

# Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology

**Phase 1 (2021-23) Progress Report – Summer 2023**

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# Introduction

Back in 2019, one of the council's first actions was to make a declaration on the significance of the threat posed by climate change and biodiversity loss, and it then promptly established a cross-party Executive Advisory Panel to gather information and make recommendations on actions.

The council adopted its first strategy in 2021, setting clear targets towards a carbon neutral council by 2040 and a carbon neutral county by 2050. Projects were then set into motion, officers recruited (including a new Corporate Director), governance established, and significant capital resource dedicated to delivery. As part of the Dorset Council Plan, the council also made 'protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology' as one of our five council priorities.

In March this year – two years on – we refreshed our strategy and action plan for Phase 2 - taking stock considering progress to date and new national policy, and tweaking our vision for a net zero, nature positive and resilient council and county.

This report aims to end the first phase by taking stock of what has been achieved so far against the original 2021-23 action plan, and to give recognition to the scale of activity to date.

But the final section also aims to stress that the scale and speed of change required to continue to deliver are significantly challenging. Championing the council's significant achievements to date should not distract us from the magnitude of the task that lies ahead if we are to continue progressing along our decarbonisation and nature recovery trajectory – let alone also preparing to make ourselves resilient to the growing early impacts of climate change.

As the report below outlines, not everything has been initiated in this first phase and there has inevitably been some prioritisation given resource constraints. But there has been a significant amount that has been accomplished and which set a very strong foundation for the next phase of our work.

The sections below are split into the themes and underlying objectives for each element of the original 2021-2023 action plan. The status of each action is listed alongside the corresponding action in the refreshed 2023 action plan. A short narrative is provided on key highlights of progress for each objective. The overwhelming majority of actions are noted as 'in progress', reflecting that most are underway but ongoing long-term actions. Some have not commenced and have been rolled over to the next phase.

This report provides a qualitative narrative of progress against actions but does not provide a quantitative description of our emissions and our consequent progress against our emissions trajectory. The latter is the subject of our Autumn/Winter progress reporting.

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## Making it happen

### Objective 1: Ensure Climate and ecological concerns are embedded at the heart of decision and plan making

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure procurement processes and strategy embed climate and ecological concerns</li> </ul>	In progress	E6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure climate change, climate resilience and ecological enhancement are embedded in our key strategies and plans, such as the developing Dorset Local Plan and our asset management plans.</li> </ul>	In progress	E3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop tools to undertake robust impact and policy appraisal to ensure climate change &amp; ecological priorities and targets are considered in all key corporate projects, programmes, and strategies, and will utilise whole-life costing when assessing all capital projects.</li> </ul>	In progress	E2, F21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review climate risk assessments undertaken by former district councils and latest Met office data, in order to fully understand risks to DC by climate change and develop a climate adaption plan.</li> </ul>	In progress	O19, O20

Climate and ecology is one of the top priorities embedded within the [Council Plan](#) and [Delivery Plan](#), and the 2023 MTFP includes climate change as a priority. Our refreshed Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy was also adopted in March 2023 to clarify our path for the next phase of our work, and now more clearly articulates the three pillars of climate, ecology and resilience. Work to embed within wider strategies is ongoing as they emerge, and recently include the Library Strategy, Commercial Strategy, emerging Housing Strategy, and emerging corporate strategies on data and people. Work is ongoing to embed within the Local Plan given its delayed adoption, and [interim planning guidance](#) has been produced until then. A new post was created in November 2022 to help facilitate embedding, and a new [Impact Tool](#) was adopted in March 2023 which should help better steer policy and strategy development to effectively embed climate and ecology. The new Service Plan template also now explicitly prompts on how the plan supports protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology.

An [Impact Tool](#) was developed and approved in March. It will support officers and members to identify and understand their impacts as they develop projects, programmes, and strategies; and give a clear and visual summary of impacts to support decision-makers. We are now working to integrate it into the report writing process: developing guidance for users, training for our green champions, and developing comms for its rollout.

As noted, climate and ecology has been embedded as a priority within our Commercial Strategy – and Cabinet reiterated commitment to sustainable procurement through the Procurement Forward Plan in February. Accordingly, there are a range of climate and ecology considerations within the Social Value Evaluation Questions for suppliers on CO2, renewables, waste, and water use amongst others. Some relevant tools, guides and training are provided in the council's Learning Hub in the Commercially Minded (part of the Commercialisation Transformation Programme). The Impact Tool will further help inform commissioning and procurement decision-making.

Work to review council-wide vulnerability to climate risk impacts has now commenced and will then be used to review our risk management approach – including for the optimisation of

Emergency Plans. Some climate risks are incorporated into the council's corporate risk register.

Work to commence a county-wide climate risk partnership approach will be developed during the next phase of work, and is being phased to follow the council risk assessment and the next National Adaptation Programme (which should produce localised climate resilience data to inform the approach).

<b>Objective 2: Ensure leadership &amp; governance are in place to ensure delivery of Climate and Ecological Emergency strategy</b>		
<b>2021-2023 Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2023-25 Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure enough human resource is in place to drive forward action either through Council departments or involvement of wider partners.</li> </ul>	In progress	E5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate decarbonising Dorset Council pension scheme</li> </ul>	In progress	O18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby Government for additional resources and the national policy framework to support climate &amp; ecological action in Dorset</li> </ul>	In progress	E4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review governance structures to ensure successful delivery of the Climate Strategy and ensure key decision-makers have a clear mandate for action.</li> </ul>	Complete	E1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively input into national forums and consultations to encourage policy development to tackle climate &amp; ecological emergency</li> </ul>	In progress	E4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participate in inter authority climate emergency networks as well as national networks set up by LGA, APSE etc.. To share and build best practice</li> </ul>	In progress	E7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in the delivery of actions, and that departments are linked at a strategic level (e.g. waste and planning).</li> </ul>	In progress	E10, E1, E2, E3

A costed action plan presented to cabinet on 6 October 2020, highlighted that significant additional revenue and capital would be required to deliver the strategy over its lifetime at the scale and pace required. £10m capital was allocated in 2022/23 over 5 years, which is strengthening work underway on our operational footprint in key areas.

The central Sustainability Team was strengthened in 2022 by the creation of a new Director of Climate Change role and a Policy Officer role – alongside co-opting two other short-term officers within the team. A Programme Manager was also appointed for the Operational Programme, to help manage the much wider decentralised network of officers across the council who are delivering actions.

Maximising opportunities for external funding and partnership working are key and over the past year Dorset Council has been extremely successful at drawing in external funding streams. This has included £19m for the Salix programme, £8.25m for Low Carbon Dorset, £1.9m for EV infrastructure, large portions of the £4.5m Shared Prosperity Fund for Low Carbon Dorset's continuation and Healthy Homes Dorset, another £4.3m of Home Upgrade Grant funding following earlier £859k Green Homes Grant funding, and £1.3m for the AONB-administered Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

Only 1.2% of the total investment assets of the Dorset Council pension fund were in fossil fuels in 2022. The fund is managed by Brunel Pension Partnership – a £35bn pool scheme of ten funds (including 9 local authorities and the Environment Agency). It is a signatory to Climate Action 100+, and adopted a refreshed [Climate Change Policy](#) in February 2023, following a [Climate Stocktake](#). It regularly publishes performance reports – including an [annual R&I report](#), a [Carbon Metric Report](#) and [TCFD Climate Action Plan Report](#). Most [recently](#), compared to its benchmark its aggregate portfolio is 27% less carbon intensive on

a Weighted Average Carbon Intensity (WACI) basis and 35% less than the baseline set in 2019.

Lobbying on climate has been undertaken on matters pertaining to energy, planning and transport with the Secretary of State for Housing, the Minister for Energy, Clean Growth & Climate Change and the Minister of State for Housing amongst others.

The programme's quarterly Operational Group was established in July 2022, with a programme manager appointed and delivery leads assigned to 8 workstreams to support delivery of the council's 2040 net zero target. To date this has achieved a 26% reduction in emissions, 22/23 emissions figures will be published in Autumn 2023. To support the Facilitation Programme, we have established a Public Sector Decarbonisation Group to act as a forum for sharing best practice and developing aligned and joint projects with local public sector partners in Dorset.

The council has responded to national consultations on a regular basis, such as government's net zero review and the Environmental Audit Committee's call for evidence on electrification.

The council participates in local and national forums, in addition to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Group noted above, including ADEPT, the Southwest Inter-authority Climate Change Officers Network, the University of Exeter's Communities of Practice, LGE and APSE groups, and relevant participation in non-climate specific but relevant strategic bodies like the Western Gateway STB. The council is also a member of multiple relevant natural environment partnerships, including Dorset Coast Forum, the Urban Heaths Partnership, and the Local Nature Partnership.

The adoption of climate and ecology as key corporate priorities has been widely communicated to all staff through briefings, senior director meetings and internal comms campaigns – alongside the programme approach being driven by the Operational Group. Several senior members and staff have received accredited carbon literacy training and an internal staff training programme is being developed. A Green Champions Network has also recently been established to further help champion and facilitate action across the organisation, and the Impact Tool will further help embed understanding of responsibilities.

### **Objective 3: Ensure adequate levels of resources are in place to ensure successful delivery**

<b>2021-2023 Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2023-25 Action</b>
▪ Respond to government calls and submit high quality grant applications for all themes	In progress	E5
▪ Explore options to raise additional funds through borrowing, council tax, developer contributions, and business rates.	In progress	E5
▪ Develop a finance strategy to enable us to deliver this climate emergency response. This includes establishing invest-to-save schemes, asset rationalisation, and building projects into our capital programme	Rolled over to Phase 2	E5
▪ Work with partners to maximise opportunities for external funding from government and others, making sure Dorset gets its fair share.	In progress	E5

Responding to government grant opportunities is an ongoing area work, and successful bids of over £50m have already been secured in key areas such as Public EV charging, the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme, the Transforming Cities Fund, Home Upgrade Grant, and supporting wider collaborative bids with partners such as for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme.



Other options for raising additional funds were scoped and continue to be explored, and projects have been built into our capital programme through a £10m allocation. A finance strategy has not yet been developed, but opportunities like climate bonds may merit further exploration in the next phase of the programme.

The council's [Infrastructure Funding Statement](#) evidences multiple relevant CIL and s106 funded projects which have been undertaken, including for flood defences, nitrate mitigation, heathland mitigation, green infrastructure and SANG, infrastructure for modal shift, recycling infrastructure and community growing space. Under the [Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol](#) compensation funds are secured for the residual loss of habitat from development. Mitigation funds raised through s106 and CIL are facilitated by steering groups and mitigation coordinators for Heathland, Nitrate, Recreation pressures.

