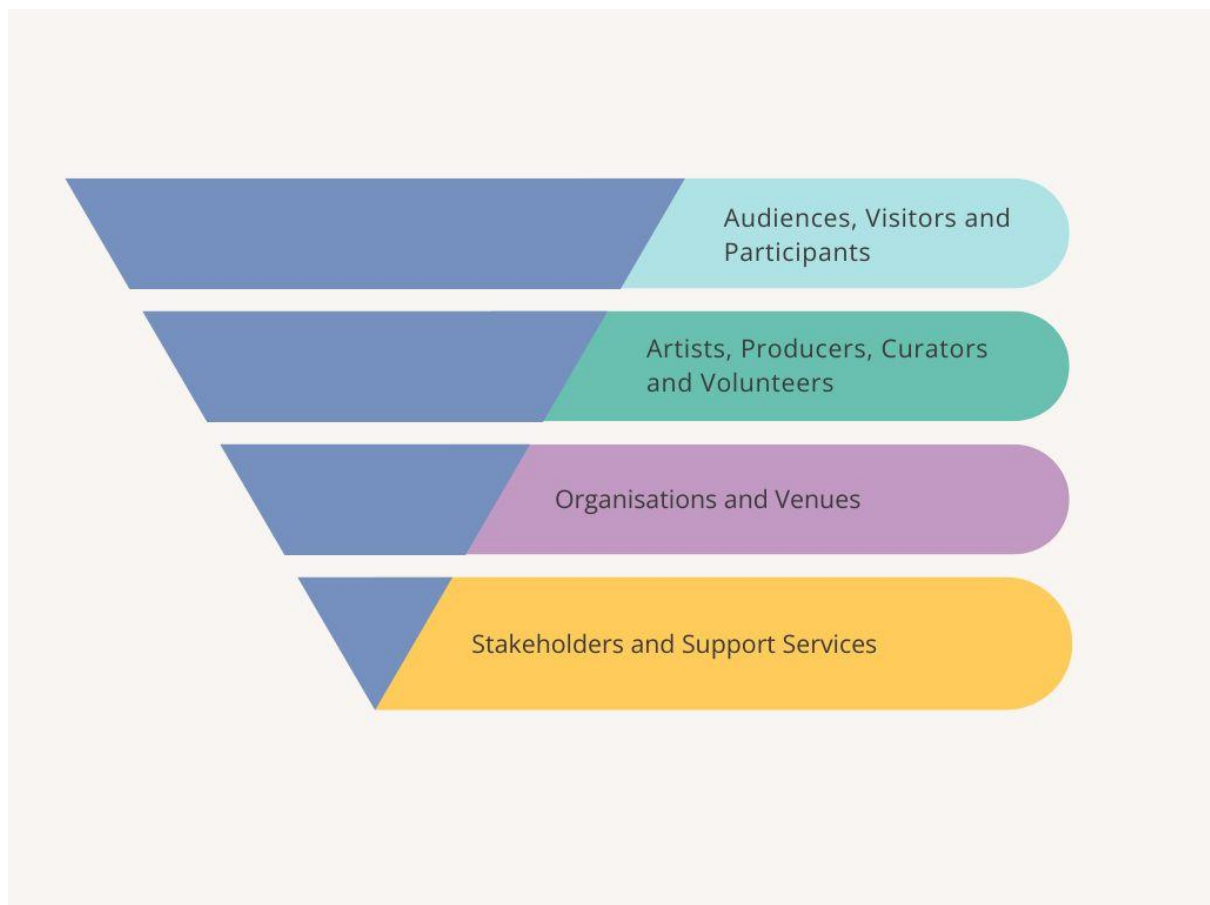
The purpose of the cultural sector is to serve audiences, visitors and participants.

The principal enablers of this are artists, producers and curators – those who make, curate or produce the work that people consume or take part in.

Enabling the work of artists, producers and curators are organisations and venues – creating programmes, attracting funding and providing space.

Beyond that are stakeholders and support services, developing the work of the sector and linking it to other parts of society.

For a healthy cultural sector, each parts of the system needs to be well-resourced, well-connected, and working collaboratively and strategically.



Cultural priorities

Priorities

For the next five years, the priorities of Dorset's Cultural sector are:

- Vibrant Places
- Healthy Communities
- Economic Development
- Environmental Action

These align with Dorset Council's Plan (2024-29) as follows:

- Vibrant Places – Housing Development
 - *With new houses being built, there needs to be cultural activity for the increased population*
- Healthy Communities – Communities for All
 - *Dorset's culture needs to reach everyone in society*
- Economic Development – Economy
 - *Culture is a key part of enabling economic growth that benefits all citizens*
- Environmental Action – Climate Crisis
 - *The cultural sector is uniquely placed to communicate to the public, changing behaviour in relation to climate crisis*

Outcomes

Each priority has an overarching ambition developed through wide consultation.

From this, a **single measurable outcome** has been selected for each priority. This is the key area of focus for each priority.

This outcome is set for the full five years of the strategy.

Measures

The outcomes will be **measured in three ways**. The intention is to both have a collective way of understanding impact and to reduce the reporting burden on cultural organisations.

The first measure is to use broad national or cross-sector data. This is data that is already being monitored by other organisations and which will be used to understand large-scale change.

The second measure will collect information from Dorset's cultural organisations. Whilst this will be mandatory for those in receipt of funding from Dorset Council, it is hoped that other organisations will provide this information to create a bigger picture of impact.

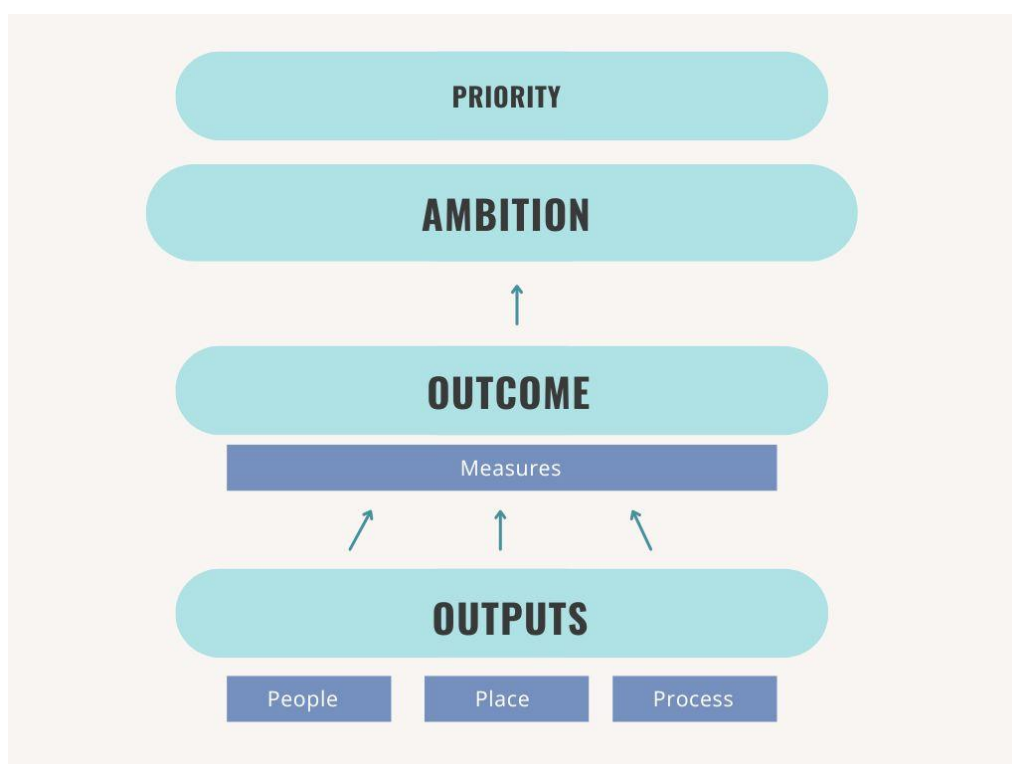
Both the first and second measure will be collected and analysed annually to assess trends.

The third measure is to gather bespoke and long-term evaluation from partners working in a particular area. Here, the approach will be to be flexible and proportionate to the scale of the organisation and the work taking place. This measure will give more flavour and depth to understanding impact than raw numbers.

Outputs

Three outputs have also been selected for each priority: one for **people**, one for **place**, one for **process**.

These will be reviewed annually and will change and grow as the strategy becomes embedded. These will be set through the central governance hub (see Appendix 2).



Universal Themes

Alongside the four priorities there are several universal themes that cut across all priority areas. These universal themes inform the outputs of each priority area.

Children and Young People

From early years engagement to professional training, Dorset will value cultural experience for children and young people. Opportunities for youth-focused and intergenerational activity will be encouraged. Culture will support Dorset Council's Best Start in Life strategy. Culture will be better embedded in education – through schools, informal learning, and community-based opportunities. Schools will be better connected to cultural providers, including promoting careers in the sector. Voices of young people will be heard and inform place-based cultural development.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Building on strong foundations, Dorset will champion equity, diversity and inclusion. Cultural organisations will work with people in deprived communities and those with protected characteristics. Cultural activity will be programmed to appeal to a wide range of people. Physical access to venues will be improved. The sector will communicate its offer to include diverse audiences and visitors. The sector will be trained to understand how best to work with marginalised people and communities. Those working in the sector will be paid appropriately including for time developing projects.

Quality and Ambition

Whilst subjective, aspiration for excellence is a characteristic of the cultural sector. The sector will strive for a high level of artistic ambition, with venues and festivals programming work of quality and skill. Whilst celebrating everyday cultural activity, the sector will also recognise the value of training in professional practice. Organisations will develop projects and initiatives on a scale that reaches people beyond those who traditionally engage. Work developed in Dorset will be shared nationally and internationally.

Collaboration

The sector will be encouraged to work together and with partners in other sectors to deliver projects. Joint training opportunities will be celebrated. Dorset's cultural activity will be jointly communicated and cross-promotion welcomed. Organisations will look to share resources where appropriate, to have the greatest impact for audiences and visitors. Formal and informal opportunities for networking will be developed and sustained. A central cultural hub will support the sector, enable and broker relationships with broader strategies in Dorset and create the conditions for ongoing partnership and collaboration.

Priority: Vibrant Places

Why

A rural area, Dorset is made up of small towns, villages and hamlets. Culture is an important part of the identity of these places. People engage in a cultural offer on their doorstep. It is a vital part of civic life.

Some towns and villages have strong cultural offers, others less so. For some the cultural offer is prominent and established; in others, it's beneath the surface, emerging and searching for a platform or an audience.

There's a need to sustain the existing offer in some places and an opportunity to grow the offer in others. In doing this, more people will have access to a cultural offer that is strong, varied and profound.

Spaces for cultural activity need developing and maintaining. Hundreds of dedicated cultural venues are vital to Dorset's cultural sector. These need care and attention to continue to provide a quality welcome for visitors and audiences. Similarly, Dorset's strong festival offer provides activity for many Dorset residents. This needs to be supported and maintained.

With a growth in population in Dorset, some places would benefit from new cultural venues to meet demand. New housing developments provide an opportunity for increased cultural provision.

Collaboration in place is strong in Dorset. Initiatives like Dorset's Towns of Culture have given focus to partnership working across cultural, civic, community and business sectors.

Where We Are Now

Dorset's cultural landscape is rooted in its distinct local identities — from rural trades and dialects to traditional games, crafts, and community heritage. Culture acts as a powerful connector to place, with artist residencies, festivals and public art.

There are 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses in Dorset. Over 100,000 people attend music festivals in Dorset and 536,000 people attend Dorset Council's core funded cultural organisations.

However, access remains uneven. Rural isolation, limited transport, and fragmented marketing restrict participation, particularly in North Dorset. Many venues and community spaces are underused or inaccessible, and while there is great pride in Dorset's natural and cultural assets, opportunities to celebrate and share them remain inconsistent.

Ambition

Dorset will be recognised as a place where culture thrives in every community — locally rooted, accessible, and sustainable. A county that makes more of what it has, using existing venues, landscapes, and stories to create authentic, high-quality cultural experiences. Local distinctiveness will be celebrated, recognising that no two places are alike.

Due to the relative size of organisations, Dorset’s cultural sector has a long history of collaboration. There is potential to build on this with increased working on joined-up marketing and coordinated programming – and for cross-sector collaboration, particularly with businesses, civic and community groups.

Empty buildings can be repurposed as creative hubs, flagship festivals expanded with local relevance, and every child having access to cultural experiences. Existing cultural infrastructure will be protected and enhanced, ensuring they’re fit for the future.

By embedding culture in everyday places — pubs, schools, youth clubs, and village halls — Dorset will balance cultural ambition with inclusivity, celebrating its dreamy places while ensuring they remain vibrant, connected, and meaningful for everyone.

Outcome: More people taking part in cultural activity

Measures

1. Engagement in culture, Participation Survey, Department of Culture, Media and Sport
2. Number of people attending cultural organisations, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluations of activity in specific places, working with Dorset’s Town Councils and place-based cultural organisations

Outputs (26-27)

People: More events in targeted places

Supporting and enabling cultural activity with a focus on towns with fewer events per person

Place: Place-based partnerships

Encouraging joint working between cultural, community, civic, business and educational organisations to increase ambition and reach more people

Process: Councils have plans for culture

In order to achieve this, Town Councils will be supported to recognise the economic and social benefits of referring to ambitions for culture in their wider plans or in a specific cultural plan or strategy

Case Study

b-side are a locally loved and internationally recognised arts organisation based on the Isle of Portland.

They deliver the annual b-side Festival: a four-day September festival of new art created in collaboration between artists and communities and installed across public spaces all over the island. From projections onto lighthouses, to sound works in quarries, to parades along high streets, their work sits at the meeting point of people and place — creating vibrant places and happy, healthy communities.

Their festival home is BnB-side, a bed-and-breakfast on Portland. It hosts artists, researchers, curators, producers, and visitors who all want to contribute to a positive future for the island. From BnB-side they also run a year-round, community-driven programme — from Community Cafés and LGBT+side meet-ups, to print workshops and open creative sessions. Everyone is welcome.

In 2025, b-side coordinated Portland and Weymouth Towns of Culture 2025, supporting a major step-change in cultural participation and collaboration across the area.

They worked with a steering group of twelve partners spanning the cultural, business, social, civic and heritage sectors. Together, they delivered two open calls across Portland and Weymouth, an emerging Producers programme, supported a youth-led Culture Passport, and a new online Culture Listings platform.

Across the year this activity supported the delivery of over 200 cultural events and activities, attended by more than 14,000 people, activating high streets, heritage sites, parks, gardens, beaches and community spaces — and reaching audiences who do not usually see themselves as “cultural makers or participants”.

“It’s made the park feel brighter, safer, and full of life.”

Participant

There has been a clear step-change locally.

Local authorities and businesses are increasingly recognising the role a vibrant cultural sector plays in place-making, wellbeing, pride and economic resilience. At the same time, there has been a growing appetite across the cultural sector to work collaboratively — particularly to create ambitious activity outside the summer season, and to build year-round cultural infrastructure that better supports artists, audiences and communities.

As a direct result of Towns of Culture 2025:

- A committed group of partners are now actively exploring opportunities to occupy or develop new cultural infrastructure in Weymouth.
- National partners, including Arts Council England, are engaged and paying attention to the work happening here.
- Hundreds of artists, community organisers and residents have been newly activated — ready to continue creating culture that tells the story of the towns in their own voices.

“This has given us the confidence to do something bigger — and to do it together.”

Participant

Priority: Healthy Communities

Why

Culture is fundamental to wellbeing and community cohesion, preventing ill health, aiding rehabilitation and contributing to a healthy society.

Dorset is a large rural area. It takes time to get from one side to the other. Consequently, the pace of life in Dorset is slower and this can tend towards people placing greater value in the things that make life worth living – of which culture is near the top of many people's lists.

Dorset also has an ageing population, with over a third of people being over 65 by 2033. With increasing age comes an increasing need for services to support living well. Cultural activity demonstrably reduces the risk of developing dementia as well as reducing anxiety, depression and apathy for those with the condition.

