



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy

1. Initial information

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

Dorset local nature recovery strategy

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

strategy

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

Both internal and external

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

Local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) present a system of spatial management for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Each LNRS must:

- i. Agree priorities for nature's recovery
- ii. Map the most valuable existing areas for nature
- iii. Map specific proposals and potential activities for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals

Dorset local nature recovery strategy provides a 10-year framework to help everyone work together towards a shared vision for nature recovery in Dorset.

Dorset's natural environment is one of our greatest assets, but over time it has been weakened. This strategy marks a turning point - an end to the decline and a focus on recovery.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been developed with consideration for equality, diversity and inclusion. The strategy aims to benefit all communities by improving access to nature, enhancing environmental quality, and supporting health and wellbeing. Through public consultation and stakeholder engagement, efforts have been made to ensure that the strategy reflects a wide range of views and does not disproportionately impact any protected groups. The strategy promotes inclusive participation in nature recovery and seeks to address barriers to engagement, particularly for underrepresented or disadvantaged communities.

Evidence gathering and engagement

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

The Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy draws on several key sources of data and evidence across the DC and BCP council areas:

- **Public consultation feedback** from residents, stakeholders, and community groups, which helps identify potential impacts on different population groups.
- **Health data** from public health Dorset in relation of lack of access to nature across Dorset data.
- **Engagement with equality groups and statutory consultees**, including Natural England and BCP Council, to ensure inclusive representation.
- **Policy and strategy alignment**, including Dorset Council's and BCP Council Climate and Ecology Strategy and national guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

7. What did this tell you?

- User experience was sometimes not as good as it could be as the strategy is long, maps are complex, and it was unclear how to make relevant to me / my organisation
- People wanted more opportunities to get involved and guidance on doing the activities.
- Support and input came from a range of different stakeholders including farmers, landowners, businesses etc
- That 'meaningful and sustained stakeholder engagement' would be critical to the success of the Dorset LNRS – delivery of the strategy needs to start straight away to keep those people engaged.
- Nature recovery can deliver benefits for wildlife and people
- Access to nature is also important for lots of people, but this must be in appropriate areas / balanced with landowner views about access
- Who is most and least likely to benefit from nature recovery efforts, based on geographic, socio-economic, and demographic factors.
- Barriers to access and engagement with nature, especially for groups such as disabled people, older adults, ethnic minorities, and those in deprived areas.
- Opportunities to improve equity, such as enhancing green space access, involving underrepresented communities in decision-making, and ensuring communications are inclusive.

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

- Martin Whitchurch – Strategic Lead for Greenspace & Conservation (BCP)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group – presented before the consultation to enable us to incorporate their ideas into how we delivered the consultation and understand the barriers to delivering nature recovery.

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

No

10. Is an EQIA required?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is relevant to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) because it helps ensure that the strategy is inclusive, fair, and does not unintentionally disadvantage any individuals or communities. It assesses how different groups—such as those defined by age, disability, race, gender, or socio-economic status—might be affected by the strategy's policies and actions. This is especially important in nature recovery, where access to green spaces.

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

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

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

Key to impacts

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

Impacts on who or what?
Age

Choose impact
Positive Impact

How
There will be a positive impact on old people, children and young people as the aim of implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, which also brings benefits for people. A healthy natural environment gives us what we need to survive, from clean air and water, to flood protection and carbon storage,

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Disability	Positive Impact	as well as beautiful outdoor places to enjoy. The LNRS will be a guide to other policy and project delivery that may increase direct access to nature as well as indirect health benefits from increased biodiversity and functioning ecosystems. Implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, including accessibility to nature spaces and increasing accessible opportunities for people to get involved in nature recovery activities. Mental and physical health benefits can be expected from increased nature recovery areas and accessibility.
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Race and Ethnicity	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Religion and belief	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Sex (consider men and women)	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group
Sexual orientation	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected characteristic group

Impacts on who or what? People with caring responsibilities	Choose impact Positive Impact	How Implementing the strategy looks to improve nature across the county, including accessibility to nature spaces which may benefit people with caring responsibilities.
Rural isolation	 Positive Impact	More access to nature areas for recreation and opportunities to help with nature recovery activities should have physical and mental health benefits. Celebrating the nature recovery activities of those in rural communities through nature recovery Dorset could have positive benefits and show how everyone's actions are connected across the county.
Socio-economic deprivation	 Positive Impact	Implementation of this strategy will include more opportunities for people to get involved in nature recovery and connect with nature.
Single parents	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected group
Armed forces communities	Neutral Impact	Having considered, we don't believe there will any impact on this protected group

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

The implementation of the LNRS is expected to have positive impacts on several groups, particularly older people, children and young people, disabled people, those with caring responsibilities, rural communities, and individuals experiencing socio-economic deprivation. These benefits stem from improved access to nature, enhanced biodiversity, and associated physical and mental health outcomes. For most other protected characteristic groups—including gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and marital status—the strategy is assessed to have a neutral impact, with no anticipated negative effects. The strategy is designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that nature recovery benefits are shared across all communities.