#### Objective 4: Ensure robust Monitoring & Reporting of progress

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a robust baseline for council and county carbon emissions and ecology</li> </ul>	In progress	E11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and report on actions and progress in achieving carbon reduction by producing an biannual report (twice yearly) of progress on climate change targets, budgets, and actions.</li> </ul>	In progress	E11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include climate and social value criteria in the South West audit partnership audit requirements</li> </ul>	In progress	E2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further explore &amp; expand the Dorset county footprint, beyond the data provided by central government, to provide a wider understanding of Dorset's emissions to include other GHGs,. agriculture &amp; land use and consumption where feasible</li> </ul>	In progress	E11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider monitoring &amp; reporting wider emissions from council activities (Scope 3) such as procurement.</li> </ul>	In progress	E11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with key partners to develop approach and methodology to strategically monitor ecological quality and monitor success in tackling ecological emergency</li> </ul>	In progress	E11

The council's scopes 1 & 2 emissions baseline along with some elements of scope 3 has been determined and forms the basis of autumn quantitative reporting (last [Autumn 2022](#)). Good options for Scope 3 baselining have been identified, but there are resource constraints on implementation that will need considering in the next phase. An ecological baseline is intended to be included in the autumn 2023 report, with work already underway to produce this.

Some monitoring and reporting of Scope 3 emissions (such as commuting) is already integrated within our progress reporting. Achieving monitoring of procured and commissioned activity will be a significant piece of work for the next phase.

A methodology for strategic monitoring of ecological indicators has been scoped and work is underway to develop these. It should be noted that there may be a need to align these to any statutory monitoring requirements imposed upon the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain policy as these emerge and embed over the next couple of years.

Climate change is included in SAWP audit programme, and feasibility of wider integration is to be considered.

Biannual reports are now produced for Scrutiny, with a qualitative narrative on action produced in Spring/Summer, and a quantitative report on progress against targets produced in Autumn/Winter (with the latter timed to coincide with the release of county-scale emissions statistics).

Government county-scale statistics have now been expanded to incorporate agriculture and waste emissions sources. Consumption emissions are identifiable at the county scale from a separate source, and we will consider the potential inclusion in future reporting.

### Objective 5: Raising awareness to support action and behaviour change

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a consistent brand for Climate plan initiatives</li> </ul>	Complete	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise targeted briefings and training sessions for officers, members, and decision makers on the benefits and opportunities of tackling climate change, highlighting this contribution to other council priorities.</li> </ul>	In progress	E10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an internal climate change champions programme</li> </ul>	In progress	E10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the awareness, engagement, and knowledge of our staff and service providers through staff awareness campaigns, with a focus on how employees can reduce their carbon emissions. This is in addition to increasing their climate resilience in the workplace and at home and integrating key climate change messages into induction programmes.</li> </ul>	In progress	E10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide more accessible and digestible information on climate change and ecology and the actions we can take through a range of channels</li> </ul>	In progress	E9

A consistent 'Greener, Cleaner Dorset' brand for the programme has now been developed and adopted (as per the front page of this report).

Targeted briefings and training sessions have been given to members, staff, and town and parish councils. This has included informal briefings by the team, training offered by the Met Office through Learning Hub, and formal accredited Carbon Literacy training offered to some senior leaders and members through the LGA. Recent sessions for Town & Parish Councils held through DAPTC are available [here](#). Further training is currently being developed, including for implementation of the new Impact Tool, as is a Sharepoint site within the intranet Council Plan pages.

A Green Champions programme has now been established and staff can now sign up to participate through the council intranet. This complements wider awareness and engagement campaigns focused at staff on issues such as energy efficiency. A Yammer climate community for staff has also been established.

Accessible public information has also been provided through social media and our updated [website](#) (including guidance on what action [individuals](#), [communities](#) and [businesses](#) can take), alongside advice for [businesses and organisations](#) and [households](#), on [EV charging](#), the [natural environment](#) and [waste management](#) amongst others. We've also achieved press coverage via our press releases on [climate](#), [environment](#) and [waste](#).

## Objective 6: Supporting Community Action

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help to facilitate and support new and existing community-led projects and community organisations active in this area and work with these groups to sign post and communicate shared messages.</li> </ul>	In progress	E8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Town and Parish Councils to develop and implement their organisation and area wide climate action plans. This is as well as helping them engage with residents to encourage community action and drive change at a grassroots community level.</li> </ul>	In progress	E8

Proactive support to community organisations has been given through advice and grants provided to [Low Carbon Dorset's community projects](#), and grants are also available for environmental projects via our [Capital Leverage Fund](#), [Biodiversity Compensation Fund](#), and [Community & Culture Fund](#) – as well as signposting to wider funding opportunities through the [Dorset Council Fund Finder](#). Guidance for communities is available on our [website](#), and our recycling team also offer [visits and talks](#) for community groups.

Technical advice to local councils has been provided through the Low Carbon Dorset programme and in addition to engagement at this year's DAPTC AGM we've also begun a series of [town & parish council webinars](#) focusing initially on general guidance, EVs and buildings – including provision of [general guidance](#) on opportunities and funding sources.

We are also now working with parishes to deliver a community tree planting programme. This will involve training to support good decision making, support for the development of parish tree plans and support with planting. A community questionnaire has been sent out and completed by ~65 parishes that is helping to guide the development of the programme. We are also working with Public Health Dorset on a school tree programme in west Dorset.

## Objective 7: Engagement with key Stakeholders

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with residents, young people, T&amp;P Councils and key organisations on this strategy and plans as they develop</li> </ul>	In progress	E9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Dorset Climate Emergency Partnership group with other key public, private, and third sector partners to deliver a carbon neutral county</li> </ul>	In progress	E7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build support from stakeholders and the wider public by informing and educating on the benefits and opportunities of acting on climate change and creating, maintaining, and developing partnership working on all aspects of climate change action</li> </ul>	In progress	E9, E7

To develop the original strategy, extensive consultation with our communities was undertaken in 2020/2021, including a [Call for Ideas](#), and with over 12,000 comments received and analysed to inform the strategy and action plan. Further engagement will also be undertaken for the development of our [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) and other relevant strategies like the Local Plan.



[Dorset Youth Council](#) gives the opportunity for young people to engage with decision-makers, and participants from the Youth Council engaged in the [Inquiry Day](#) held for developing the council's climate strategy. The strategy development process also saw representatives from Dorset schools engage with the Executive Advisory Panel and included a visit by the panel to Damers school to learn about their eco-school activity. Young people also had the opportunity to engage with decision-maker's the 2022 [Youth Climate Conference](#).

The council encourages Dorset schools to participate in the eco-schools award scheme, and Dorset has many schools that do outstanding environmental work – including a large number of Green Flag eco-schools. Resources for schools are also available through our [climate pages](#), [Litter Free Dorset](#), and our [recycling team](#) also undertakes direct engagement. Multiple local schools are also independently participants in EnergySparks and Solar for Schools.

A Public Sector Decarbonisation Group has been established for sharing best practice and developing aligned and joint projects with key Dorset public sector partners. Other forms of partnership working have been established to in part address climate and ecology even if not singularly focused on it (such as our Enhanced Partnership with bus operators). Consideration of forums or task & finish groups with other sectors will be considered in the next phase where there is practical added value for clear outcomes (such as to facilitate county-wide adaptation work).

#### Objective 8: Increase Renewable energy generation in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby central government over the major hurdles to renewable energy deployment, the Navitus Bay decision, investment needed on grid infrastructure, and future of heat</li> </ul>	In progress	E4

Lobbying of central government, network operators and others on major barriers has been undertaken, including through a letter from the Leader. Evidence has also been provided to both network operators, government, committee inquiries, and via consultation responses to help demonstrate the local challenges, such as through the BEIS net zero review. This has in part utilised evidence commissioned by the LEP from [Regen](#). We also have ongoing liaison with network operators and are engaged in relevant national & regional groups.

#### Objective 9: Increase resilience to climate change – Funding

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby government for more funding for climate risk management</li> </ul>	In progress	E4

Lobbying on climate resilience will be undertaken in the next phase of work as our adaptation programme develops to align with the development of the forthcoming National Adaptation Programme due to launch in 2023 (which, *inter alia*, should facilitate localised data).

#### Objective 10: Influence national government to secure additional funding

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby government e.g. for Rail improvements</li> </ul>	In progress	E4

Lobbying has been undertaken through various means. Most recent, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport [gave evidence](#) to the Parliamentary Transport Select Committee in early January 2023 as part of its inquiry into Rural Connectivity.

### Objective 11: Decarbonise heating in housing and community, public and commercial Buildings

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby government for clarity on national strategy for heat and national policy framework</li> </ul>	In progress	E4

Pro-active lobbying of Government for powers and funding has been undertaken through direct representation to government, lobbying of, MP's and representation through national groups.

## Buildings

### Objective 1: Ensure Council estate becomes zero carbon by 2040

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; implement decarbonisation programme to achieve carbon neutral estate by 2040</li> </ul>	In progress	O1, O2, O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include climate &amp; ecological considerations as part of the Asset Review and ensure future asset management plan is aligned to achieving DC carbon budgets to 2040</li> </ul>	In progress	E3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install energy efficiency measures as part of the decarbonisation programme to achieve carbon neutral estate by 2040</li> </ul>	In progress	O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install small scale renewable energy systems as part of the decarbonisation programme to achieve carbon neutral estate by 2040</li> </ul>	In progress	O1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand centralised Building energy management system (BEMS)</li> </ul>	In progress	O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-instate a school's energy programme to support and work with schools to reduce energy and maximise use of renewable energy technologies</li> </ul>	In progress	O1, O2, O3, F7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline for ICT emissions &amp; Develop plan to reduce emissions from ICT consumption</li> </ul>	In progress	O13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review operational controls on energy using equipment across council estate to ensure optimum efficiency</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure procurement processes give preference to energy efficient equipment &amp; water efficient equipment</li> </ul>	In progress	E6

The council has now completed decarbonisation plans for 80 buildings (including all PSDS buildings and remaining off-gas schools), and a plan is in place to develop a new Strategic Asset Management Plan that is aligned to our zero carbon targets – which should be developed by end of 2023.

Phase 1 of our estate retrofit programme has now been completed, thanks to a £19m grant. This has upgraded over 200 buildings with over 350 renewable generation, heating or energy efficiency measures – including 100 solar installations, 18 heat pumps, 6 battery storage projects, 31 electrical infrastructure upgrades, 45 LED upgrades, 12 fabric upgrades, 6 insulation projects, 185 Building Management System upgrades, and a Free Air Cooling

project. Future such work will be contingent on future rounds of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding.

The programme has also supported many schools to undertake retrofit and solar PV works, realising significant energy savings for over 100 schools – including engaging young people in projects through the installation and monitoring of measures. This has included the upgrading of academy legacy BMS systems to help ensure savings are maintained post-academisation.