Creative Health activity also has an impact on mental health. Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are under significant pressure. There's an opportunity for culture to play a role in supporting mental health in young people. Meanwhile, loneliness can be exacerbated in rural areas due to limited public transport and size of communities.

Volunteering plays an important role in many people's lives, giving purpose, developing new skills and making friendships. The cultural sector has a long history of providing volunteering opportunities in venues and at events.

Community groups gather around culture. Community radio stations, choirs, art and book groups, drama clubs and history societies play a vital role in the lives of many people in Dorset.

Culture plays a role in creating a more cohesive society. Bringing people together, fostering connection and showing different lived experiences can combat some of the increasing polarisation seen in society since the prevalence of social media.

Where We Are Now

Dorset has a strong network of cultural opportunities that improve wellbeing. The universal offer – choirs, art groups, drama clubs, community radio – is particularly strong. Volunteering plays a key role, both for cultural organisations and the volunteers themselves making connections and contributing to their community.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme provides cultural activities in school holidays for children eligible for free-school meals. In Dorset, this programme works with a large range of cultural organisations and individual practitioners to deliver activity. The Artz+ Spotz+ programme provides cultural activities for children aged 5-18 with a disability. These two programmes work closely together.

The targeted offer for those with diagnosed health conditions is strong in some places but not universally available. It is also short-term relying on project funding. Partnership with the health sector is now well-established with shared ambition through a joint Creative Health Strategy.

As with much of the country, there is a sense of an increasingly polarised society which can sometimes manifest as hostility to difference. Dorset's cultural sector has a rich history in providing welcoming spaces, celebrating diversity and bringing people together for shared experiences.

Ambition

Culture in Dorset will be embedded within everyday life, building healthier, more inclusive communities. There will be a broader definition of culture that embraces community-led activity and a stronger focus on participation.

The sector will share principles around accessibility, inclusivity, and equality delivering "warm welcome" practices and relaxed performances.

The sector will strengthen partnerships with health, particularly with social prescribers and Primary Care Networks. Creative Health will be a business-as-usual choice, universally available across Dorset. Consequently, care will be closer to home, echoing national ambitions.

Cultural organisations will be supported to deliver targeted activity to connect people and reduce isolation and anxiety, working towards reducing the gap in happy life expectancy. Those working in Creative Health will be able to receive specialist training, with those in health working to support the work of cultural organisations.

Children will have access to creative opportunities in and outside schools. Everyone will be able to take part in cultural activity, benefitting wellbeing and improving social outcomes.

The culture sector will champion inclusive practice, both in its creation and participation. More of the cultural activity in Dorset will be inclusive for audiences and visitors.

Outcome: Improvement in lives of people impacted by poor mental health and loneliness

Measures

1. Mental Health Needs Assessment, Public Health, Dorset Council; and NHS Dorset/NHS Wessex

2. Changes in health due to activity, annual survey of participants and volunteers in cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of Creative Health projects

Outputs (26-27)

People: Volunteer programme for cultural organisations

Joint recruitment and training for volunteers for cultural organisations including libraries, particularly focusing on marginalised people and supporting those with poor mental health

Place: Creative Health projects with targeted or marginalised communities

Working with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to use culture to improve health outcomes – particularly focusing on the Core20Plus5 approach to reducing health inequalities – working with primary care, social prescribers and community partners

Process: Resource for strategic development of Creative Health

Positioning Dorset to secure long-term investment in development of Creative Health sector, including workforce development, research and public communications

Case Study

Babigloo is a non-verbal approach to music making for babies and their parents/carers. They create a multi-sensory environment which encourages listening, communication and playfulness between babies and their parents/carers using live and recorded music, sound, movement, gesture, visual and tactile materials, babies' vocalisations and non-verbal communication.

Babigloo music making sessions last around 45 minutes, balancing structured activities which build on babies' sensory perceptions, with spontaneous vocal and non-verbal interaction with the babies. Each session is led by two music leaders working together and some sessions also have a visiting musician to enhance families' experience of live music and instruments. Each Babigloo programme involves a series of weekly sessions for up to ten babies and their parents/carers. They develop families' enjoyment of music making and enhance parent-child communication, thereby contributing to families' wellbeing.

"The work you do is absolutely wonderful and having had the opportunity to watch your sessions I would recommend your sessions to all parents/carers and their babies".

Family Hub Manager

Having established a successful working model in East Dorset from 2018 and West Dorset and Purbeck from 2023, Babigloo expanded across the county from 2024 in collaboration with the newly created Family Hub Network.

From this, Babigloo delivered sessions at Shaftesbury Arts Centre (with funding from Youth Music) and at Shaftesbury Children's Centre/Family Hub and The Vale Parlour Family Hub Sturminster Newton (with funding from the Local Alliance Group).

In 2024-25, Babigloo expanded their reach by 300% from 94 to 380 families. In total, their targeted work engaged 375 children and 446 adults.

"We have absolutely loved Babigloo, it has truly been a treasured bonding time for the two of us, a space for calm, joy and such incredible learning – you can almost see their brains making new connections!"

Participating Parent

Priority: Economic Development

Why

Economic growth is a key government objective both locally and nationally. By increasing and distributing wealth, people will have greater opportunities and are able to lead more fulfilling lives. Low social mobility is particularly acute in South Dorset, leading to physical, mental and social challenges that can be lifelong.

Culture plays a role in generating economic growth. The sector creates paid opportunities, both for creatives and for those working to enable cultural activity. It is a great sector in which to start and grow a business. Since 2010, the Creative Industries nationally have grown by more than 50% (against a UK average of 21.5%). In the Great South West region, Creative Industries generate 2.7bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) annually.

Culture boosts tourism. Nationally, heritage-led tourism alone generates £16bn from domestic and £12.5bn from international tourists per year. In Dorset, tourism overall generates £945m for the local economy. Yet the offer is seasonal. Culture attracts people to Dorset in the darker months of the year, creating more year-round employment opportunities.

Culture-led economic regeneration has been effective across the UK. As well as providing jobs and opportunities for people to experience culture, capital projects and festivals can change perceptions of place. At their best, they raise aspiration and ambition, supporting development of new skills and creating new employment.

Artificial Intelligence is growing in value and use. Whilst recognising the tension with human creativity, there is an opportunity for the cultural sector to responsibly use new technology to increase access and reach of their work.

Where We Are Now

Dorset is home to 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses. Dorset's cultural sector provides employment for 4,200 people (19% higher per worker than UK average), from entry-level to leadership.

There are opportunities for economic regeneration in Dorset's market towns and Weymouth, Portland and Chickerell linked to Dorset Council's economic growth strategy.

Dorset has four Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Dorchester, Ferndown & Uddens, Weymouth and Wimborne. Dorset Chamber works pan-Dorset alongside local chambers in some Dorset towns.

Visit Dorset has Local Visitor Economy Partnership accreditation, leading the strategic development of tourism. Whilst there is good evidence of the impact of tourism overall

to Dorset and anecdotal evidence of the value of the cultural sector to this, there remains an opportunity to add evidence of the direct and indirect benefit of cultural tourism to the economy of Dorset, particularly outside the peak season.

Ambition

Culture drives economic development, innovation and opportunity across Dorset. The sector will be recognised by policy makers as a key contributor to economic growth with strong integration between sectors, linking Dorset's cultural assets, landscapes, and visitor economy to attract investment and promote sustainable local growth. Collaboration between business, culture and community will be enhanced.

The sector will work collaboratively to unlock new investment in activity and capital. National funders will contribute equitably to Dorset's cultural sector. Creative industries will be supported to grow and relocate to Dorset.

The film sector will be supported to grow both attracting more national and global companies to film in Dorset and enabling homegrown companies to start-up and expand. Festivals and small-scale creative enterprises will flourish, boosting economic growth across Dorset.

Working with tourism, culture will be used to attract more visitors to Dorset, particularly in the shoulder-months, creating more year-round employment opportunities.

Working with educational organisations such as Arts University Bournemouth and employment schemes through the Department for Work and Pensions, there will be an increase in employment opportunities with centralised schemes for apprenticeships, internships, and work experience to retain young talent.

Bespoke business development and training opportunities will be available for the smaller organisations and sole traders alongside networking. Barriers to work, such as low pay, insecure conditions and limited progression, will be reduced.

New technologies will be adopted by the sector in an ethical way, valuing artistic creativity whilst enabling cultural organisations to grow and culture to reach more people.

Outcome: Economic impact of cultural sector increased

Measures

1. Number and size of creative businesses, Companies House annual return
2. Economic Impact Calculator, Event Impacts, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of organisations undergoing period of growth or development

Outputs (26-27)

People: Development programme for individuals and organisations

Using examples from across the cultural sector including inspiration from organisations within Dorset, support the diversification of income and commercialisation of cultural organisations and individuals, including investment opportunities for research and development of new products.

Place: Identify capital infrastructure needs for each town in Dorset

In some places, maintaining existing infrastructure, in others creating new places for cultural activity. This will usually be buildings but could be wider public realm. These will be aligned to wider economic development plans.

Process: Promotion of cultural tourism

With the tourism sector, position Dorset as a cultural destination attracting more visitors particularly in the off-season.

Case Study

The Tank Museum, based in Bovington, Dorset, is one of the world's leading military history museums, housing a remarkable collection of armoured vehicles that spans more than a century. As a registered charity, their mission is to preserve and share the history of tanks and the people who built and operated them, through exhibitions, public events, and education.

Like many cultural institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 presented a significant challenge. Like all cultural institutions, physical closure meant immediate loss of ticket revenue and a risk to long-term sustainability. In response, they reacted rapidly to expand their digital presence, utilising social media as a new frontline for engagement, fundraising, and community building. The project was time-limited in its initial urgency, with the 2020 lockdown acting as a key driver for creativity and innovation.

Building on their early YouTube channel and social platforms, they focused on producing consistent, high-quality content—from “Tank Chats” to live streams and specialist features—designed to appeal to global audiences. This digital strategy was supported by diversified revenue streams including YouTube advertising, Patreon memberships, corporate sponsorships, and a revamped e-commerce arm.

The results were transformative. Digital engagement became a major contributor to income, with over £2 million generated from non-visitors in 2023, significantly enhancing financial resilience. Online visibility (now 1.3m YouTube subscribers) also bolstered physical visits; annual visitors increased by around 70,000, peaking at over 220,000 in 2023, a 17% rise linked to global awareness created by digital channels.

Staff growth mirrored this success, with the team expanding by 15–20 roles, particularly in digital production, marketing, and e-commerce but also enabling them to grow their museum function capabilities as well—creating new employment opportunities within Dorset’s cultural economy. Financial sustainability improved markedly through diversified income and strengthened annual turnover.

“Our online success has opened new avenues for engagement and income, securing our future and allowing us to bring the story of tanks to audiences worldwide while supporting sustainable cultural growth here in Dorset.”

Chris Price, CEO, The Tank Museum

Priority: Environmental Action

Why

Dorset's unique landscape is of great cultural significance. Its coastline, heathlands, chalk downs and rich biodiversity shape the county's identity and how people live, work and connect with places. But this natural abundance is under pressure. Dorset is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, rising sea levels, more frequent flooding and increasingly extreme weather, all of which threaten communities, habitats, infrastructure and the county's long-term resilience.

The climate and ecological crisis is global, but its effects are felt locally. Agriculture, transport, homes and commercial buildings are Dorset's main sources of carbon emissions, demanding coordinated action across communities, organisations and the business sector. Meanwhile, despite having the highest proportion of protected National Landscape in England, Dorset has still seen the declines in biodiversity reflected across the UK.

Culture has a unique role in this challenge. Artists, museums, festivals and creative organisations can translate data into stories, helping people understand what environmental change means for their lives and inspiring practical action. Cultural activity can bring people together to celebrate Dorset's landscapes, and influence behaviour in ways that reduce carbon emissions and support nature recovery.

Dorset Council's commitment to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050 creates a clear direction of travel. The cultural sector is already contributing, from greener festivals and energy-efficient upgrades to creative projects that champion biodiversity. However, many organisations still need support to adapt buildings, shift practices and respond confidently to the environmental challenges ahead.

There is an opportunity for culture to help shape a greener future for Dorset, modelling sustainable choices, using creativity to deepen local connection to nature, and working with environmental partners to drive meaningful, community-led change. The cultural sector is particularly well-placed to lead or support non-political campaigns that communicate stories of change to the public that enable and empower.

Where We Are Now

Low Carbon Dorset has invested £5 million in low-carbon measures across the county, supporting a wide range of organisations to reduce their environmental footprint, including museums, archives and Town Council venues.

Many cultural organisations have signed up to the national Culture Declares Emergency which began in 2019. Cultural organisations are also making changes; festivals are encouraging greener travel, productions are re-using and recycling materials, and museums are enhancing biodiversity by planting trees in their grounds.

Dorset National Landscape is recognised as a leader in working with the cultural sector to engage more people in the natural world.

Ambition

Dorset will be recognised as a national leader in community-driven climate and ecological action, with culture at the heart of how people understand, respond to and prepare for environmental change.

Environmental thinking will be embedded across all cultural programmes, from energy use to the stories told on stage, in exhibitions and through community projects. Artists and organisations will create work that is inspired by the local landscape, celebrates nature recovery and helps audiences shift behaviour in tangible ways.

Cultural organisations will connect with environmental partners, enabling collaborative projects, artist residencies and shared approaches to communication and public engagement.

Cultural venues will reduce carbon emissions within their own buildings and influence visitor behaviour, particularly around travel. Organisations will adopt environmentally responsible supply chains, ethical finance, and low-carbon digital solutions. The sector will work together to prepare for flooding, storms and heatwaves, strengthening Dorset's climate resilience.

Creative activity will support nature recovery by building people's connection to the landscapes around them, sharing biodiversity through storytelling, folklore, local species, and creative activity.

Communities will be supported to take small, visible actions that add up to meaningful change, from recycling and reuse networks for the arts to cultural initiatives aligned with Dorset's Nature Recovery Strategy.

Outcome: Biodiversity within Dorset increased

Measures

1. Increase in biodiversity, Nature Recovery Strategy, Dorset Council
2. Attendance and number of events promoting sustainability, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of cultural environmental projects

Outputs (26-27)

People: Deliver training for cultural sector

Supporting cultural organisations to reduce carbon emissions, strengthen climate resilience across their venues and explore practical ways to increase biodiversity. The programme will also address how emerging technologies, including AI, contribute to the climate crisis and how the sector can use them responsibly.

Place: Coordinate cross-sector projects that change behaviour

Site specific partnerships between culture and environment that encourage sustainable behaviours and build local engagement with nature recovery.

Process: Align cultural initiatives with environmental sector objectives

Ensure cultural activity is aligned with countywide environmental priorities by improving data sharing and strengthening coordination between cultural and environmental partners

Case Study

Activate Performing Arts is a Dorset charity that has been producing transformational programmes for 35 years, celebrating Dorset and promoting our landscape and sense of place.

Their specialism in working in protected landscapes has developed through a partnership with Dorset National Landscape. They work with land stewards across England with the National Landscapes Association and in Europe with partners in France, Netherlands and Slovakia as part of their LAND project (Land Stewards and Artists).

At the heart of what Activate do is a belief that performing arts should be accessible for all – no matter what your experience or background. This passion is shared by Dorset National Landscape who recognise that not everyone is accessing our landscapes. They both believe that people are more likely to take environmental action if they care, and if they have urgency to take action.

Culminating in 2025, Activate led the national project, Nature Calling, with the National Landscapes Association. Its aim was to inspire and connect new and existing communities with National Landscapes across England, increasing people's access to nature, improve their wellbeing and inspire a sense of belonging in these special places. Six major arts projects across England were commissioned.

In Dorset, Activate worked with Dorset National Landscape who commissioned a new piece – *This Patch of Land*. They also produced the major artistic commission *Consequences* working with a range of community groups to create a new Giant in the landscape.

The artwork was unveiled in two locations across Dorset: Cerne Abbas and Corfe Castle. Over 200 people helped create the new Giant, it reached live audiences of over 27,000 and an online audience of 64,000 and has been featured in The Guardian and BBC News.

Case For Investment

To realise this strategy requires investment. The sector needs to both maintain existing sources of income and to secure new income.