Further environmental impact assessments and EQIAs will be undertaken for specific work packages throughout the delivery phase of the local nature recovery strategy.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Accessibility of the written strategy	We will maintain both a PDF and interactive website version of the strategy. The website version of the strategy was created to be compatible with assistive tech and compliant with the council's content rules. It allows people to navigate the strategy in a less traditional document form. The PDF document version will also be provided as an option for those who prefer to access in this way.	Bridget Betts, Amy Smith	Development of campaigns etc: Jan-Apr 2026
	During the delivery phase of the strategy, we will take a more targeted approach to sharing specific parts of the strategy in ways tailored to different audiences, to ensure activities and opportunities to deliver nature recovery are easily understood. This may involve videos, campaigns, and meetings.		Delivery: from Apr 2026
Accessibility of the maps	We will look to publish to final maps in a folder on the main version of Dorset Explorer if possible, rather than a separate nature recovery version, to make them easier for people to find.	Bridget Betts, Amy Smith	December 2025
	We acknowledge that detailed nature recovery maps are not accessible to all users, particularly due to their interactive online format and there being lots of layers for users to familiarise themselves with and understand what the data shows. Based on the consultation responses, we will replace the one video guide with a series of more targeted videos and explanation notes on how different user groups could use and access the different map layers. As with the videos prepared		January 2026

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	for the public consultation, closed captions will be added to make the videos accessible. There is not likely to be one single solution to meet all accessibility needs with the maps, so we will invite individuals to contact the team with specific requirements. We can then consider if we are able to provide any tailored support, for example if we can provide a printed map of a specific location of interest or written summaries for visually impaired users. We will also continue signposting to the general help documentation on how to use Dorset Explorer for those less familiar with the platform. We will keep reviewing feedback on how people are using the maps and challenges experienced, to tailor our response. Depending on what needs might be identified, we may consider developing further guidance tools, for example new written guides, hosting a webinar or exploring whether it's possible to provide training to digital champion volunteers or library staff to support residents to access the maps.		
Ways for people to get involved in nature recovery	The nature connection priority in the strategy includes a range of activities to deliver to give more people, more opportunities to get involved in nature recovery. Dorset Council could have a role in delivering these activities, along with a range of partner organisations. Our webpage will be updated to provide a sign posting service to opportunities and guidance on how to deliver nature recovery.	Bridget Betts & Amy Smith	Development of webpages: Jan-Apr 2026

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
	Following a suggestion from the former EDI reference group, attend a meeting with the new EDI engagement panel for insight on how different groups in Dorset are able to actively engage in delivering nature recovery and opportunities to improve this.	Bridget Betts & Amy Smith working with Katherine Locke (EDI officer)	early 2026 (depending on meeting availability)
Governance of the delivery phase	When we transition from strategy preparation to delivery phase, Dorset Council's role will be to: • Lead and convene a delivery partnership • Embed LNRS into local decision making • Identify strategic projects and facilitate project development • Monitor and report on delivery of LNRS priorities A group will be formed to oversee this work, with group members selected from across a range of sectors to ensure different perspectives are considered. One of the groups roles will be to consider equality, diversity and inclusion.	Bridget Betts	December 2025
Delivery of nature recovery projects	Delivery of the activities in the strategy, such as enhancing existing habitats or creating new nature-rich spaces, will be delivered by a wide range of sectors across Dorset. In many cases there will be opportunities to consider how actions for nature could also deliver benefits for people and improve equality, diversity and inclusion. Where Dorset Council are involved in project delivery, separate EQIA's will be needed for the specific projects to ensure they are inclusive.	Officers leading on project delivery	as required
The delivery phase of the strategy will run from January 2026 until we are instructed to review and update the local nature recovery strategy by Defra Secretary of State, this could be in 3 to 10 years from publication.			

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqlA: Bridget Betts

Officers involved in completing the EqlA: Amy Smith

Date of completion:13/10/2025

Version Number: 2

EqlA review date:

Equality Lead Sign Off:

Next Steps:

- the EqlA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqlA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqlA, to get a better understanding.
- EqlA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)