We've yet to undertake a comprehensive review of operational controls on energy using equipment during phase 1 but have prioritised retrofit and the baselining of our ICT equipment emissions specifically. The ICT baseline now complete and we are now developing targets and an action plan to cut these, which is due end of July. We have already minimised the number of servers and installed 'free air cooling' for the datacentre and are working on a proof of concept to remanufacture council laptops – as well as looking at reuse and recycling options for decommissioned devices.

Work to further review operational controls on energy-using equipment has been incorporated into the 2023-25 action plan (O3). Energy and water efficiency are factors within our social value scoring and our new Impact Tool should prompt further emphasis on this, but work remains to prioritise these in equipment procurement decision-making.

## Objective 2: Ensure all new Council developments are zero carbon

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a policy to ensure all new buildings that Dorset Council has direct influence over (as landowners, clients, or designers) are zero carbon (this being true zero carbon, and so a negative BER to cover the unregulated emissions).</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and promote case studies and examples of best practice on our own estate to encourage replication by others</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure use of sustainable materials in new constructions</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate available tools to incorporate whole-life costing into property processes</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trial tools to measure the embodied carbon in construction, such as the open source "EC3" tool</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O5

Work to establish a policy, trial tools, and create case studies for new council developments to be zero carbon is yet to be delivered owing to resource constraints and has therefore been rolled over into the 2023-25 action plan (O5), and a policy officer has been recruited to the Sustainability Team who can support to help take this forward.

Whilst a policy could be developed within 6 months, implementing it will be contingent upon whether capital allocations for future building projects covers the associated costs.

## Objective 3: Decarbonise heating in housing and community, public and commercial buildings

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted campaign to encourage all buildings off the gas grid to switch to heat pumps or biomass for heating</li> </ul>	In progress	F5, E9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate large scale installation of low carbon sources of heating (air/ground/water source heat pumps) using social housing as a test bed in partnership with RSLs</li> </ul>	In progress	F4

▪ Investigate potential in Dorset for large-scale 'blue' hydrogen generation with carbon capture and storage	In progress	F4
▪ Provide support for Dorset Council employees working from home in winter - funding/ thermal upgrades/advice	In progress	O7
▪ Undertake heat mapping exercises to identify opportunities for low carbon heat in Dorset such as any clusters of buildings suitable for district heating, or large heat demands off the gas grid	Rolled over to Phase 2	F18
▪ Use council buildings in trial projects to test the use of hydrogen heating	Rolled over to Phase 2	O2

A programme to decarbonise heating has been initiated through several programmes, including for public buildings through our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme programme, for housing through our Healthy Homes Dorset programme, and for community and commercial buildings through our Low Carbon Dorset programme.

Further such work will be contingent upon our receipt of further grant funding. The council, with Public Health Dorset and BCP council, has recently won a further £4.34m through HUG2 for our Healthy Homes Dorset programme, which will help further support heating decarbonisation measures and energy efficiency upgrades for local households. This includes a targeted campaign for homes that are off gas, low income, or EPC D-G.

The council's Sustainability Team supported SW Net Zero Hub to make a regional consortium application for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, as part of a larger regional bid to support large-scale installation of low carbon heating in social housing. It has subsequently been [awarded](#) £37.7m to support the delivery of over £82m worth of 'fabric first' home upgrade measures to bring low-income households up to EPC rating C. This includes, for example, £1.4m for [Magna Housing](#), £0.53m for [Aster Group](#), and £9m for [Stonewater](#) to undertake measures.

Investigation of the potential for hydrogen for Dorset was commissioned from Regen by our Local Enterprise Partnership, and is detailed in our [Low Carbon Energy Route Map and Investment Opportunities](#). Our Low Carbon Dorset programme has subsequently supported [Canford Renewable Energy's green hydrogen project](#) with a £1.5m grant. The South West's first green hydrogen production facility, it was granted full planning permission by the council in October 2021 for the installation of a 5MW solar farm and 0.90MW electrolyser to produce 125,000Kg of green hydrogen annually. The next phase of our work will further investigate the potential for hydrogen and trials locally.

An ongoing energy saving advice campaign began in June 2022 for employees and residents. It provides [advice](#), a [guidance booklet](#), and signposts to support available through our Healthy Homes Dorset programme. It was circulated through multiple channels including displays on our estate, our website, our resident [newsletter](#), and [social media](#). Further [Low Carbon Dorset guidance resources](#), integrating low carbon heating, have also been produced. Further such campaigns will emphasise the opportunities of the national Boiler Upgrade Scheme and Home Upgrade Grant.

Work on heat mapping has been explored and a standard approach has been discussed at national and regional level. Further resource is required to action, but discussions continue with Government & Partners – so it has been rolled over to Phase 2. Trialling has also been rolled over to Phase 2 when policy and tech better serves such activity.

#### Objective 4: Ensure new buildings in Dorset are zero carbon

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a positive planning framework, in partnership with other agencies, for achieving true net zero carbon home standards in Dorset</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage designs and layouts which lend themselves to low-carbon energy solutions and ecological enhancements and provide guidance and advice for developers to achieve zero carbon standards</li> </ul>	In progress	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the relevant housing strategies/policies incorporate the reduction of carbon emissions, decreased risk to climate impacts &amp; ecological enhancements.</li> </ul>	In progress	F19, E3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop trials and pilots, with RSLs, of localised offsite manufacturing for new build and retrofit</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to lobby central government over changes to national policy to encourage and enforce carbon-neutral planning and development</li> </ul>	In progress	E4

Strengthening the planning framework to encourage sustainable designs, layouts and construction methods will be achieved through the development of the new Local Plan. Work to prepare a new Local Plan has been underway since unitarization, but its adoption has now been delayed until 2026. Until it is adopted the existing adopted local plans of the former district and borough councils will provide the main part of the development plan for their respective areas.

[Interim guidance and a position statement](#) has therefore been prepared to highlight that climate change is a material consideration and to support the consistent application of existing policies which maximise their opportunities to address climate change. Furthermore, a sustainability checklist has also been prepared for submission alongside applications, and additional guidance has been prepared on retrofitting listed buildings. These documents were approved by Cabinet on 28 March subject to a six-week consultation.

Furthermore, the [Dorset Biodiversity Protocol](#) has been established to address the impacts on biodiversity, to ensure that development must avoid, mitigate and compensate for such impacts. Ecology Guidance for Planning Applications has been produced for developers, providing a flow-chart or checklist and guidance on which surveys may be required. The protocol sits alongside further Supplementary Planning Documents pertaining to issues such as heathland and nitrogen mitigation. Work is currently now underway to establish a system for ensuring that developments also realise a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

The council's Housing Strategy is being developed in 2023, and the Sustainability Team are currently engaged to embed our strategic ambitions for climate, nature and adaptation within its emerging objectives, targets and policies.

No trials or pilots have yet been undertaken with RSLs on offsite manufacturing, and this has been carried over into the 2023-25 Action Plan (F7).

Lobbying on the climate emergency (including on the Planning White Paper and the consultation on Future Homes Standard) has been undertaken with the Secretary of State for Housing, the Minister for Energy, Clean Growth & Climate Change and the Minister of State for Housing.

## Objective 5: Improve energy efficiency of current housing stock



2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver funding to assist residents to decarbonise heating (delivered through Healthy Homes Dorset Scheme)</li> </ul>	In progress	F5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate residential and non-residential sectors on low carbon technologies, energy efficiency, and sources of funding to encourage behaviour change &amp; greater uptake of low-carbon technology</li> </ul>	In progress	E9, F1, F5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforce minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rental sector (focus on EPC certificates E &amp; F without exemptions)</li> </ul>	In progress	F6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership (e.g. with RSLs, other councils and partners) to deliver programmes to improve energy efficiency of housing stock &amp; hard to treat properties</li> </ul>	In progress	F7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote innovative and sensitive energy efficiency/renewable energy measures in conservation areas and on listed buildings which preserve and enhance such assets for the needs of existing and future occupants</li> </ul>	In progress	F1, F5, F7, F20

As per the above on heating, energy efficiency and low carbon tech interventions have been initiated through our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme programme, Healthy Homes Dorset programme and Low Carbon Dorset programme.

For residential housing, our Healthy Homes Dorset Programme is a partnership with Public Health Dorset and BCP that is facilitating insulation installation for warmer, healthier, and cheaper to run local homes, with 300 completions in 2022-23 alone. Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery 1a has now been delivered and closed. Over £4m of further Home Upgrade Grant 2 funding has been secured for delivery in 2024/25 – alongside securing funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to fund projects ineligible for HUG2, £500k cost of living funding to complement HUG2 for delivery in gas-served homes, and £500k Shared Prosperity Fund for wider programme work. Additionally, we also provide guidance through our [website](#) and supported [DCAN's Greener Open Homes](#) campaign in 2022.

The council was awarded £98,000 to improve the most poorly insulated rented homes in Dorset through our MEES Enforcement Project. Landlords owning EPC rated F or G rated properties were engaged through targeting of 700 rented homes with guidance, support, and awareness. The project has now largely completed, enabling a comprehensive understanding of let properties. Through the project we also developed our ground-breaking “Energy Rating Improver”, which enables landlords to access EPC ratings and improvement options/costs for their property. This has been a fundamental tool to improving EPC ratings on over 200 properties so far, and the project has received recognition on the Net Zero 50 list for public sector digital innovations NET ZERO 50, as well as a finalist for the 2022 Granicus Digital public sector awards.

As noted above, the Sustainability Team supported SW Net Zero Hub to make a regional consortium application for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, which was awarded £37.7m to deliver ‘fabric first’ home upgrade measures.

As noted above, a position statement, sustainability checklist and guidance for listed buildings has been developed to help to promote and guide on measures in conservation areas and listed buildings and should be implemented later this year subject to the results of consultation. Our programmes have also demonstrated the potential, such as through facilitating deployment at heritage sites like [Durlston Castle](#) and Sherborne Abbey.

## Objective 6: Increase resilience to climate change – Buildings

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop local plan policies to ensure climate risks are identified and avoided in new developments, including flood risk and overheating</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Emergency Plans are adapted to reflect changing climate risks and are tested and proven fit for purpose</li> </ul>	In progress	O20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to increase climate change resilience of communities &amp; buildings by understanding the future climate risks within Dorset</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F34

Strengthening the planning framework for more climate resilient designs, layouts and construction methods will be achieved through the development of the new Local Plan, which has now been delayed until 2026.

A series of flood investigations and flood alleviation interventions have been undertaken over the last decade, the most notable being a £750,000 scheme installing resilience measures for 94 homes. Flood alleviation schemes in Bridport and Portesham have been completed, and our Building Resilience in Communities project is underway in Weymouth, to engage communities in flood risk management and boost resilience. Over 40 natural flood management structures have been installed.