Dorset Council is a funder both of core revenue for cultural organisations and of cultural projects. It also provides funding for services that support Dorset's cultural sector. By aligning with Dorset Council's wider strategic priorities, this strategy positions the sector to continue to receive valuable investment from the local authority.

Town and Parish Councils are increasingly supporting cultural activity in Dorset. The opportunity to make a difference to the lives of residents in Dorset's towns and villages is greatly enhanced by targeted cultural activity. By identifying capital needs in each town, this strategy helps to secure investment to enable new spaces for culture and improvements in existing venues, whether through national funding, Public Works Loans, developers' contributions or philanthropy.

This strategy also enables Dorset's cultural sector to work collaboratively to secure increased national funding for strategic initiatives. Be this in health, growth, place or environment, there is an opportunity to work collectively to make a long-term difference to the lives of people in Dorset.

Culture in Dorset creates great opportunities for businesses and philanthropists to provide resource. With a large number of high-net-worth-individuals and proudly local business community, the sector is in a strong position to deliver impactful and high-profile projects. Similarly, revenue from a future tourism levy would be well-targeted at a cultural sector that attracts visitors to Dorset in the shoulder months, growing Dorset's year-round economy.

By aligning with wider areas of society – particularly health and environment – the cultural sector is well-placed to work in collaboration on strategic projects that have impact for people and each sector. There's an opportunity to be ambitious in these areas, using culture to make a step-change in people's behaviours.

Finally, supporting the sector to grow will lead to increased earned income for cultural organisations, employing more people and contributing to the overall economic health of Dorset. Through this, it will enable positive social development, making Dorset a fantastic place in which to live, work, grow up and grow old.

Appendix 2: Delivery Plan

Key

- **ADC** – Arts Development Company
- **DC** – Dorset Council
- **DAPTC** – Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
- **WMTC** – Wimborne Minster Town Council
- **VCD** – Volunteer Centre Dorset
- **DHC** – Dorset Healthcare
- **NHSD** – NHS Dorset
- **VD** – Visit Dorset
- **LNP** – Local Nature Partnership
- **DLS** – Dorset Library Service
- **AUB** – Arts University Bournemouth
- **DFO** – Dorset Film Office
- **b-s** – b-side
- **DVA** – Dorset Visual Arts
- **DMS** – Dorset Music Service

Vibrant Places

Outcome: **More people taking part in cultural activity**

Outputs & Actions:

- 1. More events in targeted places**
 - Baseline data of events in towns from Dorset Town Councils - *ADC/TCs (Q1)*
 - Review of Dorset Council revenue funding - *DC (Q1)*
 - Revenue funding round for Dorset Council - *DC (Q2)*
- 2. Place-based partnerships**
 - Workshops for Town Councils on setting up Place-Based Partnerships for Towns of Culture - *ADC/DC (Q1)*
 - Wimborne Town of Culture delivery - *WMTC (Q3)*
- 3. Councils have plans for culture**
 - Engagement with each Town Council - *ADC/DAPTC (Q2)*
 - First five cultural plans delivered - *TCs (Q3)*
 - A further five cultural plans delivered - *TCs, Quarter: Q4*

Healthy Communities

Outcome: **Lives of people with poor mental health improved**

Outputs & Actions:

- 1. Volunteer programme**
 - Set up programme with Volunteer Centre Dorset - *ADC/VCD (Q1)*
 - Explore how programme can tie into wider health priorities - *ADC (Q2)*

- Promote and encourage engagement with cultural organisations - *ADC/VCD (Q3)*
- 2. Creative Health projects with targeted or marginalised communities**
 - Engage with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, Public Health, Age Friendly Dorset, Best Start in Life - *ADC/DC/NHSD (Q1)*
 - Bring together health, culture and community in two Dorset towns - *ADC (Q2)*
 - Delivery of two new projects - *Sector (Q3)*
- 3. Resource for strategic development of Creative Health**
 - Publish Creative Health strategy - *ADC/DHC (Q1)*
 - Present on programme for Creative Health to leadership team of Integrated Care Board (ICB) Cluster (Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire) - *ADC (Q1)*
 - Create proposal for ICB Cluster - *ADC (Q2)*

Economic Development

Outcome: **Economic impact of cultural sector increased**

Outputs & Actions:

- 1. Development programme for individuals and organisations**
 - Peer-to-peer learning group established - *ADC/AUB (Q1)*
 - Review of project funding - *DC (Q1)*
 - Project funding round - *DC (Q2)*
- 2. Identify capital infrastructure needs for each town**
 - Engagement with each Town Council - *ADC/DAPTC (Q2)*
 - First 5 plans - *TCs (Q3)*
 - A further 5 plans - *TCs (Q4)*
- 3. Promotion of cultural tourism**
 - Destination Management Plan published with reference to culture - *ADC/VD (Q1)*
 - Pilot Digital Platform launched for the Culture Quest project engaging children in cultural activity - *ADC (Q2)*
 - Plan joint targeted campaign - *ADC/VD (Q3)*

Environmental Action

Outcome: **Biodiversity in Dorset increased**

Outputs & Actions:

- 1. Training programme and guidance toolkit**
 - Workshop scoping - *ADC/LNP (Q2)*
 - Workshop delivery - *ADC/LNP (Q3)*
 - Guidance toolkit published - *ADC (Q4)*
- 2. Cross-sector projects**
 - Scoping projects across Dorset - *ADC (Q1)*
 - Workshop to develop a joint partnership bid - *ADC (Q3)*
 - Delivery of 1 new project - *Sector (Q4)*

3. **Align cultural initiatives with environmental objectives**

- Initial meeting between culture and environment sectors - *ADC/LNP/DC* (Q1)
- Partnership group set-up - *ADC* (Q2)
- Wider public meeting/conference - *ADC/DC* (Q3)

Internal

Outcome: **Strong governance, oversight and coordination**

- **Governance - Hub**
 - Evaluation and review of existing hub – *ADC/DC* (Q1)
 - Agreement on new membership – *ADC/DC* (Q1)
 - First meeting of new membership – *ADC* (Q2)
 - Review first year outputs – *Hub* (Q3)
 - Agree second year outputs – *Hub* (Q4)
- **Sector Groups (Libraries and Literature / Film and Creative Industries / Music / Visual Art)**
 - Agree Terms of Reference – *ADC/DLS, ADC/DFO/AUB, ADC/DMS, ADC/b-s/DVA* (Q1)
 - Invite members – *DLS/ADC, ADC/DFO/AUB, ADC/DMS, ADC/b-s/DVA* (Q1)
 - First meeting – *DLS/ADC, ADC/DFO/AUB, ADC/DMS, ADC/b-s/DVA* (Q2)
- **Communications - End of year report**
 - Agree format – *ADC/DC* (Q1)
 - Gather data – *ADC/DC* (Q2)
 - Design – *ADC/DC* (Q3)
 - Publish – *ADC/DC* (Q4)

Ongoing sector support

Individual support

There remains a need for bespoke one-to-one support for those working in the sector, particularly those near the start of their career or business. These are particularly linked to growing business, securing investment and making connections.

Resources

Shared resources will be created and made available for the sector. Examples of best practice from other sectors or elsewhere in the UK will also be shared.

Promoting opportunities

There's potential for a centralised platform to promote opportunities, such as jobs and training – sharing information with the sector. There's also an opportunity to better promote Dorset's cultural offer, both to residents and to visitors.

Networks

Due to distance between places, there's a need for networks bringing the sector in Dorset together, as well as making connections beyond culture and more localised networks in Dorset's towns.

Funding

This strategy requires resource to fully succeed. To achieve this, existing resource needs to be aligned to the strategy and used as leverage to attract new sources of income. Dorset Council has open funding opportunities – both for projects and regular funding – which can be used to drive the change identified in the strategy. Town and Parish Councils in Dorset will be encouraged to align their cultural funding with this strategy. Cross-sector and national cultural funders will be kept informed of the strategy's delivery and encouraged to support initiatives identified within the strategy.

Impact

Data and monitoring

Information will be requested from organisations and individuals both in receipt of public funding and those without in order to better understand the impact of this strategy. To reduce the reporting burden, data will only be requested that is fundamental to gaining this insight.

Evaluation

The strategy will be regularly reviewed through a central hub (see Appendix 2), reflecting on successes, failures and opportunities for improvement.

Research

Opportunities for academic research will be explored particularly where the culture sector is one part of a bigger target – as with improving mental health or increasing biodiversity.

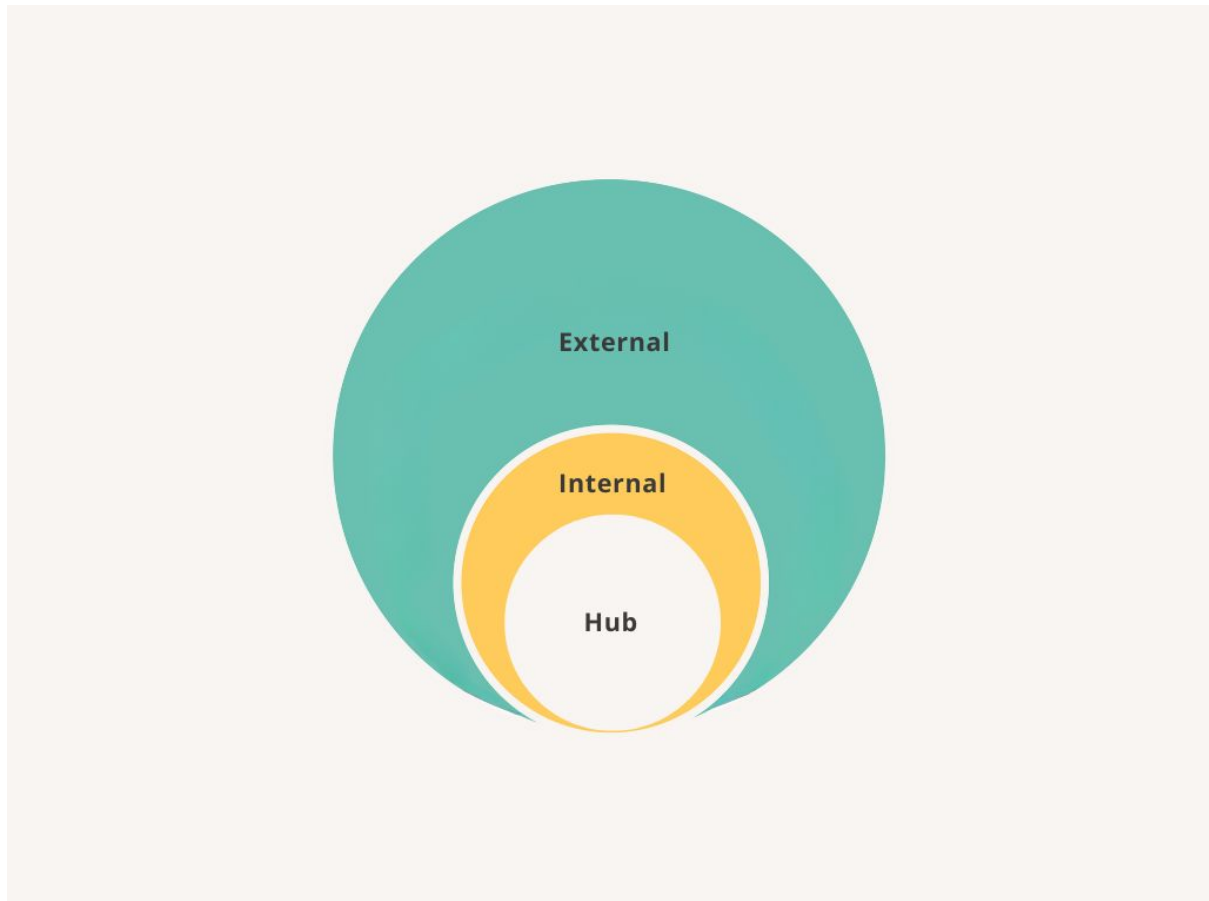
Advocacy

The sector will jointly advocate to local and national bodies, using a mix of data and case studies to make the case for culture's role in society.

Appendix 3: A Framework for Governance

To realise the ambition of Dorset's Cultural Strategy requires the involvement of a vast number of people, working collectively to achieve shared goals.

Crucially, it requires a central hub organisation bringing together both the cultural sector and cross-sector partners. This hub organisation brings together the complex web of the cultural sector and has responsibility for overall direction of the strategy.



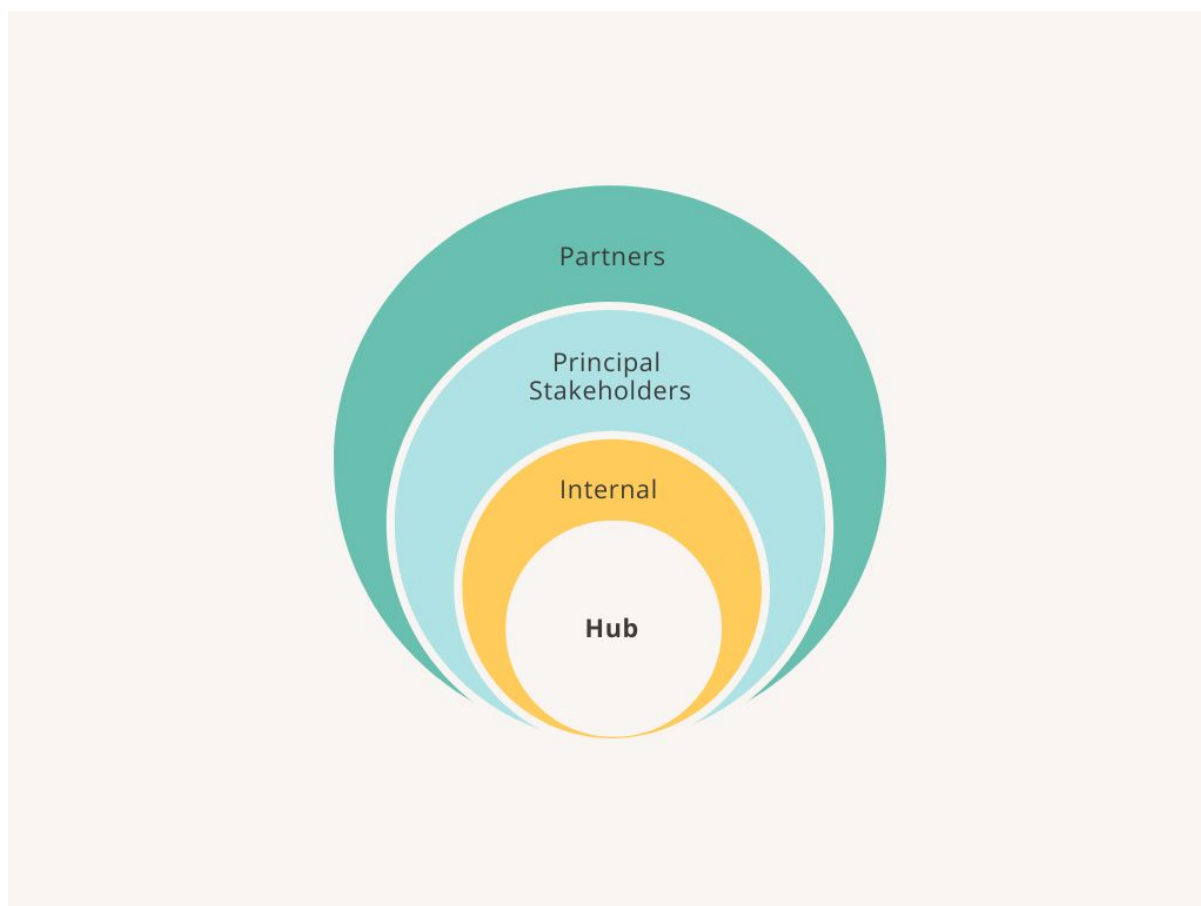
To ensure the success of Dorset's Cultural Strategy, there is a need for partners such as Dorset Council, Town and Parish Councils, national funders, the cultural sector and a wide range of external partners from across the public and private sectors to work collaboratively to bring everyone together to make collective and strategic decisions for the benefit of Dorset's cultural sector and the wider public.

Effective governance of this strategy will enable the creators of culture – professionals, amateurs, small groups, institutions – the space, resource and connections to flourish.

