

# Place and Resources Overview Committee

## 30 January 2025

### Dorset local nature recovery strategy

#### For Review and Consultation

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**

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

**Local Councillor(s):**

All Cllrs

**Executive Director:**

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

The Council has identified the challenges of climate and nature recovery amongst its key priorities within the corporate plan. Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023-2025 amongst many other actions, endeavours to deliver the Dorset local nature recovery strategy to ensure there is a collective plan for nature recovery across Dorset.

Dorset Council is the designated 'Responsible Body' leading in the preparation of Dorset's local nature recovery strategy (LNRS), with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Natural England as supporting authorities. Dorset's LNRS will be part of the network of LNRSs covering the whole of England, with no gaps or overlaps, contributing to national environmental objectives and targets.

Dorset's LNRS is co-produced working with large numbers of stakeholders including the farming community. It provides a comprehensive framework for restoring nature across the county and has a series of maps - High Opportunity

nature areas maps and potential activities maps - which help target efforts to achieve the greatest gains for nature and the wider environment.

**Recommendation:**

1) To review and comment on the draft Dorset local nature recovery strategy and subject to any agreed changes approve a further 28- day internal consultation across Dorset Council and externally with our supporting authorities BCP Council and Natural England prior to a 12-week period of statutory public consultation thereafter.

2) Following public consultation, a final version of the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy is brought back to Place Resources and Overview Committee for consideration and recommendation to Cabinet for final approval.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

Under Defra guidance we are required to seek pre-consultation approval from both supporting authorities (allowing 28 days to respond) before going to statutory public consultation.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council has identified the challenges of climate and nature recovery amongst its key priorities within the corporate plan.
- 1.2 It also adopted a climate and ecology strategy in July 2023 -2025 stating an ambitious 30 by 30 target for Dorset, which aims to protect and enhance 30% of land for nature by 2030.
- 1.3 One of the actions in the natural environment, climate and ecology strategy 2023-2025 is to create the Dorset local nature recovery strategy to ensure there is collective plan for nature recovery across Dorset.
- 1.4 This is reiterated in the declaration of a nature emergency motion, approved at the Full Council meeting on 19 July 2024, where a declaration was made that commits to further supporting this work, as well as embedding nature's recovery at the heart of the council's plans.
- 1.5 Local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) present a system of spatial management for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Each LNRS must:
  - (i) Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
  - (ii) Agree priorities for nature's recovery
  - (iii) Map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

- 1.6 Defra published LNRS [Statutory Guidance](#) and [Regulations](#) on 23/03/23. These documents outline our role as a Responsible Authority (RA) and the rules we must follow, as well as the step-by-step process for LNRS preparation.
- 1.7 Dorset Council is the Responsible Body that is leading in the preparation of Dorset's LNRS, with BCP Council and Natural England as our supporting authorities.
- 1.8 Work started on the Dorset LNRS in July 2023 and has involved working with over 76 organisations and engaging with over 1375 people at workshops, events, county shows etc. across a wide range of sectors and organisations.
- 1.9 Achieving nature recovery requires a shared vision, agreed priorities and collective action. The strategy set a clear direction and ambition for the Dorset area – (DC and BCP Council area) with the commitment to reverse the decline in nature.
- 1.10 The Dorset LNRS contains 12 nature recovery priorities, supported by detailed management activities. Plus 55 priority species identified as needing bespoke activities to ensure they remain or return to Dorset. Together, these tools ensure a strategic, collective and effective approach to nature recovery across the county.
- 1.11 The strategy promotes nature recovery through biodiversity net gain, nutrient mitigation schemes, environmental land management schemes, community-driven and individual projects.
- 1.12 From the work, the initiative [Nature Recovery Dorset](#) has been created which is a celebration of collaboration, uniting individuals, communities, and organisations in a shared mission to restore and protect the county's landscapes.
- 1.13 The Defra guidance states that progress will be monitored through a review process led by Dorset Council, which will assess achievements every three to ten years. This process will evaluate completed activities and their impacts, supported by existing monitoring initiatives that track habitats, species, and enabling measures. These insights will help refine and strengthen ongoing efforts, ensuring the strategy remains adaptive and effective.

- 1.14 The appended draft LNRS represents the work and refinement across all of the LNRS groups and the engagement. There are several supporting documents detailing some of the methodology and wider pressures and opportunities.

2. **Financial Implications**

Dorset Council has received a budget from Defra to deliver the Dorset LNRS of £273,674 over two years. The LNRS Steering Group has overseen the expenditure. Funding for the future delivery of the LNRS will happen through a variety of mechanisms including developer contributions, landowner initiatives, grants and project funding

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

Ensuring that the Dorset LNRS is implemented is critical to accomplishing the strategic natural environment ambitions of Dorset Council. The LNRS presents a collaborative, widely supported plan to deliver significant improvements to Dorset's natural environment over the coming years.

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

There are no specific health and wellbeing implications of this report. However, the impact of nature decline poses numerous health and wellbeing risks to the residents of Dorset. The strategy and its maps hope to ensure collective effort can achieve nature recovery and more people will have access to nature.

5. **Other Implications**

There are no other specific implications contained in this report

6. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: High

Residual Risk: Medium

Failing to ensure a fit for purpose local nature recovery strategy for Dorset entails (a) high risks associated with vulnerability to worsening nature decline and climate impacts (including to Council services and budgets); (b) risks of missed opportunities in failing to seize the transition to provide more nature on council land and across Dorset (including economic,

health and wellbeing opportunities); and (c) reputational risks owing to known high level of public interest in the climate and nature change agenda and the previous commitment.


## 7. Equalities Impact Assessment

The Dorset LNRS is a strategic, high-level strategy that will not positively or negatively impact on anyone's equality. EQIAs will be undertaken for specific work relating to the implementation of the strategy and for the public consultation exercise of the draft strategy.

As these are the pre-consultation draft documents, they do not meet full accessibility requirements, but work is underway to create a website version of the strategy and supporting documents, including plain text options. This will be ready for the public consultation to enable more people to see the draft and have their say. Similarly, the maps will be available on a publicly accessible version of Dorset Explorer to view online as soon as changes from the pre-consultation period are complete.

## 8. Appendices







Appendix 1: the draft  [Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy 21JAN25.pdf](#)

Appendix 2: a video to show the  [Pre-consultation draft Local Habitat Map 1.mp4](#) (3 layers):

- i. Nature areas-national importance
- ii. High opportunity nature areas
- iii. Potential activities

## 9. Background Papers

Supporting documents for the draft Dorset local nature recovery strategy include:

- i.  [Dorset local nature recovery strategy consultation and engagement report .pdf](#)
- ii.  [Pressures on nature in Dorset and opportunities for recovery.pdf](#)
- iii.  [How the Local Plans and Local Nature Recovery Strategy work together.pdf](#)
- iv.  [Policies, strategies and plans relating to the LNRS.pdf](#)
- v.  [Species recovery methodology and longlist.pdf](#)
- vi.  [Guide to Dorset's nature recovery maps.pdf](#)

10. **Report Sign Off**

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