Work to review council-wide vulnerability to climate risks has now commenced and will then be used to review our risk management approach – including for the optimisation of Emergency Plans.

Work to commence a county-wide climate risk partnership approach will be developed during the next phase of work and is being phased to follow the council risk assessment and the next National Adaptation Programme (which should produce localised climate resilience data to inform the approach).

## Economy

### Objective 1: Maximise opportunities for clean growth in Dorset and encourage investment in green jobs and business

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure clean growth is included within the DLEP investment prospectus &amp; low carbon projects are developed in readiness for any future funding/investment</li> </ul>	In progress	E5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with government in defining local gigabit strategy and delivery plan for 100% gigabit-capable coverage by 2026.</li> </ul>	In progress	E4, F13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with DLEP to ensure clean growth at the centre of Dorset's local industrial strategy</li> </ul>	Complete	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to support the provision of local training for green skills</li> </ul>	In progress	F35
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the low carbon and renewable energy economy in Dorset and encourage investment to create high quality and skilled jobs and businesses in this sector.</li> </ul>	In progress	F36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to attract inward investment in green sector businesses with highly skilled workforces.</li> </ul>	In progress	F36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use potential COVID-19 recovery funds to provide investment in low-carbon technologies &amp; ecological enhancements for key sectors</li> </ul>	Complete	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support greater deployment and strengthen high-speed broadband/ ICT infrastructure in Dorset to enable business to utilise greater</li> </ul>	In progress	F13

home working, reduce travel and facilitate innovation and collaboration		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate opportunities building renewable energy infrastructure and retro fitting on council employment land &amp; premises (industrial estates/hotels etc)</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	O1, O2, O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate building renewable energy infrastructure at Dorset Innovation Park</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop the Dorset Innovation Park to become a centre of excellence in clean growth &amp; ecological enhancement by encouraging low carbon business into the area, facilitating research and development and ensuring best practice low carbon buildings.</li> </ul>	Rolled over to phase 2	F36

Clean growth was placed at the core of both the [Dorset Living Better](#) investment prospectus (in its Natural pillar) and the [Dorset Local Industrial Strategy](#), and the LEP produced a [Green Economy dashboard](#). Shared Prosperity Fund funding has since been secured for low carbon projects with economic benefits (including for the continuation of our Low Carbon Dorset and Healthy Homes Dorset programmes), and Dorset LEP has also provided investment to Dorset Green H2 through its Growing Places Fund loan scheme.

Green skills have been included within the [Local Skills Improvement Plan](#), with net zero one of its 6 priorities – and based upon [local employer research](#) using surveying and interviews on net zero. The Shared Prosperity Fund will provide funding for green skills training in FY2025. [The Dorset Green Skills Hub](#) – a partnership between Bournemouth & Poole College, Weymouth College and Skills & Learning Adult Community Education – launched in late 2022 with the help of a major government grant; and commenced its course offerings in 2023.

Further to those, additional work to promote the green economy and encourage investment is ongoing with clients but details here are commercially sensitive. Strategic work to better promote the green economy will be enabled by the planned 2024 refresh of the Economic Growth Strategy.

Some Covid-19 business support was provided through Additional Restrictions Grants, but there was little demand for exclusively green actions.

A classification of [broadband coverage areas](#) was undertaken, and the Digital Dorset team identified areas in need of improved broadband across 35 sites to inform Government's Project Gigabit programme. The Gigahub Connectivity in Rural Dorset Project is now well underway, with over 7,000 local homes and businesses the first nationally to benefit. The council has been awarded almost £900,000 to oversee the project, and a contract has been awarded to Blandford-based Wessex Internet to deliver the rollout in North and East Dorset. The second phase is due to launch later this year. Digital Dorset has also undertaken facilitation work to enable digital connectivity, including through [support schemes](#) like the [Gigabit Voucher scheme](#), the [Embedded Digital Champion project](#) and the annual [Festival of the Future](#).

Further resource is required to undertake feasibility work for council employment land and premises, including to source legal guidance on what is possible to achieve under the scope of leases. This has therefore been rolled over to the Phase 2 Action Plan.

Investigation of prospective renewable infrastructure at Dorset Innovation Park has been rolled over into 2023 Action Plan (O1). Work to develop Dorset Innovation Park into a centre

of excellence in clean growth and low carbon has also been rolled over into 2023 Action Plan (F36)

## Objective 2: Turning Dorset into a Low Carbon tourist destination

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the tourism sector to develop specific programmes of support for sustainable tourism &amp; make Dorset a low-carbon tourism destination</li> </ul>	In progress	F36

Visit Dorset created an action plan in 2021. It has since created a [directory](#) of eco-friendly accommodation (including those with EV chargers), a [sustainability business support hub](#), a [guide for green tourism in Dorset](#) for visitors, promoted Low Carbon Dorset to local businesses, and has hosted webinars for local businesses. It is also a sponsor of the Dorset Tourism Awards, which includes an award in recognition of sustainable tourism. Visit Dorset was also a founder member of the Great South West Tourism Partnership to engage in regional-scale lobbying, and helped to shape the partnership's [Towards 2030](#) prospectus, which included an ask for a regional eco-friendly visitor destination project. A Dorset Council Sustainable Tourism Plan has been drafted including actions for implementation by a variety of council run services to lower the carbon footprint of tourism.

## Objective 3: Support Dorset businesses to become more energy and resource efficient and to install renewable energy

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote best practice case studies and target key organisations who could benefit most from low carbon technologies in partnership with the LEP and business sector organisations</li> </ul>	In progress	E9, F1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support businesses to become more energy and resource efficient and to install renewable energy by working with partners to expand Low Carbon Dorset programme</li> </ul>	In progress	F1

The initial phase of our [Low Carbon Dorset Programme](#) provided free advice and £6.2m in grant funding to local projects worth £17m, installing 13MW of renewables and saving 10kt CO2e/yr. An extension was secured to the programme to June 2023 to provide further technical support and grants to Dorset businesses. Resource has been secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund to continue the advisory service beyond June.

Low Carbon Dorset developed a series of best practice case studies (including 19 [business-focused case studies](#)), an [info pack for businesses](#), and a [guide to reducing emissions](#). The work of the programme has been promoted by the [LEP](#) and the [Dorset Chamber of Commerce](#) amongst other routes, including social media campaigns and the [local business press](#).

Litter Free Dorset has established the [Sustainable Business Network](#) and award scheme to recognise and celebrate positive business activity, holding its launch event in January.

Dedicated resource is required to assess the feasibility of renewable and energy efficiency interventions on council employment land and premises. Limitations to implementation may be imposed by leases, so policy will be required to provide legal steer on development of a draft green lease template in co-operation with Assets and Regen.

## Objective 4: Increase resilience to climate change – Economy

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with partners to help businesses to be more resilient to climate change through helping them understanding their key risks and actions they can take to become more resilient</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F34

The council's work as Lead Local Flood Authority incorporates works that benefit local businesses and engages them on risks. Major projects serving to increase economic resilience to flood risks include a series of flood investigations and alleviation interventions (such as in Bridport and Portesham) and the Building Resilience in Communities project in Weymouth – including supporting Dorset Coast Forum to produce the recently launched Flood Risk in Weymouth Guide.

As regards wider climate-related resilience risks, work to scope potential components of a county-wide adaptation partnership programme have been developed and will be phased to benefit from the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) due to launch in 2023.

## Food & Drink

### Objective 1: Increase local, low-carbon food production in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure well provisioned new allotments are provided wherever possible through the planning process and work with Towns and Parishes to enable community use</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F25, F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with producers, supermarkets, local business's (restaurants and café's) and partners to promote 'local food' Green Kitchen Standard/ Food for Life and reduce food miles</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F24, F25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote home growing to residents as part of wider communication campaigns</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	E9, F25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop plan to transition Council Farms to low carbon production - Work with County Farm tenants to encourage the adoption of more climate and ecological friendly practices, greater protection of soils, and share best practice with the wider farming community</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase range of edible fruits on Council owned open spaces e.g. through development of community orchards scheme</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensure procurement processes give preference to local food and explores carbon reduction opportunities in catering services and contracts</li></ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	E6

Further allotment provision policy would be covered by the future Local Plan, which has been delayed until 2026.

There has been limited activity working with businesses or residents on promoting low carbon foods so far, and this has been rolled over to Phase 2. Some general supporting advice on food is provided through our [website](#), and the council continues to support [Dorset Food & Drink](#) (a not-for-profit, community interest company) which supports and promotes local food and drink businesses.

Work has commenced to survey our council farms to identify further opportunities for nature and climate. This includes contracted work to undertake baseline ecological surveys on the



existing and potential biodiversity value of 15 council farms, part-funded by the AONB's [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) programme.

Action on edible fruits has been rolled over to Phase 2, though we do already provide some [guidance on planting trees](#), including fruit trees. Action on food within procurement will also be undertaken within broader work on procurement to be pursued in Phase 2.

All food waste collected is treated in-county using anaerobic digestion which produces biogas used to generate electricity, and biofertilizer sold as a soil improver for plants and crops. A weekly [food waste collection](#) service is available to all properties, including communal premises. Our [Zero Waste Map](#) signposts to food banks and community fridges which facilitate redistribution, and the council also promotes the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign. Litter Free Dorset also undertake [food waste campaigns](#).

The council has enabled some land for community growing (such as the lease of land for a peppercorn rent for use by [Bridport Community Orchard](#)), provided grant support to local organisations supporting surplus food redistribution (such as [The Nest](#) in Weymouth and [Blandford Community Fridge](#)), and has supported the development of a [food network](#) through cost of living funding to ensure all residents have access to sustainable, affordable food – which is in part facilitated through surplus redistribution.

### Objective 2: Encourage more low carbon cooking and meals

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Promote the principles and benefits of low carbon healthy cooking e.g. Green Kitchen Standard/ Food for Life and EATS to residents of Dorset	Rolled over to Phase 2	F24
▪ Explore adoption for local food Green Kitchen Standards/Food for life & reduce food miles within existing Dorset Council contracts	Rolled over to Phase 2	E6

Action on encouraging low carbon food consumption has been rolled over into the 2023-25 action plan (F24, F25, E6).

### Objective 3: Increase resilience to climate change - Food & Drink Supplies

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Work with partners to help food & drink suppliers within Dorset to be resilient and adapt to climate change	Rolled over to Phase 2	F34

Work to scope potential components of a county-wide adaptation partnership programme have been developed and will be phased to benefit from the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) due to launch in 2023.