It also requires culture sector partnerships, some of which already exist and others which can be created – these are internal sector networks.

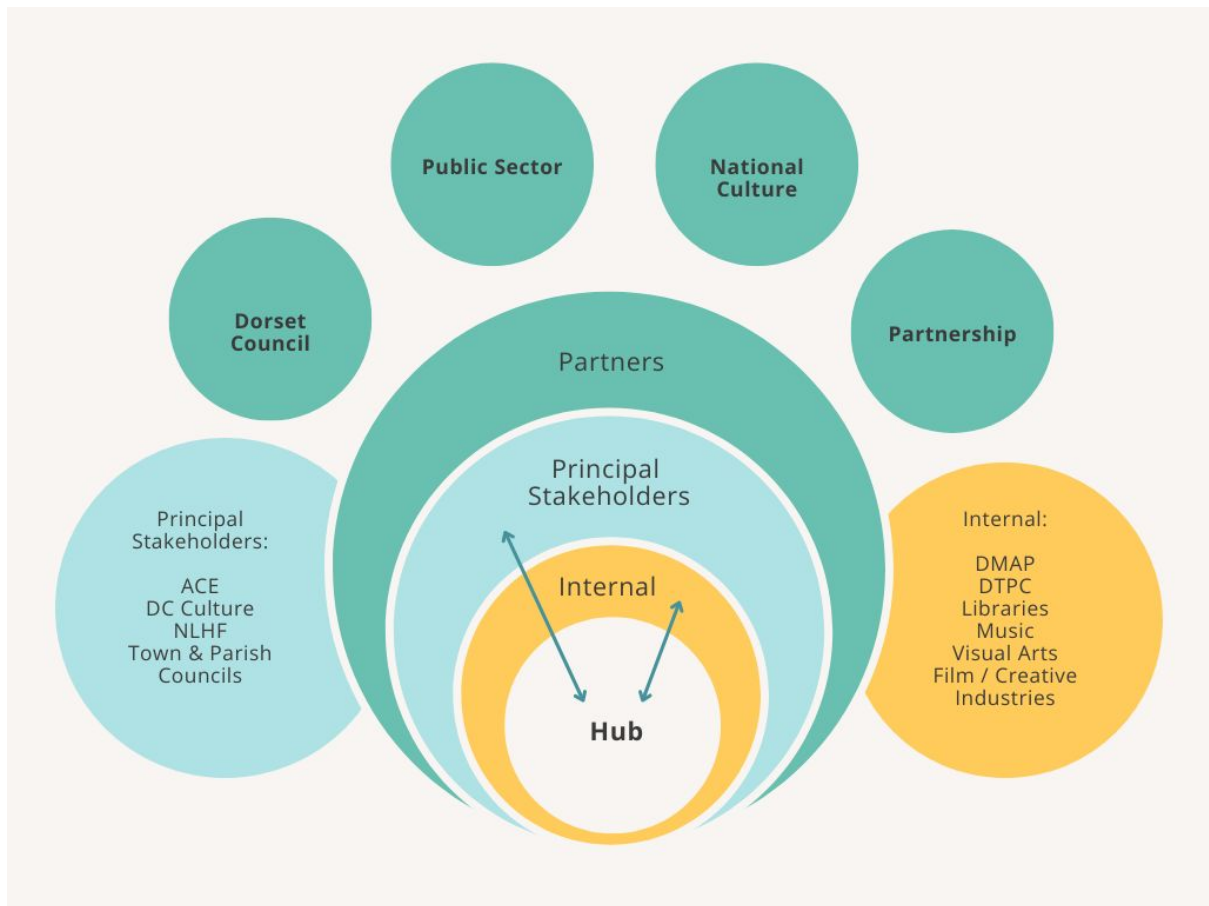
It requires the involvement of key stakeholders and partners external to Dorset's cultural sector.

As some external bodies are more fundamental to the success of the strategy, these have been divided into two: principal stakeholders and partners.



The **internal networks** are more sector-facing, supporting particular cultural forms of the sector. Some already exist – such as Dorset Museums Association Panel (DMAP), Dorset Theatre Promoters Consortium (DTPC) and Dorset Library Service. Others are dormant at present but are key parts of the cultural sector – these would be initiated once the strategy is adopted. These networks will relate to the hub, feeding information in and receiving information out.

The **principal stakeholders** are the key public funders of culture in Dorset and will be more involved in the delivery of the strategy, again relating to the central organising hub.

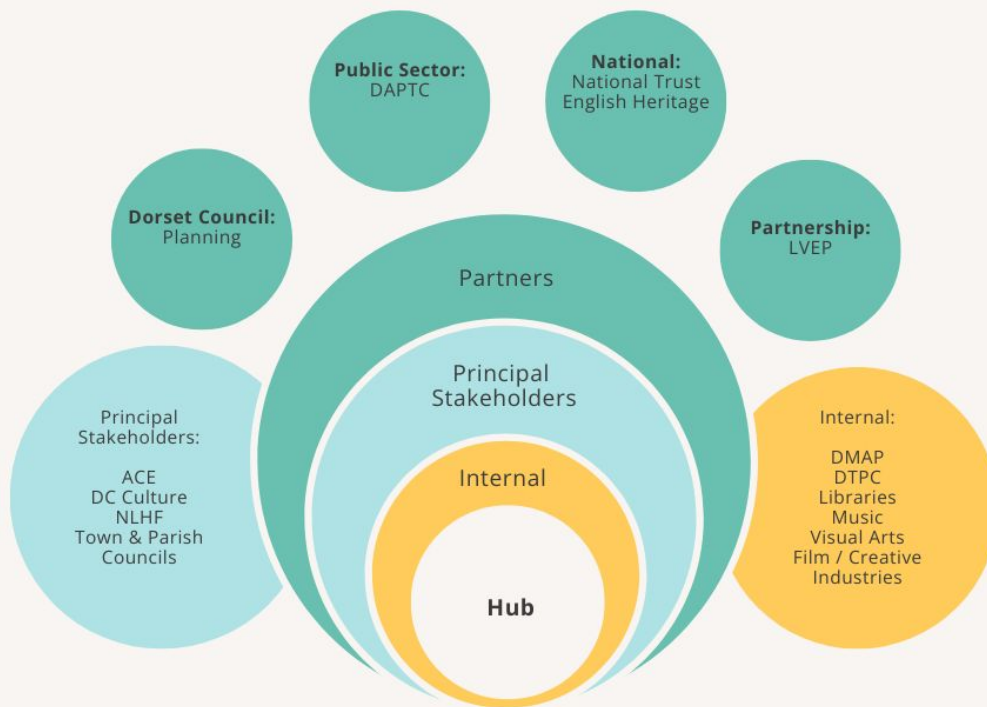


External partners will be brought together to develop specific project or programmes of work. They will also be kept informed of the strategy's progress, ensuring alignment between the cultural and adjacent sectors.

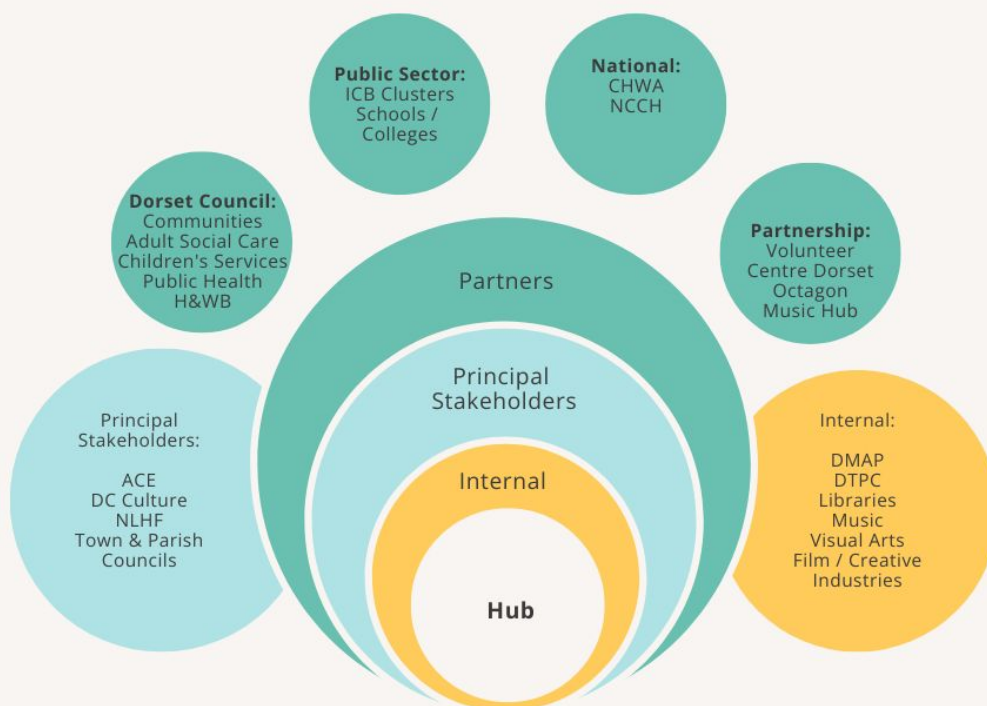
These external partners have been divided into four categories – national cultural sector, non-cultural departments of Dorset Council, wider public sector and partnerships.

The partners vary for each of the four priority areas:

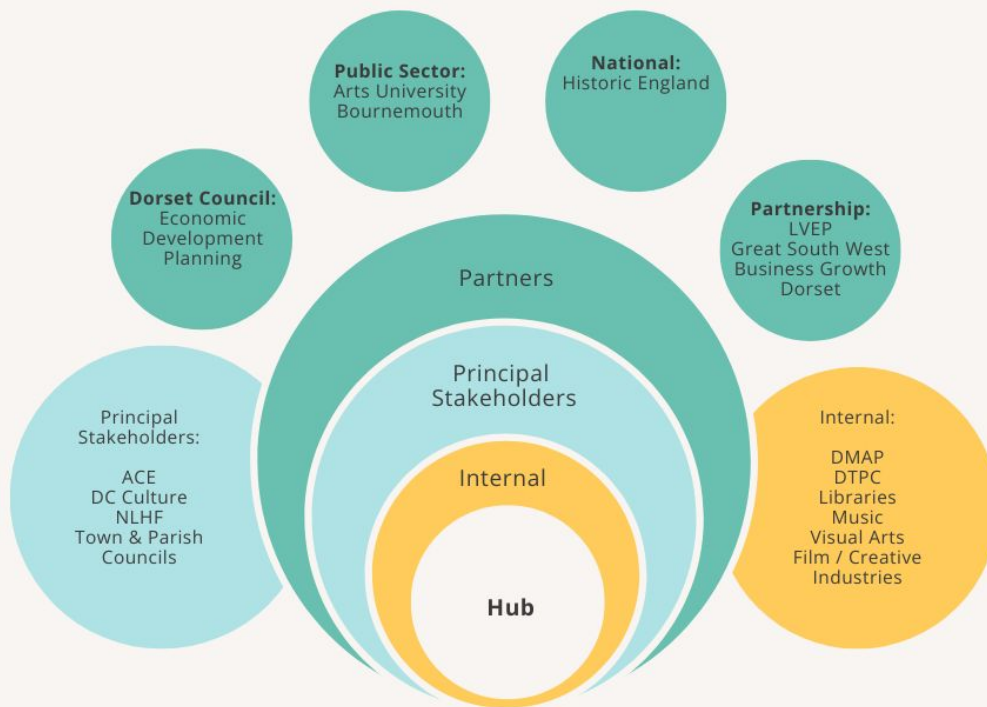
Vibrant Places



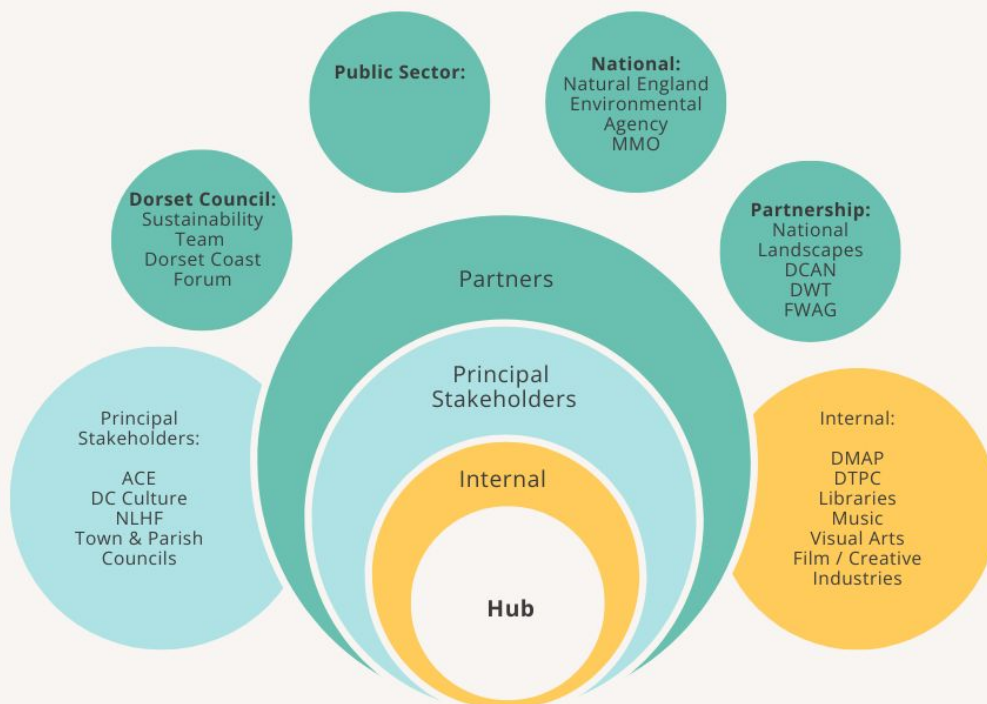
Healthy Communities



Economic Development



Environmental Action



Roles connected to the strategy

Central organising hub – drives the strategy; responsible for setting outputs and measuring outcomes; primary responsibility for communicating the purpose of the strategy internally and externally

Internal networks – connecting the strategy to the wider sector; feeding the voice of the sector into the direction of the strategy; supports and advocates for their artform or part of the cultural sector

Principal stakeholders – connecting strategy to wider areas of public sector or national strategies; providing challenge and counsel; aligning resource behind strategy where this overlaps with organisation's own priorities

External partners – informed of strategic direction; exploring options for joint working on projects or programmes; occasionally coming together as working groups to plan action against a shared priority

Appendix 4: Viability of Dorset's Cultural Sector in 2026

During consultation on this strategy, concerns were repeatedly raised on the precariousness of the cultural sector, particularly for organisations in receipt of public funding and those working in the freelance sector. Alongside challenges, opportunities were also presented, some of which are specific to Dorset.

The following is a summary of the findings from online and in-person consultation bringing together the thoughts of over 150 people working in Dorset's cultural sector.

Dorset's cultural sector sits at a crossroads between resilience and precarity.

The sector is particularly concerned by **funding and financial sustainability**. This is not a surprise given the changes in the national funding landscape. Between 2009/10 and 2022/23, Arts Council England's core funding decreased by 18%. Over the same period, local government funding across England decreased by 48%. Dorset Council, however, has maintained the level of its funding for culture and, possibly uniquely for local government, has an open process for organisations to apply both for regular and project funding.

Access to new funding streams, sponsorship, and partnerships is now key to survival — not just growth. However, the overwhelming dependence on short-term or project-based grants creates a fragile foundation. Without sustained investment or diversified income, the sector risks being locked into cycles of instability that limit its capacity for innovation, fair pay, and strategic development.

"We need to fundraise to cover deficits and to revise two business models so we don't make deficits again."

Despite financial strain, **collaboration and partnership working** remain powerful sources of optimism. Artists, organisations, and venues increasingly view cooperation — both locally and across regions — as essential to maintaining creative momentum. Shared resources, joint funding bids, and cross-sector partnerships are practical responses to isolation and competition. This spirit of collaboration shows a sector that, whilst financially constrained, is socially and creatively rich, with the potential to strengthen Dorset's identity as a place of cultural ambition.