## Natural Assets

### Objective 1: Protect and increase ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience on Council land

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Work with tenants of Council Farm's to promote and ensure best environmental practices are upheld and share best practice with the wider farming community	In progress	O16, F26

▪ Review all Dorset Council chemical use to ensure no harm to unintended species	In progress	O15, O17
▪ Develop a scientifically robust approach to identify & monitor carbon sequestration values of council owned open space	Rolled over to Phase 2	E11
▪ Creation of suitable high ecological value areas on council land (incl. bee-friendly, wild flower, hedge & woodland planting zones) & areas for carbon sequestration & climate resilience	In progress	O15
▪ Identify areas on Dorset Council land to enhance ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience (surface water run off and natural flood management).	In progress	O15
▪ Reduce use of fertilizers on council land by increased use of locally produced compost	In progress	O15, O16

Work has commenced to survey our council farms to identify further opportunities for nature and climate. This includes contracted work to undertake baseline ecological surveys on the existing and potential biodiversity value of 15 council farms, part-funded by the AONB's Farming in Protected Landscapes programme. A process is also underway to commission a review of the ecological baseline on a selection of council land to identify biodiversity uplift potential.

Our Natural Environment team has also already been working closely with the council farm estate to enhance their ecological value, including through the introduction of [barn owl boxes](#) and restoration and creation of great crested newt ponds.

All compost now used across our Greenspace Team, landscaping projects and grounds maintenance services are peat-free and is sourced from local green waste recycling. We continue to minimise the use of pesticides and consider alternative control methods. We have also replaced nearly all petrol engine hand tools with battery driven equivalents and installed solar panels at the depot where they are charged.

Work to identify and monitor natural sequestration on the council estate has also been rolled over to the next phase of the programme.

## Objective 2: Protect and increase ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Develop and provide guidance to ensure community tree planting initiatives are ecologically robust & sensitive to local landscape ('right tree in the right place') e.g. Tree planting checklist	Complete	E9
▪ Continue with & further develop Partnership working (e.g. Urban Heaths Partnership, Dorset Coast Forum and Dorset Local Nature Partnership) to maximise opportunities for joint working and external funding	In progress	E7
▪ Work with town & parish councils to promote best practice within their greenspace & communities	In progress	E8, E9
▪ Increased tree planting where suitable to avoid detrimental effects on other habitat	In progress	O15, O16 F26, F28
▪ Continue to support partners to investigate the opportunities to reintroduce beaver colonies to facilitate flood prevention and to improve water quality and enhance biodiversity	In progress	O15, O16 F26, F28
▪ Expand 'cut and collect' verge management to increase ecological value of highway verges	In progress	O17
▪ Promotion of ecologically friendly gardens to residents	In progress	E9
▪ Communicate to businesses and land owners good practice in terms of protecting and enhancing ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience	In progress	E9, F26

▪ Develop business case for large scale commercial carbon sequestration scheme within Dorset & implement scheme if feasible	Rolled over to Phase 2	F29
▪ Work in partnership with Lead Flood Authority and EA to develop SUD's SPD ensuring that drainage solutions are of high ecological value	In progress	F20
▪ Work with internal & external partners to identify opportunities for large scale rewilding	In progress	F28
▪ Work with partners to connect fragmented habitats across the county	In progress	F28, E7
▪ Ensure all new developments conform the Environment Act's requirement for 10% biodiversity gains for all new developments	In progress	O14

The council has also produced a [tree planting checklist](#) for residents, and we are also now working with parishes to deliver a community tree planting programme. This will involve training to support good decision making, support for the development of parish tree plans and support with planting. A community questionnaire has been sent out and completed by c.65 parishes that is helping to guide the development of the programme. We are also working with Public Health Dorset on a school tree programme in west Dorset.

We have significantly changed the way we [manage our verges](#) in the last few years, improving an additional 350,000m<sup>2</sup> for biodiversity as a result – with a consequent doubling in butterfly species since. To support [pollinators and butterflies](#) we have increased the amount of 'cut and collect' mowing for urban verges within the 30mph road network to North Dorset, Weymouth, Portland, Purbeck, Bridport, West Dorset and East Dorset – cutting soil fertility and growth rates to enable wildflowers to establish and thrive, and reducing cuts from 7 a year to 2 within some areas. We also now cut B and C class rural roads once instead of twice a year. Some verges have been designated as SNCIs as a result.

Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is delivering a £1.3m [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) programme, engaging landowners on good practice by enabling 40 projects so far to implement measures like woodland creation, regenerative farming, soil health and flood mitigation measures.

The council continues to work closely with the [Urban Heaths Partnership](#), [Litter Free Dorset](#), [Dorset Coast Forum](#), our AONBs, [Local Nature Partnership](#), and Stour Valley Partnership. Most recently, a Heathland Mitigation review for Dorset has taken place to evidence that the mitigation methods and the work of Urban Heath Partnership is working and of value. An increase in resources has been provided which means 61 schools can now be targeted and we are currently recruiting a new campaigns officer to deliver more behaviour change campaigns on heathlands. Litter Free Dorset run campaigns like #Loveyourverge and a recent project 'reconnecting to nature Spaces' which is connecting those with disabilities to local nature areas. Dorset Coast Forum are coordinating the [Seagrass in Studland](#) project (which will provide wildlife and carbon sequestration benefits) in line with the Voluntary No Anchor Zone at Studland. We also participated in the LNP's [Nature Recovery Workshop](#) and its [Annual Forum](#).

Signposting for residents on wildlife-friendly gardening is available through our tips for individuals on our [webpages](#), and we ran a [#LetGrassGrow](#) campaign for No Mow May.

Exploration of potential commercial carbon sequestration has yet to be undertaken and has been rolled over to the next phase of the programme as part of the wider piece of work on defining our approach to offsetting – with mitigation prioritised in the initial phase. Work on developing an SuDS SPD was also initiated but has been delayed due to the postponement

in the development of the Local Plan – but a [SuDS Advice Note](#) has been produced for ecological consultants and developers.

The identification of priority areas for habitat creation and restoration – including for tree planting and large scale rewilding – will be incorporated within the development of a wider Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which has just commenced with an officer recently appointed. Preliminary mapping of Dorset's [ecological networks](#) is already available showing high value existing areas and potential defragmentation.

### Objective 3: Use of various planning gains to increase ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy to ensure where ever possible additional land brought about by planning gain is managed in-house to benefit from economies of scale and to ensure ecological value and carbon sequestration potential is maximised</li> </ul>	In progress	F19, O14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategic approach to draw together planning gains from various ecological mitigation schemes e.g. Biodiversity, Nitrates and Heathland schemes etc to maximise the ecological benefits to Dorset</li> </ul>	In progress	O14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use developer contributions secured through the planning system to provide and sustain high-quality public open space that is capable of meeting the needs of current and future residents/visitors</li> </ul>	In progress	E5

Mechanisms have been agreed that for all major developments the Natural Environment Team will receive consultation on planning applications and assess green infrastructure proposals, including early conversations to discuss DC land ownership opportunities. The council has 5 ecologists, four of whom are engaged in day-to-day review of planning applications. Further policy may be considered through the development of the Local Plan.

Dorset Council has both adopted and interim planning policy to manage development affecting protected habitats. Our [Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol and Biodiversity Compensation Framework](#) are helping to enable new development better conserves and enhances nature. Developer compensation funds are spent on nature and greenspace projects all over Dorset, such as to purchase a 13-acre site to create a [new nature reserve](#) near Blandford. Mitigation is secured through developer contributions including [Community Infrastructure Levy and s106](#). These mechanisms remain ongoing and are used when development opportunities affecting protected areas come forward. Steering groups and associated mitigation coordinator roles have been established to manage Heathland, Nitrate, Recreation pressures. These coordinators and their groups have facilitated the identification and delivery of new open spaces (SANGS) to reduce recreational pressures on protected heathlands; improved monitoring; and increased wardening to raise awareness and support behaviour change.

Example projects include: For Wild Woodbury we have provided heathland mitigation money to purchase a large SANG site. £150,000 will be provided to Swanage railway trust to open up 3ha of woodland site (part of Purbeck park). Many Rights of way improvements have been made. Nitrate mitigation money has been used to enable Dorset Wildlife Trust to purchase Wild. We're currently procuring two wetland feasibility studies, mitigation money used to purchase Mildown Nature Reserve. For our birds and recreation initiative, mitigation money was spent on the lake Pier project. For Chesil and the Fleet mitigation, new signage at Chesil centre, 20 volunteers recruited and new volunteer kits provided, a community

warden placed in post, little tern officer in place, and all monitoring enabled with new time lapse cameras and automated counters.

Work is now underway to implement 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, with a working group established and work underway including for the preparation of interim guidance, awareness raising materials and templates.

#### Objective 4: Ensure decision making around use of natural assets is based upon ecological value

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with development management team to ensure green infrastructure advice team is involved in all relevant planning applications to ensure ecological value and recreational opportunities are fully considered</li> </ul>	Complete	F22

The Green Infrastructure team has now merged with the Natural Environment Team, and relevant officers (ecology, heathland) are now on the planning consultation list. Substantial work is also now underway to prepare for the implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain.

#### Objective 5: Increased appreciation and engagement with areas of high ecological value

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop and promote the health &amp; wellbeing benefits of publicly accessible high ecological value land</li> </ul>	In progress	F19, O14, E9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with Children's and Adult Services to identify and create opportunities for natural environment to be better utilised on social care offer</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F30

The council promotes getting active in greenspace through its [health and activity pages](#), including 'green gym' conservation activities. Connection with nature was also the focus of the 2021 Mental Health Awareness Week [campaign](#).

Multiple local projects have promoted nature-based activities for health and wellbeing, including the [Natural Choices](#), [Stepping into Nature](#) and [Nature Buddies](#) projects, whilst the Healthy Places Programme and Dorset Local Access Forum have invested in improving access to greenspace in recognition of the value of the environment as a determinant of health.

Our proposed outcomes for the forthcoming [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) includes that 'more people will have access to the health benefits of nature'.

Work to develop nature-based opportunities with Children's and Adult services as part of the social care offer has been rolled over into the 2023-25 Action Plan (F30).

#### Objective 6: Increase accessibility of rights of way and off road routes

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure rights of way network is fully promoted and maintained to a high standard</li> </ul>	In progress	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase amount of well provisioned and well promoted off road routes</li> </ul>	In progress	



A significant number of rights of way issues have been resolved, keeping maintenance to a high standard. There has been a significant increase in off-road routes along old railway lines in West and East Dorset using developer contributions, as well as positive examples like the [Castleman Trailway](#) and improvements to the [Dorset Coast Path](#).

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is being reviewed and updated and will be published in 2023 with a greater emphasis on the role Rights of Way can play in sustainable transport solutions.

## Renewable Energy

### Objective 1: Increase Renewable energy generation on council owned land

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission study to identify opportunities for small scale on-site renewable energy installations on council buildings &amp; assets</li> </ul>	Complete	O1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission study to identify opportunities for renewable energy in County Farms and council carparks.</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct large renewable energy installation (around 60 MW of solar PV or 30 MW of wind turbines) on council owned land to meet council's demand</li> </ul>	In progress	O1

A study on buildings and assets was completed in 2021 and our Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme programme has facilitated 100 solar installations so far across the council's estate. Further resource is required to undertake further feasibility work on the wider estate. Numerous options have been considered for large renewable installations but no firm plans have yet been developed.

### Objective 2: Increase Renewable energy generation in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Low Carbon Dorset Programme</li> </ul>	Complete	F1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver extended Low Carbon Dorset programme</li> </ul>	In progress	F1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with renewable energy developers in Dorset to secure new renewable energy generation to meet (and exceed) needs of the County</li> </ul>	In progress	F2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a positive planning policy framework and toolkit for maximizing the use of renewable energy within new developments</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake detailed resource mapping to confirm Dorset has the technical resources to be self-sufficient. Potential sites can then be identified in the Local Plan</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As Local Planning Authority – actively encourage renewable energy deployment               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify suitable areas in local plan</li> <li>2. Guidance created for developers</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	In progress	F20, F18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support expansion and awareness building of the Energy Local project in Dorset</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote renewable energy technologies to residents &amp; businesses</li> </ul>	In progress	E9, F1, F5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with BCP to plan a zero-carbon energy system for Dorset</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F3
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£895k of additional funding has been secured through the Shared Prosperity Fund to extend the Low Carbon Dorset programme, and further options are being explored. A team has been recruited and the project got underway in April 2023.

Ongoing discussions are underway with renewable energy developers in Dorset. Additional generation has come online in Dorset in the past three years, with approximately 500MW largescale renewable capacity now in total (mostly solar).

Strengthening the planning framework will be achieved through the development of the new Local Plan. Work is underway but its adoption has been delayed until 2026. [Interim guidance and a position statement](#) has therefore been prepared to clarify what is possible in existing policy, and the interim position statement includes a section on Renewable Energy. Initial mapping of potential sites for onshore wind has been identified for the 2021 draft local plan, and we continue to look at assessment of landscape and heritage sensitivity to help inform decision making and potential new allocations in forthcoming Local Plan.

Guidance on Community Energy is signposted to from our [webpages](#). [Energy Local Bridport](#) is now live. Consideration of how to build support and awareness for such projects has been rolled over into Phase 2.

The initial phase of our [Low Carbon Dorset Programme](#) provided free advice and £6.2m in grant funding to local projects worth £17m, installing 13MW of renewables and saving 10kt CO2e/yr. An extension was secured to the programme to June 2023 to provide further technical support and grants to Dorset businesses. Resource has been secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund to continue the advisory service beyond June. It provides [guidance resources](#) and [case studies](#). Additionally, we also supported [DCAN's Greener Open Homes](#) campaign in 2022.

Work to develop a joint energy system plan with BCP has not been undertaken due to resource constraints, so has been rolled over into Phase 2.

## Transport

### Objective 1: Improve low carbon transport infrastructure

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Local Plan ensure as far as possible that developments provide high quality spaces, routes and facilities, or contributions towards facilities, for pedestrians, cycles and other car-free modes, EV charging and cycle parking.</li> </ul>	In progress	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure access to sustainable transport is considered in planning applications</li> </ul>	In progress	F19, F22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate potential for small scale park &amp; ride hubs with electric vehicle charging point availability</li> </ul>	In progress	F10, F14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce low carbon transport policies through statutory planning documents including refreshed LTP and new Local Plan</li> </ul>	In progress	E3, F9, F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep cost/payback of streetlights, bollards and signals under review to identify when they meet a payback that satisfies loan requirements or finance policy requirements</li> </ul>	In progress	O4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce carbon emissions from transport infrastructure construction and maintenance</li> </ul>	In progress	O11

Adoption of the Local Plan has now been delayed until 2026, but transport teams are working with Planning to embed sustainable transport within it. Preparation of a Local Transport Plan is currently underway, and both it and an accompanying quantified carbon reduction pathway will be adopted in 2025.

Further discussion will be required to ensure that planning consultations are reaching appropriate officers, but a new post has been created in the Transport Planning Strategy and Policy sub-team to work closely with Transport Development Management and Planning.

A proposal for a Weymouth Park & Ride scheme was included within the unsuccessful BSIP bid and also formed part of the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 bid. The team will continue to pursue park & ride hubs through routes such as BSIP, the Local Transport Plan, Local Plan, and Levelling Up Funds.

A £250k investment in 2022/23 and £500k investment in 2023/24 was made from the climate fund into the LED streetlight replacement programme. Over a third of Dorset's streetlights are now LED and, along with other measures, this has helped to halve its overall energy consumption since 2008. There remain two more years to complete the £2.5m programme.

We've worked closely with our partners Hanson UK to become one of the first councils in the UK to use low energy asphalt at scale to construct and maintain roads in Dorset – making up 42% of total surfacing (22,995 tonnes) in 2022/23. We've also installed a new all-electric container (known as a hotbox) at our Charminster Highways depot to keep asphalt hot while it is stored to carry out local pothole and patching work – the first all-electric asphalt storage hotbox in the UK. We have also installed 415 solar panels on our Charminster depot roof. We're also now using new processes to enable old road surface material to be remade as high-quality material for our roads with our partners Allasso Recycling – using over 14,000 tonnes of this material last year, up 8,000 tonnes on previous years.

## Objective 2: Encourage decarbonisation of road transport

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage low carbon freight and logistics</li> </ul>	In progress	F11, E6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage decarbonisation of road transport through development of public EV charging network &amp; promotion of ultra low emissions vehicles and hydrogen when relevant</li> </ul>	In progress	F14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage use of ultra low emission public transport vehicles (including taxis) – particularly smaller buses</li> </ul>	In progress	F15, E6

Our [Electric Vehicle Strategy](#) set our programme through to 2023, and is due to be refreshed in 2023. By 2030, the programme aims to get 80% of households within a 10-minute walk of a public chargepoint. Through our [Charging Ahead](#) programme we've now completed [Phase 1](#) of our public EV charger rollout with Joju, with Phase 2 now underway. 144 [public charge points](#) are now available in Dorset, up from 63 in 2019. We are also 1 of 9 [Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure pilots](#), which initiated in March and is enabling £4m in funding to further invest in charging infrastructure – and could see a planned 175 charge points installed. Feasibility studies were undertaken for ultrarapid hubs, and Mer (our charge point operator) have also proposed 4 charging hubs in key locations.

Initial work is underway to explore potential opportunities of Hydrogen and other low carbon fuels for DC heavy vehicles.

We included an outline bus decarbonisation plan within the [BSIP](#), and are now awaiting further details on ZEBRA Round 2 funding to proceed – and also require funding to progress feasibility work.

We contributed to the production of the [SW Freight Strategy](#) produced by our Sub-national Transport Board, which has decarbonisation as one of its six priorities.

### Objective 3: Encourage behaviour change in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Review of parking policy to support mode shift	In progress	F20
▪ Encourage and enable more walking and cycling through the production of local cycling and walking investment plans, related bids and initiating infrastructure delivery, and behaviour change through comms.	In progress	F10
▪ Explore introduction of a bike share scheme in larger settlements	In progress	F10
▪ Improve the quality and availability of public transport with a focus on maintaining the core network, better using S106 funds, and creating a new Enhanced Partnership scheme to make services more attractive to the travelling public.	In progress	F10, E7, E5
▪ Encourage behaviour change through active & sustainable travel campaigns and initiatives.	In progress	F11, E9
▪ Expand cycle training and independent travel training programmes	In progress	F11
▪ Work with schools, parents and partners to reduce the carbon foot print of the daily school commute and pollution from idling vehicles	In progress	F11
▪ Through the Local Plan ensure as far as possible that developments are located in sustainable locations where key services are nearby and the need to travel by car is reduced	In progress	F19
▪ Engage with businesses to support sustainable business travel and active travel through the BTN or successor groups	In progress	F11
▪ Deploy Mobility as a Service (MaaS) applications that provide clear information across a range of travel modes and promote use of the most sustainable travel options	Rolled over to Phase 2	F12

Our Enhanced Partnership with bus operators was established in 2022, and it is guided by our [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) (BSIP). The first BSIP was published in 2021 and then updated in 2022, with a refresh to be published in 2023. It has a central target to move to a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035 (EV and hydrogen), and 60% of the fleet by 2030 (with the rest at Euro VI standard or better). We also require operators to submit an Environmental Statement when they submit a tender, including on how they'll cut their carbon footprint.

Dorset Council has developed and is continuing to develop a wide range of strategies in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans and the Dorset Local Plan to promote active travel across Dorset.

The [Transforming Cities Fund](#) project with BCP is underway to improve infrastructure and facilities for active travel across East Dorset. Funding was also secured to upgrade sections of the [National Cycle Network](#).

Our [website](#) details an extensive set of resources to encourage cycling, including route and parking maps, training, health rides, and accessibility schemes.

The [Beryl bike scheme](#) was launched in the southeast Dorset area in 2022 on national Cycle to Work day – providing 122 bikes and more than 50 bays. Further expansion is being investigated, including deployment in Weymouth and Dorchester. Expansion to southeast Dorset into Upton and Corfe Mullen is planned for summer 2023. Grant funding has also been received to sustain our current cycle training programme until March 2024, and we will continue to seek further funding to deliver more.

The website also contains guidance on [cycling and walking to school](#) and on producing [school travel plans](#). Promoting active travel in local schools has been an LTP priority, and we are continuing delivery of the Sustrans Bike It Project across local schools – following earlier work such as [expanding cycle storage](#).

Dorset has also been awarded £1.97m as part of the latest round of Active Travel funding to enable more safe routes for people on foot, in wheelchairs and on bicycles – including benefiting the school streets initiative to create safer environments for children as they commute to and from school. [School Streets](#) pilot schemes are currently already underway in Upton, Dorchester and Chickerell.

Behaviour change comms campaigns and business engagement for active travel are to be developed as part of the LTP4 programme (the BTN has been inactive since Covid).

Further enabling of policy in support of modal shift will be undertaken through development of the new Local Plan, whose adoption has been delayed until 2026.

Deployment of Mobility as a Service applications was proposed within the BSIP but did not receive funding. We are therefore currently investigating with neighbouring authorities like BCP or Somerset to develop PT portals.