"Collaboration is Dorset's superpower"

The sector's **viability also depends on visibility and infrastructure**. In some parts of Dorset, there's a lack of accessible venues, exhibition spaces, and marketing capacity, particularly in rural areas. Yet this challenge also presents opportunity: reimagining empty buildings as creative hubs, expanding community-based programming, and improving digital visibility can reinvigorate cultural participation.

Audience development and inclusive practice — reaching underserved and rural communities — are ethical imperatives as much as strategic.

“Without a venue there is no opportunity.”

Finally, Dorset’s cultural sector is determined to **adapt and evolve**, even within constraints. From developing new work to engaging in digital and international projects, the sector demonstrates entrepreneurial energy and deep commitment to local identity. However, the sector’s long-term viability will hinge on systemic support — fair funding, cultural recognition, and joined-up strategic working. Without these, the sector’s creative vitality risks being overshadowed by burnout and economic fragility. With them, Dorset could consolidate its growing reputation as a rural region defined by creative resilience, collaboration, and place-based cultural strength.

“Levelling it up so it’s sustainable for me as well as ambitious.”

Appendix 5: Engagement and consultation

Ongoing consultation groups

- Dorset Council Cultural Officers representing museums, archives, libraries, leisure, arts, environment and tourism
- Changemakers – a group of 15 Dorset cultural leaders, Arts Council England and Dorset Council
- Arts Development Company Board specifically focusing on governance

One-to-ones

- Cllr Ryan Hope, Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement
- Dorset Libraries
- Dorset Council Communities
- Dorset Council Public Health
- Dorset National Landscape
- Volunteer Centre Dorset
- Business Growth Dorset
- Visit Dorset
- Arts Council England
- Creative UK
- Dorset Archaeology
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- NHS Dorset
- Arts University Bournemouth
- Dorset Museums Association Panel
- Dorset Tourism Partnership

Workshops

- 19th September, Lyric Theatre, Bridport (public)
- 25th September, Exchange, Sturminster Newton (public)
- 29th September, Museum of East Dorset, Wimborne (public)
- 11th November, online, Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils
- 20th November, Coastland College, Weymouth (16-18-year-olds)
- 22nd November, Buckland Newton Youth Group (10-16-year-olds)

Online

An online consultation for audiences/visitors, volunteers and cultural workforce had 317 responses. There were 100 responses from workforce, 138 from volunteers and 236 from audiences/visitors (those in multiple categories were able to answer each section).

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Appendix 6: Links to other strategies

Dorset

Dorset Council Plan: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-council-plan-2024-to-2029>

Dorset Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy:
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2020-to-2023>

Dorset Library Strategy: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-library-strategy-progress-2024-2025>

Dorset Council Economic Growth Strategy:
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-s-economic-growth-strategy-2025-to-2040>

NHS Dorset Joint Forward Plan: <https://nhsdorset.nhs.uk/voice/jointforwardplan/>

Dorset Council Local Plan (draft): <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-local-plan-options-consultation-2025>

Dorset Council Nature Recovery Strategy (draft):
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-s-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

Dorset National Landscapes Management Plan (draft); <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/resources/draft-management-plan-2026-31/>

Dorset Council Community (draft)

Creative Health strategy (draft)

Destination Management Plan (draft)

Regional/National

NHS 10 Year Health Plan for England: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-term-plan/>

Arts Council England, Let's Create Strategy: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030>

National Lottery Heritage Fund, Heritage 2033:
<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/heritage-2033-our-10-year-strategy>

Creative Industries Sector Plan:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-plan>

Department for Business and Trade, Industrial Strategy:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy>

Historic England Corporate Plan 2023-26: <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/corporate-plan/>

National Trust, People and Nature Thriving Strategy:
<https://docs.nationaltrust.org.uk/strategy-2025>

Appendix 7: Sources

ONS Census:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/censusbasedstatisticsuk2021>

ONS Official Census and Labour Market:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket>

ONS UK Business: Activity, Size and Location (2024):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation2024>

DCMS Participation Survey: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/participation-survey>

DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates Gross Value Added:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-and-digital-sector-gva-2022-provisional/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-gross-value-added-2022-provisional>

Dorset Hall: <https://dorsethalls.net/>

Dorset Council: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-council/parish-and-town-councils/parishatoz>

Great South West: <https://greatsouthwest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-Creative-Industries-in-the-Great-South-West.pdf>

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-economy/visitor-economy/>

Economic Impact of Rural Dorset's Visitor Economy 2023:

https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/dorset/2023_In_fographic_The_Economic_Impact_of_Rural_Dorsets_Visitor_Economy_excluding_B_CP_Council_area_FINAL_14e783a3-07a5-48dd-9e26-b97980a26707.pdf

Local Government Association: <https://www.local.gov.uk/culture-led-regeneration-case-studies>

Dorset Council census insights:

<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/insights/topics/Topic/Population>

Sport and Recreation Alliance:

<https://sramedia.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/f393c7e4-5096-499a-9723-60824b6629ac.pdf>

National Centre for Creative Health: <https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/APPG-on-Creative-Health-Creativity-and-Children-and-Young-Peoples-Mental-Health.pdf>

The State of the Arts, University of Warwick:

<https://www.campaignforthearts.org/reports/the-state-of-the-arts/>

National Centre for Creative Health: [https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/Creative-Health-at-a-Glance- -Booklet.pdf](https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/Creative-Health-at-a-Glance--Booklet.pdf)



Appendix 8

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Template

Before completing the EQIA please have a look at the [Dorset Council style guide](#) and also use the [accessibility checker](#) to make sure your document is easy for people of all abilities to read.

Some key tips

- avoid tables and charts, if possible please provide raw data
- avoid pictures and maps if possible.
- avoid using bold, italics or colour to highlight or stress a point
- when using numbering or bullet points avoid using capitals at the beginning unless the name of something
- date format is dd month yyyy (1 June 2021)
- use clear and simple language
- where you need to use technical terms, abbreviations or acronyms, explain what they mean the first time you use them
- if using hyperlinks, make sure the link text describes where the link goes rather than 'click here' Please note equality impact assessments are published on the Dorset Council [website](#)

Before completing this form, please refer to the [supporting guidance](#). The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to consider the equality implications of your policy, strategy, project or service on different groups of people including employees of Dorset Council, residents and users of our services and to consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

Where further guidance is needed, please contact the Inclusion Champion or the [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#).

1. Initial information

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

Dorset Cultural Strategy

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

New policy, project, strategy, project or service

Review of policy, project, strategy, project or service

Other (please explain)

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

Internal (employees only)

External (residents, communities, partners)

Both internal and external

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

This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) evaluates the Dorset Cultural Strategy to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all protected characteristic groups. The strategy aims to unite Dorset's cultural sector, align with council priorities, and deliver measurable outcomes across four key areas: Vibrant Places, Healthy Communities, Economic Development, and Environmental Action.

Aims and Objectives

The Dorset Cultural Strategy seeks to increase cultural engagement, improve mental health through cultural activities, boost economic impact, and enhance biodiversity. It involves 600 organisations and 4,000 workers benefiting 93% of Dorset's residents.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

The current cultural strategy expires in March 2026 and a new more up to date version is required. Cultural activity and programming is well placed in influencing

society's perceptions, raising awareness and promoting understanding about different protected characteristic groups.

Dorset Council's role within the delivery of cultural provision is that of enabler. The Council works closely with the voluntary and community sector, providing funding and support to organisations to deliver a high-quality service rather than directly operating theatres or galleries. It can influence how culture is delivered through funding, both revenue and one-off project grants, to ensure that providers deliver an inclusive and accessible service, prioritising communities with low engagement

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

Dorset Council Plan: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-council-plan-2024-to-2029> – informs all strands of the strategy, aligning the cultural sector with Dorset Council's broader objectives around housing, communities, economy and environment

Dorset Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2020-to-2023> - informs Healthy Communities, particularly around Creative Health activity

Dorset Library Strategy: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-library-strategy-progress-2024-2025> – informs Vibrant Places, particularly around spaces for cultural activity

Dorset Council Economic Growth Strategy: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-s-economic-growth-strategy-2025-to-2040> – informs Economic Development, particularly around market town development, employment and cultural tourism

NHS Dorset Joint Forward Plan: <https://nhsdorset.nhs.uk/voice/jointforwardplan/> - informs Healthy Communities, particularly around mental health and ageing well

Dorset Council Local Plan (draft): <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-local-plan-options-consultation-2025> - informs Vibrant Places and Economic Development particularly around capital infrastructure

Dorset Council Nature Recovery Strategy (draft): <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-s-local-nature-recovery-strategy> – informs Environmental Action, particularly around projects to increase public understanding of biodiversity

Dorset National Landscapes Management Plan (draft); <https://dorset-nl.org.uk/resources/draft-management-plan-2026-31/> - informs Vibrant Places and Environmental Action, particularly around activities in public space

Dorset Creative Health strategy (draft) – informs Healthy Communities, particularly around strategic resource for Creative Health

Destination Management Plan (draft) – informs Economic Development, particularly around cultural tourism

NHS 10 Year Health Plan for England: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-term-plan/> - informs Healthy Communities, particularly around preventative care

Arts Council England, Let's Create Strategy: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030> – informs all elements of strategy, particularly on funding for arts organisations and projects

National Lottery Heritage Fund, Heritage 2033: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/heritage-2033-our-10-year-strategy> – informs all elements of strategy, particularly on funding for heritage organisations and projects

Creative Industries Sector Plan: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-sector-plan> – informs Economic Development, particularly around growth of creative businesses

Department for Business and Trade, Industrial Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy> – informs Economic Development, particularly around creative industries sector

Historic England Corporate Plan 2023-26: <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/corporate-plan/> - informs Vibrant Places and Economic Development, particularly around capital infrastructure

National Trust, People and Nature Thriving Strategy: <https://docs.nationaltrust.org.uk/strategy-2025> – informs Environmental Action, particularly around cultural organisations improving biodiversity on their own sites

ONS Census: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/censusbasedstatisticsuk2021> – informs understanding of comparative demographics in Dorset

ONS Official Census and Labour Market: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket> – informs understanding of comparative cultural workers in Dorset

ONS UK Business: Activity, Size and Location (2024): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation2024> – informs understanding of comparative number and scale of cultural businesses

DCMS Participation Survey: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/participation-survey> – informs understanding of comparative engagement in culture in Dorset

DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates Gross Value Added: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-and-digital-sector-gva-2022-provisional/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-gross-value-added-2022-provisional> – informs understanding of economic value of cultural sector nationally

Dorset Hall: <https://dorsethalls.net/> - informs Vibrant Places, particularly around spaces for cultural activity

Dorset Council: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-council/parish-and-town-councils/parishatoz> – informs Vibrant Places, particularly around understanding of local government

Great South West: <https://greatsouthwest.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-Creative-Industries-in-the-Great-South-West.pdf> – informs Economic Development, particularly around potential for growth aligned with neighbouring places

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/heritage-counts/heritage-and-economy/visitor-economy/> - informs Economic Development, particularly around impact of heritage sector

Economic Impact of Rural Dorset's Visitor Economy 2023: https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/dorset/2023_In_fographic_The_Economic_Impact_of_Rural_Dorsets_Visitor_Economy_excluding_B_CP_Council_area_FINAL_14e783a3-07a5-48dd-9e26-b97980a26707.pdf – informs Vibrant Places and Economic Development, particularly understanding of rural impact

Local Government Association: <https://www.local.gov.uk/culture-led-regeneration-case-studies> – informs Vibrant Places and Economic Development, particularly around targeted cultural interventions

Dorset Council census insights: <https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/insights/topics/Topic/Population> – informs understanding of Dorset's demographics

Sport and Recreation Alliance: <https://sramedia.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/f393c7e4-5096-499a-9723-60824b6629ac.pdf> – informs Healthy Communities, particularly around value of movement activity such as dance

National Centre for Creative Health: <https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/APPG-on-Creative-Health-Creativity-and-Children-and-Young-Peoples-Mental-Health.pdf> – informs Healthy Communities, particularly on value of culture to young people's mental health

The State of the Arts, University of Warwick: <https://www.campaignforthearts.org/reports/the-state-of-the-arts/> - informs understanding of national state of the cultural sector and its relative decline

National Centre for Creative Health: <https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/Creative-Health-at-a-Glance--Booklet.pdf> – informs Health Communities, particularly understanding of value of Creative Health interventions

7. What did this tell you?

Local context

The Dorset Council area of Dorset is home to 385,000 people in 170,000 households. It has one of the oldest demographics in the UK – 30% are over 65 (19% nationally) and the average age is 51 (40 nationally). Dorset has an old age dependency ratio of 537 (vs. 297 nationally), meaning there are 537 people aged 65+ for every 1,000 working-age adults.

94% of people in Dorset are White British (74% nationally). In line with national averages, 17.5% live with a disability. 80% of working aged people are in employment (75% nationally). 15% of working aged people are self-employed (13% nationally).

There are six Lower-layer Super Output Areas in lowest (most deprived) decile of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This represents 11,500 people (3% of the population). Five of these are in Weymouth, one in Portland.

Dorset welcomes almost 13 million visitors to Dorset every year, with total visitor spend of £924 million. Tourism is highly seasonal with 51% of visits taking place June-September.

Dorset is predominantly rural. There are 152 persons per square mile (a fifth of national average). 53% of Dorset is an accredited National Landscape. It is home to England's only natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast.

Dorset has 17 towns and over 300 villages. The largest town, Weymouth, is home to 53,000 people whilst the smaller, Beaminster, has just over 3,000.

As with other rural areas, Dorset is comparatively less well-served by public transport than urban areas, particularly in the north. Two train lines connect to London but connectivity within Dorset is a challenge with people reliant on cars.

Dorset Council is a unitary authority formed in 2019 from a merging of five Districts and the County Council. There are 17 Town Councils and 278 Parish Councils.

Dorset is part of the proposed Wessex devolution partnership with Somerset, Wiltshire, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Councils.

Dorset's Cultural Sector

There's a high level of engagement with culture in Dorset. 93% of people engage with the arts, 78% visit a heritage site, 45% visit a museum or gallery and 26% visit a public library. 79% of people use a car to travel to cultural experiences.

There are 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses in Dorset. The cultural sector employs 4,200 people (2,900 in creative, arts and entertainment; 1,300 in libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities). Nationally, 28% of people working in creative industries nationally are freelance – it is likely to be higher in Dorset due to the size of cultural organisations.

There are 32 museums in Dorset, 24 of which have Arts Council England accreditation. There are 22 National Trust and 12 English Heritage sites. Most towns in Dorset have a theatre, arts centres or public building that hosts live performance. There are over 25 public and private exhibition spaces across Dorset, including galleries in museums and arts centres. Dorset Art Weeks features 250 studios and galleries.

Dorset also celebrates performance in non-culture-specific spaces. There are 115 village halls with a mixed community and professional programme. Dorset has 385 pubs, many of which hold cultural events. Performances and public art also take place in temporary spaces – in town squares, village greens, gardens and large-scale festival sites. Each summer, Dorset welcomes over 100,000 visitors for music festivals. The community sector is strong, with radio stations, amateur dramatics and community choirs.

Dorset is a location for national and international film production with the Dorset Film Office managing licences for filming on the Dorset Council land and liaising with film companies.

Some elements of the cultural sector are supported directly with public funding. Dorset Council provides revenue funding totalling £486,000 to 28 organisations and awards additional funding to around 30 projects a year. Arts Council England is the largest single funder of culture in Dorset providing £4m in 2024-25 in regular funding (to six National Portfolio Organisations), project grants and strategic funds. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the second largest single funder of culture, awarding £1.2m in 2024-25 to 9 projects. Most Town Councils and some Parish Councils provide funding for culture through a combination of project and regular funding.

There are 31 libraries in Dorset, of which 23 are run directly by Dorset Council with the remaining 8 run by the community. Libraries are community cultural hubs that play a key role in supporting children and young people's cultural engagement supporting Dorset Council's Best Start in Life strategy, Creative Health – including social prescribing – and digital inclusion.

Dorset's archives are managed by Dorset History Centre and contain 1,000 years of historical records. Dorset's archaeology is the most significant in the region. As the depository for the county, Dorset Museum and Art Gallery holds over 3 million objects, making up 70% of their collection.

Dorset's cultural sector provides opportunities for volunteering. The 28 revenue-funded organisations in Dorset alone work with 1,377 volunteers who contributed a combined 84,288 hours a year.

Despite being a distinct local authority area, many artists and organisations based in the Dorset Council area work in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) and vice versa. Creatives benefit from opportunities on both sides of the border. Audiences also travel from one to the other. BCP is home to larger venues such as Poole Lighthouse which includes a 1500-capacity Concert Hall and the Bournemouth International Centre which can host up to 10,000 people.

Similarly, creatives and producers at the edge of the Dorset Council area often work beyond the borders, with Southampton, Salisbury, Yeovil and Exeter, in particular, providing cultural opportunities.

The cultural sector overlaps with many other parts of society, particularly health and education. Dorset has delivered a joint Creative Health strategy with partners in health to increase the use and impact of cultural activity that improves health and wellbeing. Culture plays a key role in the development of young people. Many of Dorset's schools and colleges have excellent cultural facilities, some of which are used by professionals and community groups as well as students. Further education institution Coastland College specialises in courses for the cultural and creative industries, whilst Arts University Bournemouth (based in BCP) has a global reputation for its creative courses.

The cultural sector is supported by various regional and national sector-specific bodies covering museums, libraries, visual art, live music, outdoor arts and theatre. In Dorset, the museums are supported by South West Museum Development with a dedicated officer for the county of Dorset. Arts Development Company provides support to the rest of the sector, providing bespoke advice and training.

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

We've held public workshops for 80 people in Bridport, Wimborne and Sturminster Newton. We've held sector specific workshops with museums and Town Councils. We've run youth workshops with Coastland College in Weymouth (16-18) and with Buckland Newton Youth Group (10-16).

We've had ongoing consultation with a working group of Dorset Council culture and culture-related officers and another with leaders of Dorset Cultural organisations.

We've had one-to-one consultation meetings with Dorset Libraries, Dorset Council's Communities team, Dorset National Landscapes, Volunteer Centre Dorset, Business Growth Dorset, Dorset Archaeology, Arts Council England, Creative UK, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts University Bournemouth, NHS Dorset, Visit Dorset and Dorset Council Public Health.

We had an online consultation with 250 responses.

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

No.

Is an EQIA required?

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

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

n/a

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

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

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

Key to impacts

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

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Positive	The strategy targets both Children and Young People and older people. From early years engagement to professional training, Dorset will value cultural experience for children and young people. Opportunities for youth-focused and intergenerational activity will be encouraged. Culture will support Dorset Council's Best Start in Life strategy. Culture will be better embedded in education – through schools, informal learning, and community-based opportunities. Schools will be better connected to cultural providers, including promoting careers in the sector. Voices of young people will be heard and inform place-based cultural development. Older people are specifically recognised in the Healthy Communities priority, recognising the ageing demographic in Dorset and the opportunity for cultural activity to improve health and wellbeing.
Disability	Positive	The strategy supports people with disabilities, both through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion universal theme and through improving access to venues through capital improvements, such as wheelchair access, facilities for people with visual or hearing impairments, and spaces that support people with neurodevelopmental conditions. Neurodevelopmental conditions include conditions that affect how the brain develops and processes information, such as autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Positive	The strategy supports gender identity through the Healthy Communities priority which develops inclusive activity in targeted places which brings communities together creating a universal offer. This offer will be accessible and welcoming.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	This strategy is not specifically targeted at people who are married or in a civil partnership. Evidence from the ONS Census and the DCMS Participation Survey does not identify marital status as a factor affecting participation in cultural activity locally or nationally.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Venues for cultural activity will be accessible for pregnant women and provide spaces for those caring for young children. This could include daytime 'noisy' performances, space for prams and buggies and breakout rooms.
Race and Ethnicity	Positive	The strategy promotes inclusion for race and ethnicity through both the universal themes and through Healthy Communities, working with targeted groups and communities. This includes programming in venues and festivals, opportunities to work in the sector and communications to targeted groups.
Religion and belief	Neutral	This strategy is not specifically targeted at people with a particular religion or belief. Evidence from the ONS Census and the DCMS Participation Survey does not identify religion or belief as a significant barrier to cultural participation in Dorset or nationally.
Sex (consider men and women)	Positive	The strategy will particularly benefit men who don't normally engage with culture by working to improve lives of people with poor mental health. With suicide the biggest cause of death in men under 50 (https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-call-for-evidence-on-mens-health), work will be undertaken to deliver cultural projects to address this. The strategy will also benefit women, particularly those with limited access to cultural activity such as new mothers (see Pregnancy and Maternity, above).
Sexual orientation	Positive	The strategy supports sexual orientation through the Healthy Communities priority and through the EDI theme which is one of four universal themes which run throughout all the work of the strategy. This includes programming activity of cultural sector and training in inclusive recruitment.
People with caring responsibilities	Neutral	This strategy is not specifically targeted at people with caring responsibilities. Evidence from the ONS Census and DCMS Participation Survey does not identify caring responsibilities as a primary barrier to cultural participation. However, some activity delivered through the Healthy Communities priority may indirectly benefit carers, particularly through

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		projects supporting people living with conditions such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease.
Rural isolation	Positive	The strategy identifies a need for a rich cultural offer throughout Dorset through the Vibrant Places priority. This includes targeted activity in places with less culture and ensuring strategic plans exist to increase cultural activity.
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive	The strategy aims to address socio-economic deprecation by growing the cultural sector and its impact, creating more employment opportunities. It also aims to reduce barriers to accessing culture. As cultural activity is often more prevalent in affluent communities, by increasing cultural activity in across Dorset, this strategy will benefit those in socio-economic deprivation.
Single parents	Neutral	This strategy isn't targeted specifically at single parents though there may be activity through the Vibrant Places stand that benefits this group by increasing activity across Dorset. This would lead to more activity happening closer to where someone lives, reducing travel time and making cultural activity more accessible for single parents.
Armed forces communities	Neutral	This strategy isn't targeted at armed forces communities though there may be activity that benefits this group through the Vibrant Places strand in identifying places with less activity than others. Were a targeted place to be an area in which armed forces communities lived, this would lead to an increase in activity available for that community.

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

This strategy has a positive impact for age, disability, gender reassignment/gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, rural isolation and socio-economic deprivation.

The cultural programme will work with targeted communities, particularly those marginalised from parts Dorset's cultural offer. It will provide new activity to increase access to culture.

Spaces for cultural activity will be improved to welcome more people and reduce or remove barriers to access.

Opportunities to take part in culture will be enhanced, with people able to benefit from cultural activity which improves their health and wellbeing.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is one of four Universal Themes of the strategy. This means it informs every element of the strategy and is a major consideration in decisions around funding and investment for culture.

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
Ensure that the strategy remains live and that actions are focused to address inequality in accessing culture	Set up effective governance structure, meeting quarterly	Dorset Council/external cultural development	May 2026
	Review outputs on an annual basis aligned with EDI universal theme	Dorset Council/external cultural development	November 2026
	Ensure Equality, Access and Inclusion are the main topic of discussion at least once a year	Dorset Council/external cultural development	March 2027
Ensure there is evidence of the impact of cultural activity on targeted groups	Annual impact report case studies	Dorset Council/external cultural development	March 2027
	Monitoring information of organisations in receipt of Dorset Council funding	Dorset Council/external cultural development	May 2027

Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay

Officer completing this EqIA: Darren Spreadbury & Arts Development Company

Officers involved in completing the EqIA:As Above

Date of completion: 10/03/2026

Version Number: 1

EqlA review date: 10/03/2027

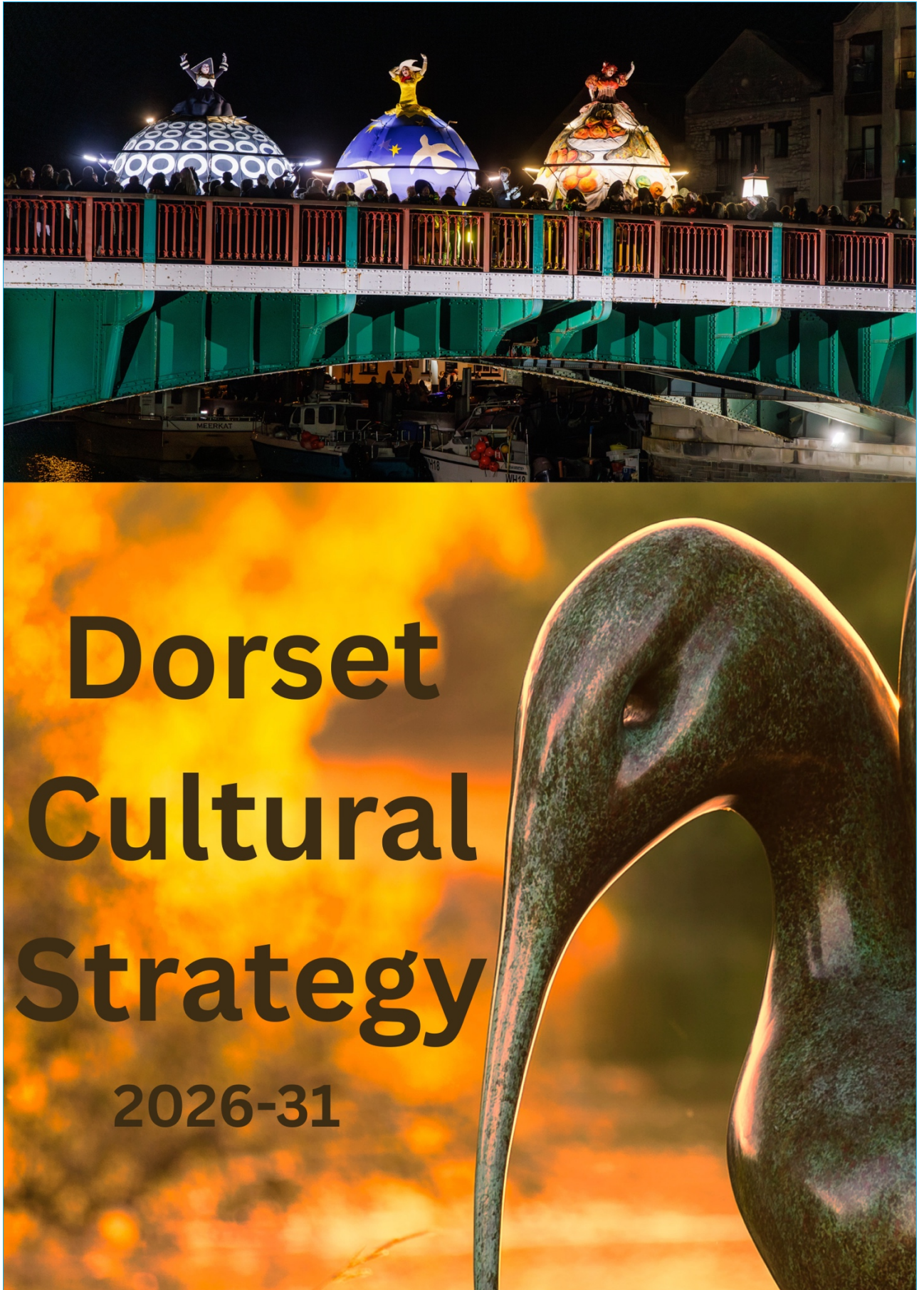
Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay

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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Foreword

Dorset is a place rich in culture. Throughout our towns, villages and natural landscape, that cultural life is evident. From civic museums to community arts centres, national festivals to public libraries, culture is never far away, and yet there's an opportunity to do even more. That's where the Dorset Cultural Strategy comes in.

Created through wide engagement with the sector, community and external partners, the strategy positions culture to play an even greater role for those who live in and visit Dorset.

It will create **places that are more vibrant**, whether in our market and seaside towns, historic villages or rural landscape. It will enable culture to **strengthen our communities** and **improve the health** of those who live here. It will **champion inclusive economic development** as the cultural sector plays its part in the wider growth of Dorset, and it will **support environmental action**, communicating and demonstrating ways of changing behaviour in response to the climate and ecological emergency.

This is an ambitious strategy but it is achievable. It will be realised through partnership and collaboration. It requires Town and Parish Councils, strategic health bodies and environmental partners to work alongside the cultural sector. It requires cultural organisations to work collectively to create things that are greater than the sum of their parts. Critically it requires Dorset Council to play the role of enabler and facilitator, connecting the cultural sector to the wider strategic priorities that benefit society as a whole.

The Dorset Cultural Strategy sets the direction for change. Together, we can realise that change.

Cllr Ryan Hope

Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement



A Shared Vision

Dorset is where culture and creativity pioneer ambitious change.

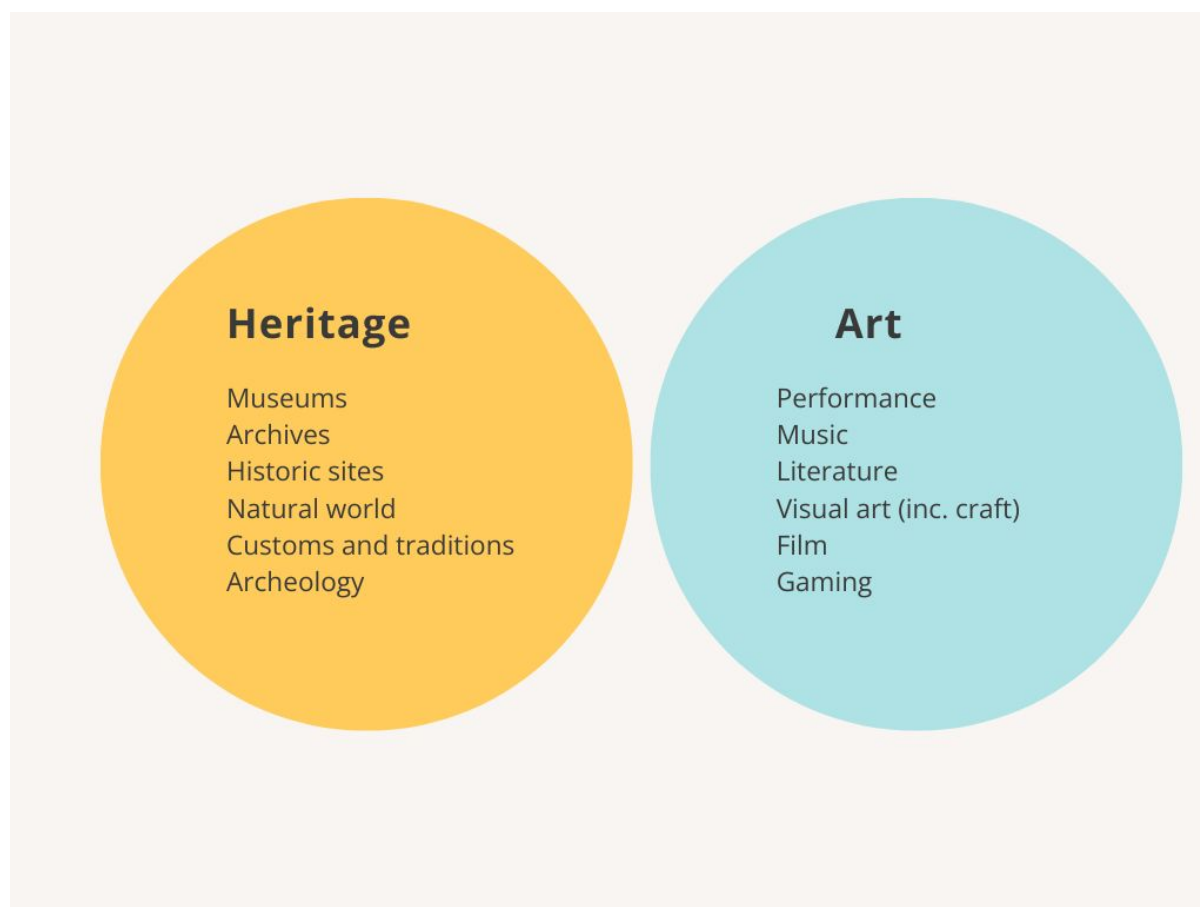
In a fast-moving world, Dorset embraces the new and diverse. Culture is a force for positive development, creating radical improvements in health and the environment. It supports sustainable economic development, attracting new income to Dorset. Throughout its towns, villages and rural areas, cultural activity takes place all year-round, providing life-enriching experiences for residents and visitors.