#### Objective 4: Challenge Business as usual

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage and facilitate behavioural change in the way staff travel to and for work including grey fleet reduction, strategic travel planning with partner organisations</li> </ul>	In progress	O6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the need for staff to travel to and for work through remote working and the use of digital</li> </ul>	In progress	O6

A staff travel survey was completed in August 2022, and a relaunch of the council's draft Travel Plan is currently under discussion for 2023. Our digital teams have helped enable remote working, which has cut employee commuter journeys and emissions significantly. A Dorset Workplace policy was adopted in 2021 to facilitate remote working.

Employee benefits schemes are in place for bikes and electric vehicles through salary sacrifice schemes. There are also fold-up and electric bikes available for staff at request from County Hall.

#### Objective 5: Reduce the need to travel in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working closely with Dorset Business Travel Network and Digital Dorset to promote the use of ICT to individuals and businesses to avoid travel / encourage working from home</li> </ul>	In progress	F12



The Digital Dorset team identified areas in need of improved broadband across 35 sites to inform Government's Project Gigabit programme. The Gigahub Connectivity in Rural Dorset Project is now well underway, with over 7,000 local homes and businesses the first nationally to benefit. The council has been awarded almost £900,000 to oversee the project, and a contract has been awarded to Blandford-based Wessex Internet to deliver the rollout in North and East Dorset. The second phase is due to launch later this year. Digital Dorset has also undertaken facilitation work to enable digital connectivity, including through [support schemes](#) like the [Gigabit Voucher scheme](#), the [Embedded Digital Champion project](#) and the annual [Festival of the Future](#).

## Objective 6: Increase resilience to climate change – Transport

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand key risks and potential costs posed by climate change to transport &amp; travel in Dorset</li> </ul>	In progress	O19, F34

Baselining and evidence gathering for the Local Transport Plan includes the emissions baseline and an Issues & Opportunities report. A consultation on the Issues & Opportunities Report is planned for later in 2023.

Work to review council-wide vulnerability to climate risk impacts has now commenced and will then be used to review our risk management approach – including for the optimisation of Emergency Plans.

Work to commence a county-wide climate risk partnership approach will be developed during the next phase of work, and is being phased to follow the council risk assessment and the next National Adaptation Programme (which should produce localised climate resilience data to inform the approach).

## Objective 7: To green the council fleet

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue the option to implement an electric refuse fleet by first establishing accurate data regarding the performance of its existing fleet.</li> </ul>	In progress	O9, E11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise ultra low carbon vehicle replacement within the Dorset Council fleet</li> </ul>	In progress	O9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand electric vehicle charging points and other ultra-low emission fuel alternatives across the council property estate.</li> </ul>	In progress	O8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a vehicle replacement policy that includes suitable electric minibuses at cost effective prices becoming available from 2025 but that the market is kept under continuous review</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O9, E6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimise personal vehicle use for business travel through the introduction of ULEV pool fleet</li> </ul>	In progress	O9, O6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure procurement processes embed carbon reduction for transport purchases &amp; leasing</li> </ul>	In progress	E6

A fleet review has been completed with the Energy Savings Trust, and 70 vehicles were identified as replaceable with fully electric variants. Funding has been allocated, and the Pool Car fleet has already seen the replacement of 13 electric vehicles and additional vehicles to be ordered in 2023.

A policy is to be developed and a range of electric vehicles (cars, vans, tippers, mechanical sweepers, refuse collection vehicles) have been trialled by a number of different services, and further implementation is dependent on infrastructure upgrades and depot reviews.

Alternative fuel refuse collection vehicles have been trialled, with the potential to introduce this onto the fleet subject to funding, and dependent on the outcome of waste depot reviews and existing depot capacity. A decision is currently pending on further trialling of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil in refuse vehicles.

Fleet Services and Dorset Travel continue to monitor the development of alternatively fuelled, electric small/medium buses. Additional funding and infrastructure will be required, including recognition that not all buses parked in depots (some are parked at and operate from Day Centres).

The option to purchase alternatively fuelled (electric) vehicles always considered as part of vehicle replacement program. The costs of replacement is being included in future applications for capital funding (Vehicle Replacement Program for 2025 to 2030). Vehicle workshop technicians are being trained in how to work on EVs.

Capital has been allocated to support the expansion of EV charging infrastructure at council sites, with new capacity of 14 chargers installed at County Hall and further chargers at other sites currently being scoped.

## Waste

### Objective 1: Become a low waste council by 2040

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
▪ Ensure all reusable furniture is donated.	In progress	O12
▪ Carry out internal waste audits across our operations & create waste reduction plan supported by targeted campaigns	Rolled over to Phase 2	O12
▪ Develop waste policy based on audit findings	Rolled over to Phase 2	O12
▪ Work with Council tenants and concessions to reduce food waste and promote less packaging	In progress	O12
▪ Develop waste communications plan for DC staff & buildings and provide containers etc for all DC staff & buildings	In progress	O12, E9
▪ Continue to work towards our commitment to become single-use plastic-free & eliminate the use of all single life products (wherever possible)	In progress	O12
▪ Increase scope of Single-Use Plastic Team to include non-recyclable products.	In progress	O12

Surplus furniture from office rationalisation has been re-used in other offices, depots and schools.

No audits have been carried out due to resource constraints, so this has been rolled over into the 2023-25 action plan subject to resourcing (O12).

The council has a robust [Single Use Plastics Policy](#) that commits to remove and reduce single use plastics from our operations and services. Two recycling officers are participating in the green champions group, and employee communication channels are used to promote

waste reduction and recycling (e.g. via digital signage), alongside various employee discounts at local zero waste shops and nappy retailers.

The team also supported the introduction of food containers to all County Hall kitchens, and County Hall catering services have removed all avoidable single use plastics. Refill, mug library, food composting, and recycling facilities are being promoted to all staff across County Hall. Catering services have transitioned to compostable materials for packaging, but they are not currently industrially compostable, so work is ongoing to encourage more staff to reuse and provide more packaging-free options.

We continue to promote our internal commercial waste service to businesses (including our tenants and concessions), which includes recycling and food waste collections.

## Objective 2: Support the transition to a Circular Economy

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liaise with Waste Services on planning any major developments</li> </ul>	Complete	F22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide practical advice on the adoption of a circular economy to the general public &amp; businesses</li> </ul>	In progress	F23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure all decisions have the circular economy at their heart.</li> </ul>	In progress	O12, F23, E2, E6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carry out scenario modelling for waste collection and treatment options in order to establish appropriate waste infrastructure to support the circular economy</li> </ul>	In progress	F23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement findings of scenario modelling</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F23

The waste team are consulted on pre-applications and planning applications for new residential dwellings or commercial developments.

Circular economy ambitions are contained within the [Waste Plan](#), and our waste team accordingly undertakes comprehensive engagement that includes business network events. It has also worked with partners to conduct a business survey that included the offer of individual business waste auditing. Our Litter Free Dorset programme also hosts the [Sustainable Business Network](#) and its Sustainable Business Awards.

The waste team also undertakes a comprehensive programme of [campaigns and initiatives](#) on waste reduction, reuse, recycling and the circular economy. In 2022/23, this included 12 community talks/presentations on 'right stuff, right bin' and 'where recycling/rubbish goes'; 2 swish events (resulting in 685 items donated (302kg) and 765 items taken home (337kg)); 4 give and take days (with a total 207 households taking away 2.6 tonnes of items); 3 real nappy demonstrations to 65 health visitors showing how to use reusable nappies and providing information on our incentive scheme; 22 roadshows; presentation at business network events.

A reuse strategy has been researched and developed and tasks are now being implemented. Our [Zero Waste Map](#) signposts to repair cafes and exchange/reuse facilities. Multiple [funding streams](#) are made available for further such community projects, and the council has previously provided support for [Wimborne Repair Café](#).

We are still in the process of building our 'as-is' model of waste collection rounds. This needs to be completed ahead of us being able to use the model for scenario modelling. We are

currently in the second stage of the 'as is model & route optimisation' programme which is to refine the output rounds ready for optimisation. Once this stage is complete, we will have system generated model rounds that accurately reflect the actual rounds as far as possible. We will then be able to run whole area, system generated, round optimisation exercises removing all historical boundaries/borders. We will also be able to model different scenarios involving different collection vehicles, depots, materials, treatment facilities, collection frequencies, etc.

<b>Objective 3: Reduce the amount of waste produced in Dorset</b>		
<b>2021-2023 Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2023-25 Action</b>
▪ Develop targeted campaigns to reduce the amount of waste produced in Dorset and increase recycling and reuse	In progress	F24
▪ Develop targeted campaign to reduce, re-use and recycle commercial and industrial waste	In progress	F24
▪ Improve recycling facilities and waste infrastructure in line with outcomes of scenario modelling and reviewed waste policy	In progress	F23

Our recycling and composting rate is 58.9%, putting us in the top three unitary councils in England. Waste sent to landfill has been cut to just 2%, and most of our residual waste is now sent to the New Earth Mechanical Biological Treatment plant in Poole where organic and recyclable materials are extracted and leftover material is turned into fuel. We've been listed in the top 3 councils in a national Recycling Carbon Index, which measures carbon emissions avoided through local authority recycling schemes.

The waste team continue to develop and implement a vast array of different [campaigns](#), projects and [engagements](#) to reduce waste and increase recycling. These include the home compost bin subsidy; the reusable nappy incentive; discounts for reusable period products and incontinence pads; food waste reduction campaign (including media animations and school competitions); the communal improvement programme; container stickering; the online zero waste map; the Yes/No contamination campaign; the side waste reduction project; the '[Litterlotto](#)' incentive scheme; and reuse activities including swish events and give & take days.

For commercial waste we offer a comprehensive waste and recycling collection scheme via the commercial waste team. We worked alongside Litter Free Dorset, Chambers of Commerce, local BIDs and town councils to offer a Dorset wide business survey to establish what they required to lessen their impact on the environment. As part of this, the team offered the opportunity for a recycling officer to conduct an individual business waste audit.

Our [Event Management Plan template](#) requests (§9) details of environmental considerations, stresses the importance of acting to put plans in place to minimise environmental impacts, and notes that events will not be approved unless addressed. The Single Use Plastics (SUP) policy also notes our commitment to work with event organisers to eliminate SUP across events held on Dorset Council land and share guidance for this more widely, and to continue to support local communities by sharing best practice, raise awareness, supporting and promoting positive initiatives, campaigns and actions for reducing waste. Examples of such initiatives are described on the [Litter Free Dorset](#) website.

We are still in the process of building our 'as-is' model of waste collection rounds as noted above, which is a prerequisite to scenario modelling. Meanwhile, we are continuing to develop our infrastructure plans by progressing with a site in the Blandford area and

investigating options for the East of the county. The proposed Blandford Waste Management Centre was granted planning permission in April 2022 and negotiations on the land are ongoing, however on 20/06/23 Cabinet agreed to progress with CPO of the land as negotiations have stalled. Regarding a waste site in the east, work is continuing, and members support the proposed project timeframe to allow sufficient time for the most suitable site to be identified and maintain current cross border arrangements with neighbouring authorities. We are also feeding into a wider depot/ infrastructure review led by assets and property.