To achieve this, individual cultural expression will be celebrated, the cultural sector will be supported to enable sustainability, collaboration will be encouraged, and innovation and ambition will be championed.



What Do We Mean By Culture?

For this strategy, culture roughly divides into two parts: arts and heritage.



Culture sometimes takes place in dedicated cultural spaces – such as arts centres, theatres, museums. Sometimes culture takes place in spaces that have other functions, like pubs, community centres and town squares and sometimes culture takes place in private, at home reading a book, listening to music or watching a drama on TV.

Culture is often created by professionals who are paid to create work and who are usually trained to some degree. But culture is created by everyone, sometimes at home, sometimes in public, through whistling a song, dancing on a night out or passing on traditions and customs.

There is a subtle distinction between cultural organisations and creative businesses. The former tends to focus on social impact whereas the latter tends to focus on profit. That said, many organisations straddle these worlds and others defy the trend.

In this strategy, the word “culture” covers all aspects of the sector, embracing creative businesses and cultural organisations.

Local context of Dorset

Residents

- 385,000 people in 170,000 households
- 30% are over 65 (19% nationally) and the average age is 51 (40 nationally)
- Dorset has an old age dependency ratio of 537 (vs. 297 nationally)
- 94% of people in Dorset are White British (74% nationally)
- 17.5% live with a disability (in line with national average)
- 80% of working age people are in employment (75% nationally); 15% of working age people are self-employed (13% nationally)
- 11,500 people (3% of the population) live in the most deprived decile in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Visitors

- 13 million visitors to Dorset every year, with total visitor spend of £924 million
- Tourism is highly seasonal with 51% of visits taking place between June-September

Geography

- Predominantly rural – there are 152 persons per square mile (a fifth of national average).
- 53% of Dorset is an accredited National Landscape
- Home to England's only natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast.
- Dorset has 17 towns and over 300 villages
- The largest town, Weymouth, is home to 53,000 people whilst the smaller, Beaminster, has just over 3,000.



Dorset's Cultural Sector

93% of people engage with the arts, 78% visit a heritage site, 45% visit a museum or gallery and 26% visit a public library.

There are 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses in Dorset.

The cultural sector employs 4,200 people (2,900 in creative, arts and entertainment; 1,300 in libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities).

There are **32 museums** in Dorset, 24 of which have Arts Council England accreditation. There are 22 National Trust and 12 English Heritage sites. Most towns in Dorset have a theatre, arts centres or public building that hosts live performance. There are over 25 public and private exhibition spaces across Dorset, including galleries in museums and arts centres. Dorset Art Weeks features **250 studios and galleries**.

Dorset also celebrates performance in non-culture-specific spaces. There are **115 village halls** with a mixed community and professional programme. Dorset has **385 pubs**, many of which hold cultural events. Performances and public art also take place in temporary spaces – in town squares, village greens, gardens and large-scale festival sites. Each summer, Dorset welcomes **over 100,000 visitors for music festivals**. The community sector is strong, with radio stations, amateur dramatics and community choirs.

Some elements of the cultural sector are supported directly with public funding. Dorset Council provides revenue funding totalling **£486,000 to 28 organisations** and awards additional funding to around 30 projects a year. Arts Council England is the largest single funder of culture in Dorset providing **£4m in 2024-25** in regular funding (to six National Portfolio Organisations), project grants and strategic funds. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the second largest single funder of culture, awarding **£1.2m in 2024-25** to 9 projects. Most Town Councils and some Parish Councils provide funding for culture through a combination of project and regular funding.

There are **31 libraries** in Dorset, of which 23 are run directly by Dorset Council with the remaining 8 run by the community. Libraries are community cultural hubs that play a key role in supporting children and young people's cultural engagement supporting Dorset Council's Best Start in Life strategy, Creative Health – including social prescribing – and digital inclusion.

Dorset's archives are managed by Dorset History Centre and contain **1,000 years of historical records**. Dorset's archaeology is the most significant in the region. As the depository for the county, Dorset Museum and Art Gallery holds over **3 million objects**, making up 70% of its collection.

Dorset's cultural sector provides opportunities for volunteering. The 28 revenue-funded organisations in Dorset alone work with **1,377 volunteers** who contributed a combined **84,288 hours a year**.

Cultural priorities

Priorities

For the next five years, the priorities of Dorset's Cultural sector are:

Vibrant Places

Healthy Communities

Economic Development

Environmental Action

These align with Dorset Council's Plan (2024-29) as follows:

- **Vibrant Places** – Housing Development
 - *With new houses, there needs to be cultural activity for the increased population*
- **Healthy Communities** – Communities for All
 - *Dorset's culture needs to reach everyone in society*
- **Economic Development** – Economy
 - *Culture is a key part of enabling economic growth that benefits all citizens*
- **Environmental Action** – Climate Crisis
 - *The cultural sector is uniquely placed to change public behaviour*



Outcomes

Each priority has an overarching ambition developed through wide consultation.

From this, a **single measurable outcome** has been selected for each priority. This is the key area of focus for each priority.

This outcome is set for the full five years of the strategy.

Measures

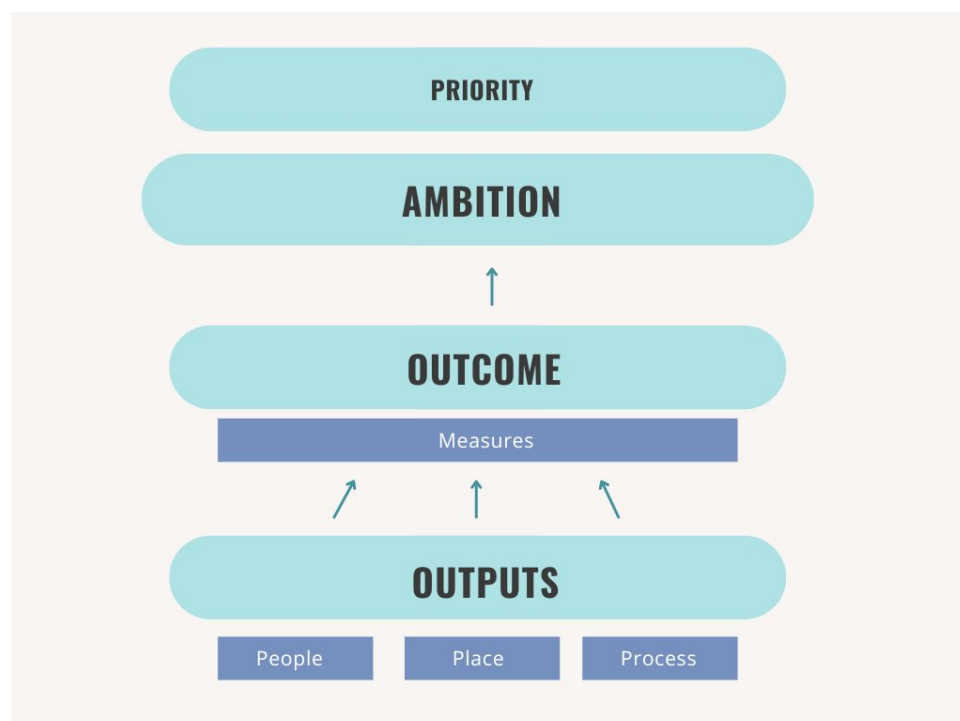
The outcomes will be **measured in three ways**:

1. National or cross-sector data
2. Information from Dorset's cultural organisations
3. Bespoke and long-term evaluation

Outputs

Three outputs have also been selected for each priority: one for **people**, one for **place**, one for **process**.

These will be reviewed annually and will change and grow as the strategy becomes embedded.



Universal Themes

Alongside the four priorities there are several universal themes that cut across all priority areas.

Children and Young People

From early years engagement to professional training, Dorset will value cultural experience for children and young people.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Building on strong foundations, Dorset will champion equity, diversity and inclusion.

Quality and Ambition

The sector will strive for a high level of artistic ambition, with venues and festivals programming work of quality and skill.

Collaboration

The sector will be encouraged to work together and with partners in other sectors to deliver projects.



Priority: Vibrant Places

Why

A rural area, Dorset is made up of small towns, villages and hamlets. Culture is an important part of the identity of these places. People engage in a cultural offer on their doorstep. It is a vital part of civic life.

Some towns and villages have strong cultural offers, others less so. For some the cultural offer is prominent and established; in others, it's beneath the surface.

Where We Are Now

Dorset's cultural landscape is rooted in its distinct local identities — from rural trades and dialects to traditional games, crafts, and community heritage. Culture acts as a powerful connector to place, with artist residencies, festivals and public art.

There are 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses in Dorset. Over 100,000 people attend music festivals in Dorset and 536,000 people attend Dorset Council's core funded cultural organisations.

However, access remains uneven. Rural isolation, limited transport, and fragmented marketing restrict participation, particularly in North Dorset. Many venues and community spaces are underused or inaccessible, and while there is great pride in Dorset's natural and cultural assets, opportunities to celebrate and share them remain inconsistent.

Ambition

Dorset will be recognised as a place where culture thrives in every community — locally rooted, accessible, and sustainable. A county that makes more of what it has, using existing venues, landscapes, and stories to create authentic, high-quality cultural experiences. Local distinctiveness will be celebrated, recognising that no two places are alike.

Outcome

MORE PEOPLE TAKING PART IN CULTURAL ACTIVITY

Measures

1. Engagement in culture, Participation Survey, Department of Culture, Media and Sport
2. Number of people attending cultural organisations, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluations of activity in specific places, working with Dorset's Town Councils and place-based cultural organisations

Outputs (26-27)

People: More events in targeted places

Supporting and enabling cultural activity with a focus on towns with fewer events per person

Place: Place-based partnerships

Encouraging joint working between cultural, community, civic, business and educational organisations to increase ambition and reach more people

Process: Councils have plans for culture

In order to achieve this, Town Councils will be supported to recognise the economic and social benefits of culture in their wider plans or in a specific cultural plan or strategy

Case Study

b-side are a locally loved and internationally recognised organisation on the Isle of Portland. They deliver the annual b-side Festival: four-days new art created in collaboration between artists and communities, and installed across public spaces all over the island. From projections onto lighthouses, to parades along high streets, their work sits at the meeting point of people and place — creating vibrant places and happy, healthy communities.

Their festival home is BnB-side, a bed-and-breakfast on Portland. It hosts artists, researchers, curators, producers, and visitors who all want to contribute to a positive future for the island.

In 2025, b-side coordinated Portland and Weymouth Towns of Culture 2025, supporting a major step-change in cultural participation and collaboration across the area. They worked with a steering group of partners spanning the cultural, business, social, civic and heritage sectors. Together, they delivered two open calls across Portland and Weymouth, an emerging Producers programme, supported a youth-led Culture Passport, and a new online Culture Listings platform.

Across the year this activity supported the delivery of over **200 cultural events** and activities, attended by **more than 14,000 people**, activating high streets, heritage sites, parks, gardens, beaches and community spaces — and reaching audiences who do not usually see themselves as “cultural makers or participants”.

“It’s made the park feel brighter, safer, and full of life.”

Participant

There has been a clear step-change locally. Local authorities and businesses are increasingly recognising the role a vibrant cultural sector plays in place-making, wellbeing, pride and economic resilience. At the same time, there has been a growing appetite across the cultural sector to work collaboratively — particularly on ambitious activity outside the summer season, and to build year-round infrastructure that better supports artists, audiences and communities.

As a direct result of Towns of Culture 2025: a committed group of partners are now actively exploring opportunities to occupy or develop new cultural infrastructure in Weymouth; national partners are engaged and paying attention to the work happening here; hundreds of artists, community organisers and residents have been newly activated — ready to continue creating culture that tells the story of the towns in their own voices.

“This has given us the confidence to do something bigger — and to do it together.”

Participant

Priority: Healthy Communities

Why

Culture is fundamental to wellbeing and community cohesion, preventing ill health, aiding rehabilitation and contributing to a healthy society.

Dorset also has an ageing population, with over a third of people being over 65 by 2033. With increasing age comes an increasing need for services to support living well.

Culture plays a role in creating a more cohesive society. Bringing people together, fostering connection and showing different lived experiences can combat some of the increasing polarisation seen in society since the prevalence of social media.

Where We Are Now

Dorset has a strong network of cultural opportunities that improve wellbeing. The universal offer – choirs, art groups, drama clubs, community radio – is particularly strong. Volunteering plays a key role, both for cultural organisations and the volunteers themselves making connections and contributing to their community.

As with much of the country, there is a sense of an increasingly polarised society which can sometimes manifest as hostility to difference. Dorset's cultural sector has a rich history in providing welcoming spaces, celebrating diversity and bringing people together for shared experiences.

Ambition

Culture in Dorset will be embedded within everyday life, building healthier, more inclusive communities. There will be a broader definition of culture that embraces community-led activity and a stronger focus on participation.

Outcome

IMPROVEMENT IN LIVES OF PEOPLE IMPACTED BY POOR MENTAL HEALTH AND LONELINESS

Measures

1. Mental Health Needs Assessment, Public Health, Dorset Council; and NHS Dorset/NHS Wessex
2. Changes in health due to activity, annual survey of participants and volunteers in cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of Creative Health projects

Outputs (26-27)

People: Volunteer programme for cultural organisations

Joint recruitment and training for volunteers for cultural organisations including libraries, particularly focusing on marginalised people and supporting those with poor mental health

Place: Creative Health projects with targeted or marginalised communities

Working with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to use culture to improve health outcomes – particularly focusing on the Core20Plus5 approach to reducing health inequalities – working with primary care, social prescribers and community partners

Process: Resource for strategic development of Creative Health

Positioning Dorset to secure long-term investment in development of Creative Health sector, including workforce development, research and public communications

Case Study

Babigloo is a non-verbal approach to music making for babies and their parents/carers. They create a multi-sensory environment which encourages listening, communication and playfulness between babies and their parents/carers using live and recorded music, sound, movement, gesture, visual and tactile materials, babies' vocalisations and non-verbal communication.

Babigloo music making sessions last around 45 minutes, balancing structured activities which build on babies' sensory perceptions, with spontaneous vocal and non-verbal interaction with the babies. Each session is led by two music leaders working together and some sessions also have a visiting musician to enhance families' experience of live music and instruments. Each Babigloo programme involves a series of weekly sessions for up to ten babies and their parents/carers. They develop families' enjoyment of music making and enhance parent-child communication, thereby contributing to families' wellbeing.

"The work you do is absolutely wonderful and having had the opportunity to watch your sessions I would recommend your sessions to all parents/carers and their babies".

Family Hub Manager

Having established a successful working model in East Dorset from 2018 and West Dorset and Purbeck from 2023, Babigloo expanded across the county from 2024 in collaboration with the newly created Family Hub Network.

From this, Babigloo delivered sessions at Shaftesbury Arts Centre (with funding from Youth Music) and at Shaftesbury Children's Centre/Family Hub and The Vale Parlour Family Hub Sturminster Newton (with funding from the Local Alliance Group).

In 2024-25, Babigloo expanded their reach by 300% from **94 to 380 families**. In total, their targeted work engaged **375 children and 446 adults**.

"We have absolutely loved Babigloo, it has truly been a treasured bonding time for the two of us, a space for calm, joy and such incredible learning – you can almost see their brains making new connections!"

Participating Parent

Priority: Economic Development

Why

By increasing and distributing wealth, people will have greater opportunities and are able to lead more fulfilling lives. Low social mobility is particularly acute in South Dorset, leading to physical, mental and social challenges that can be lifelong.

Culture plays a role in generating economic growth. The sector creates paid opportunities, both for creatives and for those working to enable cultural activity. It is a great sector in which to start and grow a business.

Culture boosts tourism. In Dorset, tourism overall generates £945m for the local economy. Yet the offer is seasonal. Culture attracts people to Dorset in the darker months of the year, creating more year-round employment opportunities.