In terms of reviewing waste policy, we are due to conduct a review of the Dorset Municipal Waste Management Strategy but we are waiting to receive the government responses to the three national waste consultations that were conducted in 2021/22 as these will have a significant impact on how we proceed going forward - they will dictate what and how we collect waste and how it will be funded.

Objective 4: Encourage greater re-use of waste in Dorset		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the development of repair cafes and library of things.</li> </ul>	In progress	F23

A reuse strategy has been researched and developed and tasks are now being implemented. This has included the development of an online zero waste map for Dorset which includes details of repair cafes, community fridges, milk refill stations and reusable nappy retailers. The council has also previously provided support for [Wimborne Repair Café](#).

Objective 5: Increase the proportion of Dorset's waste that is recycled		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with BIDs to investigate possibility of one waste contractor collecting all waste in the area, reducing multiple vehicles collecting in the same area</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F23

No action to date due to resource constraints.

Objective 6: Reduce emissions from waste fleet		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with fleet manager to reduce emissions from waste collection vehicles, through route optimisation.</li> </ul>	In progress	O9

The route optimisation 'as-is' model is still being developed. Once this is completed, it will be used to redesign routes to enable route optimisation and improve efficiency. This will not be before the end of 2023. There will then be an implementation programme that is required to deliver the proposed changes.

Objective 7: Reduce Littering & Fly tipping		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with the Police, EA &amp; community groups to reduce littering &amp; fly tipping</li> </ul>	In progress	F31

We have successfully undertaken over 2,000 enforcement actions against waste crime since April 2018, including 364 Fixed Penalty Notices and 22 prosecutions, with a 100% conviction rate. Joint working with the Police, EA and other agencies has been continual with



engagement through the rural crime team, ANPR team and various specific operations. The littering from vehicles process has been set up, and we were one of the first councils to do this, with 25 Fixed Penalty Notices issued to date. A litterlotto app has also been launched to encourage residents to dispose of waste in a litter bin and be in with the chance to win a prize.

## Water

### Objective 1: Reduce Water Demand in Dorset

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure water use is minimised and reuse is optimised in new developments</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information to residents and businesses on reducing water consumption, helping to improve understanding of the issues and solutions to better water management, reducing bills and carbon emissions</li> </ul>	In progress	E9

Within Nutrient Neutrality catchments we are looking to require higher water efficiency standards in development secured by condition. Elsewhere, policy will need to be developed through the Local Plan, adoption of which is delayed until 2026.

Information on water saving is available through our [website](#), and further work to consider potential campaigns has been rolled over into Phase 2.

Our new planning [sustainability checklist](#) also includes relevant prompts on water conservation alongside sustainable drainage.

### Objective 2: Reduce Water Demand at Dorset Council

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make Dorset Council buildings water efficient, by installing technologies such as flow regulators, water efficient toilets &amp; shower heads</li> </ul>	In progress	O3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce / replace demand on mains water within Dorset Council buildings by installing technologies such as rainwater harvesting and grey water systems</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O3

A full audit has not yet been undertaken, but there is ongoing installation of relevant measures as part of ongoing maintenance upgrades. For example, numerous toilet refurbishments undertaken across the estate (including schools, community buildings, offices and libraries) has seen water efficient dual flush, cistern and tap technologies installed.

A limited number of systems have been installed over time. Determination of the future expansion of such demand reduction measures has been rolled over to Phase 2.

### Objective 3: Reduce Wasted Water

2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with water companies to ensure water leaks are identified and eliminated in Dorset</li> </ul>	In progress	O3, E7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an in-depth assessment of water leaks across the Council's estate</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O3

Water company liaison has been rolled over to Phase 2. Any sites on our estate where water use shows to be anomalous are identified and investigated, and a number of leaks have been identified and rectified.

Objective 4: Protect Water Supplies		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out audit of all Dorset Council sites holding materials hazardous to water quality to ensure correct storage is in place &amp; ensure pollution prevention equipment is properly maintained.</li> </ul>	Rolled over to Phase 2	O15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Council Farms and Green spaces to ensure land management practices protect water supplies</li> </ul>	In progress	O16, O17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Environment Agency to ensure all high risk industrial and farming areas in Dorset have been identified and appropriate pollution prevention measures are in place</li> </ul>	In progress	F31, F26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to promote land management practices that prevent polluting water courses and ensure good water management</li> </ul>	In progress	E7, E9, F26

Work to audit hazardous materials has been delayed due to staff changes and rolled over into Phase 2.

Our Environmental health team liaises regularly on all controlled emissions and issues, and guidance on testing is available via our [website](#).

A nitrate protection programme is in place to work with landowners to understand water pollution issues and improve management in the Poole catchment area through the Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme, including enabling farmer-led approaches for nutrient reduction. Partnership work to promote positive land management practices for watercourses and the riverine environment is undertaken with [Dorset Catchment Partnerships](#).

Relevant pollution mitigation work is also undertaken through [Litter Free Dorset](#) through its water quality campaigns, and signage interventions such as at Charmouth and Church Ope Cove.

Objective 5: Increase Resilience to Climate Change – Water		
2021-2023 Action	Status	2023-25 Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with water companies to ensure:-               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- climate resilience is being addressed</li> <li>- sufficient supplies of good quality water will be available for Dorset Residents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	In progress	F34
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness to Riparian owners to maintain watercourses to prevent flooding</li> </ul>	In progress	E9, F26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Environment Agency to identify areas at risk from flooding &amp; ensure adequate protection is in place</li> </ul>	In progress	F18, F24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid developments in flood risk areas &amp; areas subject to tidal surges and coastal erosion</li> </ul>	In progress	F19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to create tree planting programmes to prevent flood risk and water pollution</li> </ul>	In progress	F34, O14

Work to address the climate resilience of water supplies with water companies will form part of the broader partnership approach to adaptation to be developed in Phase 2, timed to benefit from the forthcoming third National Adaptation Programme.

Work to raise awareness with riparian owners on watercourse maintenance is undertaken through normal routes on flood resilience outreach, such as at flood warden workshops and conferences.

The identification of flood risk areas has been completed and work is ongoing with the EA to ensure that adequate protections are in place.

The SFRA Level 1 has been prepared and published and will aid in decision-making where flood risks exist in order to direct development away from areas at risk of flooding in accordance with national policy.

No programme of tree planting specifically on flood risk and water pollution has been created beyond the work of the [Catchment Partnerships](#), but we undertake work with farms on nutrient mitigation (as noted above) and the AONB-led Farming in Protected Landscapes programme has supported 11 projects that cut flood risk and a further 25 that have cut carbon and other forms of pollution.

## **The challenge ahead**

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Our [refreshed strategy](#) and [action plan](#) set out our priorities for the next phase of the programme, including continuing many ongoing actions already initiated, and commencing some which were not priorities in the first phase and which have been rolled over. We will not reiterate those here but will instead outline some of the major challenges which our future delivery will face.

We have achieved much so far, as outlined above. However, as we proceed our trajectory will likely get more difficult.

Unsurprisingly, a major constraint will continue to be resource constraints, and in particular our ability to continue to attract major grant funding from national competitive funding pots. We have been very successful to date, but maintaining our trajectory will be contingent on our securing income for major programmes like future rounds of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – and we must ensure we are ready to seize these. Beyond grant income, there will also undoubtedly be a requirement to re-align existing resources to accelerate action, and further consideration to strengthening how we mainstream activity within our service planning and budget setting processes.

Key amongst this will also be considering how we commission and procure our goods. What we buy makes up the overwhelming component of our footprint, and it will be considerably important therefore to turn increasing attention to how much and what we buy. But this also contains clear opportunities to leverage wider change by supporting low carbon, nature positive local products and services, and to work with suppliers to encourage wider action to achieve net zero.

The initial phase of our work has prioritised our Operational Programme to tackle the council's own impacts and work towards becoming a net zero council by 2040. Whilst there remains significant work to do in that programme, we must also look increasingly beyond the council itself and facilitate wider change by working together with our communities, local businesses, and public and third sector partners. There are significant steps we have already taken here – including establishing our Public Sector Group with Dorset public sector partners and commencing outreach with local councils amongst others – and we will need to take this further.

Key amongst the external stakeholders who we must work with more are those within the food system. In all discussion of climate change, food still remains relatively underplayed compared to energy, but it will need to be an increasing area of focus – especially in rural areas like Dorset. Our farmers are essential land stewards who can be at the forefront of the transition to a greener, cleaner Dorset, and we will need to think about how we can better work with them. Developing our Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be a great opportunity to do this, but we must also think more widely to work closer with our farming community and how to influence our food system more generally.

Even more significant for facilitation will be developing a broad approach to how we effect behaviour change and influence for our residents and businesses. Whilst we have undertaken some work in this regard to date, scaling this up and broadening its scope will likely be difficult and we will have to work in partnership and with our grassroots community to successfully have influence. From installing low carbon tech in your home, to choosing active or public modes of travel, or considering what you buy – personal choices will increasingly matter. Of course, action is not all up to individuals, and creating the conditions that support people to choose low carbon options will be important – and it will take care and consideration to ensure that these are effective.

A major challenge will also be emerging tech, infrastructure or policy constraints. Most significant here are grid constraints which will set a limit on what is achievable for renewable generation and for the electrification of heat and transport. Government has set out significant plans over the last year for the grid towards its goal of decarbonising. We are already engaged, providing evidence and lobbying key stakeholders like network operators and government on this. Also highly important are policy and market developments around heat pumps and especially hydrogen – particularly government's forthcoming determination of heat network zones and 2025 and its decisions on the role of hydrogen in 2026. Whilst we are certainly not sitting on our hands, a full understanding of the opportunities and costs of pursuing particular options is partly contingent on these national factors.

Another increasing area of focus will need to be defining an approach to offsetting residual emissions. We are already taking some work to help inform a potential approach, and our pragmatic 2040 and 2050 targets give us more room – but we must nevertheless begin to consider what an approach to offsetting might look like. This is difficult especially as offsetting ultimately requires land (whether domestic or global), and so any local delivery (which could have co-benefits but also risks) requires thinking strategically about land use.

Finally, we must also consider that in spite of efforts so far, warming is happening now and will continue – and it is looking increasingly likely that we will cross 1.5C soon. That will bring resilience threats that we must take seriously – and as wildfires show, these can threaten efforts at emissions reduction and nature recovery too, let alone the broader social costs. There are also the more difficult to observe but clear indirect impacts already being seen through things like climate-drivers of inflation. Implications such as this should prompt us to increasingly grasp that climate change and biodiversity loss are not only environmental problems, but socio-economic ones.