Where We Are Now

Dorset is home to 660 arts, entertainment and recreation businesses. Dorset's cultural sector provides employment for 4,200 people (19% higher per worker than UK average), from entry-level to leadership.

Visit Dorset has Local Visitor Economy Partnership accreditation, leading the strategic development of tourism. Whilst there is good evidence of the impact of tourism overall to Dorset and anecdotal evidence of the value of the cultural sector to this, there remains an opportunity to add evidence of the direct and indirect benefit of cultural tourism to the economy of Dorset, particularly outside the peak season.

Ambition

Culture drives economic development, innovation and opportunity across Dorset. The sector will be recognised by policy makers as a key contributor to economic growth with strong integration between sectors, linking Dorset's cultural assets, landscapes, and visitor economy to attract investment and promote sustainable local growth. Collaboration between business, culture and community will be enhanced.

The sector will work collaboratively to unlock new investment in activity and capital. National funders will contribute equitably to Dorset's cultural sector. Creative industries will be supported to grow and relocate to Dorset.

Outcome

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CULTURAL SECTOR INCREASED

Measures

1. Number and size of creative businesses, Companies House annual return
2. Economic Impact Calculator, Event Impacts, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of organisations undergoing period of growth or development

Outputs (26-27)

People: Development programme for individuals and organisations

Support the diversification of income and commercialisation of cultural organisations and individuals, including investment opportunities for research and development of new products.

Place: Identify capital infrastructure needs for each town in Dorset

Both maintaining existing infrastructure and creating new places for cultural activity. Usually buildings but also wider public realm; always aligned to wider economic development plans.

Process: Promotion of cultural tourism

With the tourism sector, position Dorset as a cultural destination attracting more visitors particularly in the off-season.

Case Study

The Tank Museum, based in Bovington, Dorset, is one of the world's leading military history museums, housing a remarkable collection of armoured vehicles that spans more than a century. As a registered charity, their mission is to preserve and share the history of tanks and the people who built and operated them, through exhibitions, public events, and education.

Like many cultural institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 presented a significant challenge. Like all cultural institutions, physical closure meant immediate loss of ticket revenue and a risk to long-term sustainability. In response, they reacted rapidly to expand their digital presence, utilising social media as a new frontline for engagement, fundraising, and community building. The project was time-limited in its initial urgency, with the 2020 lockdown acting as a key driver for creativity and innovation.

Building on their early YouTube channel and social platforms, they focused on producing consistent, high-quality content—from “Tank Chats” to live streams and specialist features—designed to appeal to global audiences. This digital strategy was supported by diversified revenue streams including YouTube advertising, Patreon memberships, corporate sponsorships, and a revamped e-commerce arm.

The results were transformative. Digital engagement became a major contributor to income, with over **£2 million generated from non-visitors in 2023**, significantly enhancing financial resilience. Online visibility (now **1.3m YouTube subscribers**) also bolstered physical visits; **annual visitors increased by around 70,000**, peaking at over 220,000 in 2023, a 17% rise linked to global awareness created by digital channels.

Staff growth mirrored this success, with the team expanding by 15–20 roles, particularly in digital production, marketing, and e-commerce but also enabling them to grow their museum function capabilities as well—creating new employment opportunities within Dorset's cultural economy. Financial sustainability improved markedly through diversified income and strengthened annual turnover.

“Our online success has opened new avenues for engagement and income, securing our future and allowing us to bring the story of tanks to audiences worldwide while supporting sustainable cultural growth here in Dorset.”

Chris Price, CEO, The Tank Museum

Priority: Environmental Action

Why

Dorset's unique landscape is of great cultural significance. Its coastline, heathlands, chalk downs and rich biodiversity shape the county's identity and how people live, work and connect with places. But this natural abundance is under pressure. Dorset is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, rising sea levels, more frequent flooding and increasingly extreme weather, all of which threaten communities, habitats, infrastructure and the county's long-term resilience.

Culture has a unique role in this challenge. Artists, museums, festivals and creative organisations can translate data into stories, helping people understand what environmental change means for their lives and inspiring practical action. Cultural activity can bring people together to celebrate Dorset's landscapes, and influence behaviour in ways that reduce carbon emissions and support nature recovery.

Where We Are Now

Many cultural organisations have signed up to the national Culture Declares Emergency which began in 2019. Cultural organisations are also making changes; festivals are encouraging greener travel, productions are re-using and recycling materials, and museums are enhancing biodiversity by planting trees in their grounds.

Dorset National Landscape is recognised as a leader in working with the cultural sector to engage more people in the natural world.

Ambition

Dorset will be recognised as a national leader in community-driven climate and ecological action, with culture at the heart of how people understand, respond to and prepare for environmental change.

Creative activity will support nature recovery by building people's connection to the landscapes around them, sharing biodiversity through storytelling, folklore, local species, and creative activity.

Communities will be supported to take small, visible actions that add up to meaningful change, from recycling and reuse networks for the arts to cultural initiatives aligned with Dorset's Nature Recovery Strategy.

Outcome

BIODIVERSITY WITHIN DORSET INCREASED

Measures

1. Increase in biodiversity, Nature Recovery Strategy, Dorset Council

2. Attendance and number of events promoting sustainability, annual reporting of cultural organisations
3. Evaluation of cultural environmental projects

Outputs (26-27)

People: Deliver training for cultural sector

Supporting cultural organisations to reduce carbon emissions, strengthen climate resilience across their venues and explore practical ways to increase biodiversity

Place: Coordinate cross-sector projects that change behaviour

Site specific partnerships between culture and environment that encourage sustainable behaviours and build local engagement with nature recovery.

Process: Align cultural initiatives with environmental sector objectives

Ensure cultural activity is aligned with countywide environmental priorities by improving data sharing and strengthening coordination between cultural and environmental partners

Case Study

Activate Performing Arts is a Dorset charity that has been producing transformational programmes for 35 years, celebrating Dorset and promoting our landscape and sense of place.

Their specialism in working in protected landscapes has developed through a partnership with Dorset National Landscape. They work with land stewards across England with the National Landscapes Association and in Europe with partners in France, Netherlands and Slovakia as part of their LAND project (Land Stewards and Artists).

At the heart of what Activate do is a belief that performing arts should be accessible for all – no matter what your experience or background. This passion is shared by Dorset National Landscape who recognise that not everyone is accessing our landscapes. They both believe that people are more likely to take environmental action if they care, and if they have agency to take action.

Culminating in 2025, Activate led the national project, Nature Calling, with the National Landscapes Association. Its aim was to inspire and connect new and existing communities with National Landscapes across England, increasing people's access to nature, improve their wellbeing and inspire a sense of belonging in these special places. Six major arts projects across England were commissioned.

In Dorset, Activate worked with Dorset National Landscape who commissioned a new piece – *This Patch of Land*. They also produced the major artistic commission *Consequences* working with a range of community groups to create a new Giant in the landscape.

The artwork was unveiled in two locations across Dorset: Cerne Abbas and Corfe Castle. Over **200 people** helped create the new Giant, it reached **live audiences of over 27,000** and an **online audience of 64,000**, and has been featured in The Guardian and BBC News.

Case For Investment

To realise this strategy requires investment. The sector needs to both maintain existing sources of income and to secure new income.

Dorset Council is a funder both of core revenue for cultural organisations and of cultural projects. It also provides funding for services that support Dorset's cultural sector. By aligning with Dorset Council's wider strategic priorities, this strategy positions the sector to continue to receive valuable investment from the local authority.

Town and Parish Councils are increasingly supporting cultural activity in Dorset. The opportunity to make a difference to the lives of residents in Dorset's towns and villages is greatly enhanced by targeted cultural activity. By identifying capital needs in each town, this strategy helps to secure investment to enable new spaces for culture and improvements in existing venues, whether through national funding, Public Works Loans, developers' contributions or philanthropy.

This strategy also enables Dorset's cultural sector to work collaboratively to secure increased **national funding** for strategic initiatives. Be this in health, growth, place or environment, there is an opportunity to work collectively to make a long-term difference to the lives of people in Dorset.

Culture in Dorset creates great opportunities for **businesses and philanthropists** to provide resource. With a large number of high-net-worth-individuals and proudly local business community, the sector is in a strong position to deliver impactful and high-profile projects. Similarly, revenue from a future tourism levy would be well-targeted at a cultural sector that attracts visitors to Dorset in the shoulder months, growing Dorset's year-round economy.

Finally, supporting the sector to grow will lead to increased **earned income** for cultural organisations, employing more people and contributing to the overall economic health of Dorset. Through this, it will enable positive social development, making Dorset a fantastic place in which to live, work, grow up and grow old.



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	Minor negative impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	Mixed impact
Green Economy	Major positive impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	Minor positive impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	Minor positive impact
Water	Minor positive impact
Resilience and Adaptation	Minor positive impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Grow our economy	Major positive impact
High-quality and affordable housing	Neutral impact
Communities for all	Major positive impact

Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Food & Drink	
No recommendations found for this category	
Waste	
No recommendations found for this category	
Natural Assets & Ecology	
No recommendations found for this category	

Appendix 10

Water	
No recommendations found for this category	
Resilience & Adaptation	
No recommendations found for this category	

Place and Resources Overview Committee Draft Work Programme

Meeting Date: 26 March 2026

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Councillors	Other Information
Culture strategy	Strategy document to shape the future direction of arts, culture and heritage across the Dorset Council area.	Paul Rutter, Service Manager for Leisure Services Jon Andrews, Place Services	Going to Cabinet on 21 April for decision
Traffic enforcement policy	TBC	Laura Russ, Implementation Team Manager	

Meeting Date: Thursday 4 June 2026 tbc

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
RoWIP - Rights of Way Improvement Plan	In preparation for the full public consultation of this document, the committee will have the opportunity to comment on draft RoWIP prior to full consultation.	Russell Goff, Greenspace Manager Jon Andrews, Place Services	Pre-consultation discussion, may return to Place and Resources Overview in July post consultation ahead of final decision by Cabinet
Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order	Proposed Public Consultation process and documentation - Overview Committee in June, Findings from	Janet Moore, Service Manager Environmental Protection	

	consultation to Overview in October, Cabinet in November		
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Meeting Date: Thursday 9 July 2026 tbc

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Page 1 of 8

Future items requested-
20mph speed limits in partnership with town and Parish Councils
Hedge to hedge
Road Safety
Market Town Strategy
Parking

Informal work of the committee:

Date	Topic	Format	Councillors	Lead Officers	Other Information

The Cabinet Forward Plan - April to July 2026 **(Publication date – 24 MARCH 2026)**

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
2026					

April

Housing Standards Enforcement Policy & Statement of Principles for Determining Financial Penalties Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Do 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 21 Apr 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 16 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	Steven March, Service Manager for Housing Standards steven.march@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Iain Sim, Interim Corporate Director for Housing iain.sim@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)
Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 4 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open In the Spending Review in June, the Government announced a fourth round of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 4 committing £950m to deliver a four-year programme nationally (from April 2026). This report will inform Cabinet that DC had	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	Paul Derrien, Housing Enabling and Delivery Manager paul.derrien@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Vikki Jeffrey, Senior Housing Funding and Delivery Officer vikki.jeffrey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
been awarded £662,000 of capital grant and £4, 796 of revenue grant from MHLG to acquire 4 properties. Two of these properties were to be used as settled housing for refugees from Afghanistan and the other two to be used as temporary accommodation for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.					
Dorset National Landscape grant funding 2026-2029 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open In January 2026 the hosted Partnership team for the Dorset National Landscape should be notified of its grant allocation from Defra for 2026-2027 and indicative allocations for 2027-2029. All support delivery of the Management Plan previously adopted by Cabinet.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	<i>Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning</i> <i>mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Tom Munro, Dorset National Landscape Manager</i> <i>tom.munro@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Transformation Update Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Sets out the context, progress to date, and the rationale for targeted investment for transformation. This will ensure Dorset Council remains resilient and fit for the future, full aligned with Council Plan priorities and our medium-term financial plan.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation	<i>Nina Coakley, Head of Transformation and Design</i> <i>nina.coakley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Lisa Cotton, Corporate Director for Transformation, Customer and Cultural Services</i> <i>lisa.cotton@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
Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - prioritisation of CIL funded infrastructure projects Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To provide an update on arrangements for spending strategic CIL. The report will address the clarification of current CIL funding commitments and the identification and prioritisation of CIL funded projects to be supported through the Capital Programme process.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	Andrew Galpin, Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager andrew.galpin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)
Culture Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Strategy document to shape the future direction of arts, culture and heritage across the Dorset Council area.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026	Place and Resources Overview Committee 26 Mar 2026	Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	Paul Rutter, Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services paul.rutter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)
Nitrogen Credit Pricing methodology Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To set out an agreed methodology for how we set the price of our nutrient credits ensuring legal defensibility, financial sustainability, a credible and trusted credit market, and strong governance through transparent, accountable pricing.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
New Forest District Council Local Plan consultation Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open New Forest District Council Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation response.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Terry Sneller, Strategic Planning Manager terry.sneller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)
Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan 2024 - 2038 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Report relating to the making (adoption) of the neighbourhood plan following examination and referendum.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	Ed Gerry, Community Planning Manager ed.gerry@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)
Microsoft Licensing 2026 - 27 renewal Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Changes to the licensing arrangements with Microsoft have extended the current agreement term by an additional year incurring spending.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation	James Ailward, Head of ICT Operations james.ailward@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Leisure Facilities Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt Strategy report to determine the future of leisure centre provision.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 21 Apr 2026		Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	<i>Paul Rutter, Service Manager for Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services</i> <i>paul.rutter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
May					

Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategic Funding Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open A strategic funding paper seeking Council Support for Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Capital Programme and pipeline.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 19 May 2026		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Jack Wiltshire, Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering</i> <i>jack.wiltshire@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> , <i>Matthew Penny, Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion</i> <i>matthew.penny@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
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 19 May 2026	People and Health Overview Committee	Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	<i>Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships</i> <i>Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> , <i>Jennifer Lowis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement</i> <i>jennifer.lowis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dft Rental E-scooter Trial Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Seeking Cabinet approval to enable two areas of Dorset to introduce an e-scooter rental service trial. The two areas are: 1) Upton and Corfe Mullen 2) Weymouth, Portland, Chickereil and Dorchester.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 19 May 2026		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Christopher Whitehouse, Projects Team Manager christopher.whitehouse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Kate Tunks, Service Manager for Infrastructure and Assets kate.tunks@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Bridport Reablement Centre Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open This report to provide an update on the Bridport Reablement Centre Project, including approval on the Stage 2 Scheme and award of the build contract to the preferred construction partner.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 19 May 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 29 Apr 2026	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Sam Poole, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Future direction of public health contracts following disaggregation of the Shared Service Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open This report will update Cabinet on commissioning intentions, and preferred arrangements for commissioning public health services following disaggregation of the shared service in 2024-25. Cabinet is asked to support the recommendations on	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 19 May 2026		Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health sam.crowe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Director of Public Health and Prevention (Sam Crowe)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
future direction of travel for public health contracts. A mirror paper is going to BCP Council Cabinet with the same recommendations.					
June					

Youth Justice Plan Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To approve the Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27.	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 16 Jul 2026	Cabinet 23 Jun 2026	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>David Webb, Head of Service - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service</i> <i>david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
Draft Outturn Report 2025/26 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the 2025/26 Outturn report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 23 Jun 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Sian Hedger, Deputy s151 Officer</i> <i>sian.hedger@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer</i>
September					

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
July 2026 (period 4) financial management report 26/27 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the Period 4 financial management report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 8 Sep 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk , Sian Hedger, Deputy s151 Officer sian.hedger@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer
November 2026					
September 2026 (period 6) financial management report 26/27 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the period 6 financial management report 2026/27.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 10 Nov 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk , Sian Hedger, Deputy s151 Officer sian.hedger@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer
February 2027					
December 2026 Quarter 3 financial management plan 2026/2027 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the Quarter 3 financial management plan 2026/27.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 2 Feb 2027		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk , Sian Hedger, Deputy s151 Officer sian.hedger@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Budget & Medium term financial plan strategy report (MTFP) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the medium Term Financial (MTFP) and budget strategy.	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 11 Feb 2027	Cabinet 2 Feb 2027	Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Sian Hedger, Deputy s151 Officer</i> <i>sian.hedger@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>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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