Climate & Nature:

Update and key lines of enquiry

Dorset Council has committed to providing a public progress update on its Climate and Nature programmes twice a year. These updates are reported to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee and take the form of either a qualitative report (Spring/Summer) or a quantitative report (Autumn/Winter).

This report replaces the Spring/Summer 2026 update. Rather than providing a comprehensive overview of all activity, it responds to a series of key lines of enquiry raised by councillors, combining narrative commentary with supporting data and evidence where available. Given the broad scope of some questions, responses aim to provide an appropriate level of detail while signposting to relevant reports and committee papers for further information.

The council continues to make progress across a wide range of climate and nature workstreams. A fuller summary of programme performance and outcomes will be presented in the quantitative update scheduled for December 2026.

This report is structured around the following sections:

1. Our strategic approach

Dorset Council's Climate and Nature Programme is structured around three interconnected challenges: reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation), reversing biodiversity loss (nature recovery), and adapting to a changing climate (resilience). The council's approach recognises that these issues cannot be addressed in isolation. Action to reduce emissions helps limit future climate impacts, nature recovery delivers benefits for both carbon reduction and resilience, and adaptation ensures that communities, infrastructure and services can continue to thrive in a changing environment.

The council recognises that addressing the climate and nature emergencies requires action both within its own operations and across the wider county through partnership working with communities, businesses, public sector organisations and landowners. It has a critical convening and leadership role to ensure the appropriate strategic frameworks are in place to facilitate the creation of a climate-friendly, nature-rich county that can adapt and thrive in the face of environmental change.

1.1 What is the long-term vision for climate resilience in Dorset, and how is progress being monitored?

Climate change is already affecting Dorset, with extreme weather, flooding and coastal erosion becoming more common. These impacts are expected to intensify over the coming decades, with implications for communities, public services, infrastructure, public health, the local economy and the natural environment.

The long-term vision is for Dorset to be a climate-resilient county where communities, public services, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment are prepared for the impacts of climate change and able to thrive despite increasing climate risks.

Many organisations across Dorset are already delivering important adaptation and resilience activity. However, this work is often developed within individual sectors or organisations and is not always guided by a shared understanding of Dorset's most significant climate risks.

To address this, Dorset Council is working with BCP Council and partners to co-develop a Dorset-wide Climate Adaptation Strategy. The strategy will provide a common framework for understanding climate risks, identifying adaptation priorities and strengthening coordination across the county. It will build on existing activity rather than duplicate it, helping organisations work together more effectively to anticipate, prepare for and respond to climate impacts.

The strategy will also draw on the findings of the Dorset Citizens' Climate Panel, whose members developed a vision for a resilient, fair and healthy future for Dorset. This will help ensure that the strategy reflects local values and community priorities while supporting the county's long-term climate resilience ambitions.

Climate resilience is also being embedded through the delivery of the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). While resilience is not identified as a standalone priority, it is a core outcome that underpins the strategy's 13 priorities. The LNRS seeks to create a connected, functioning network of nature-rich habitats that can better withstand and adapt to pressures such as climate change, flooding, drought, habitat fragmentation and changing land use. This includes restoring ecosystems, improving habitat connectivity, supporting species recovery and delivering nature-based solutions such as wetland creation, floodplain restoration and peatland recovery.

A resilient Dorset will also be characterised by communities that understand local climate and environmental risks, are prepared for foreseeable emergencies, and can recover more quickly from disruptive events. Building resilience is a shared responsibility across public authorities, businesses, voluntary organisations and local communities. Through the Dorset Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and other partnerships, work is underway to strengthen community preparedness and awareness, including support for Town and Parish Councils to develop community emergency response plans, the production of public-facing risk information, and initiatives that help residents and young people understand and respond to local risks.

Progress against this vision will be monitored through the development and implementation of the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy. This will include the creation of a Dorset Climate Risk and Opportunity Register, a Strategic Adaptation Framework setting out governance, roles and responsibilities, and a time-limited action plan. Together, these will provide a basis for tracking progress, reviewing emerging risks and ensuring adaptation activity remains focused on Dorset's most significant climate challenges.

Progress should also be measured through indicators of community resilience and preparedness. These may include the coverage of Community Emergency Resilience Plans across Dorset, levels of volunteer capability, public awareness of local risks, and the ability of communities and partner organisations to prepare for, respond to and recover from climate-related events.

Example

Preparing Dorset for the future: Dorset Citizens' Climate Panel

In the autumn of 2025, with the help of public participation charity Involve, we created the Dorset Citizens' Climate Panel.

Over several weeks, 20 residents heard from independent experts, learned about local climate impacts, and discussed practical ways Dorset can adapt to a changing climate.

You can find out more about the panel's recommendations and learn how they can help our county prepare for climate change in the final report.

1.2 What is the long-term vision for nature recovery in Dorset, and how is progress being monitored?

The long-term vision for nature recovery in Dorset, as set out in the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), is that:

"Nature in Dorset is recovering, thriving, resilient and connected across our landscapes. Everyone in Dorset is able to access nature and be involved in nature recovery."

The strategy provides a shared framework for nature recovery across the county to 2035. Its overarching ambition is to support delivery of the national and international 30by30 target, which aims to protect and effectively manage 30% of land and rivers for nature by 2030. Achieving this requires not only protecting important habitats, but also restoring ecosystems, improving connectivity between habitats and enabling nature to recover at a landscape scale.

As the Responsible Authority for the LNRS, Dorset Council is responsible for monitoring and reporting on nature recovery activity across Dorset. The aim is to

build a shared picture of progress, helping partners understand what action is taking place, celebrate success and identify where further effort is needed.

A Dorset LNRS Monitoring and Reporting Group has been established to develop a locally appropriate monitoring framework based on national guidance. Initially, monitoring will focus on recording and mapping activities that support nature recovery across Dorset. Over time, this will expand to include environmental outcomes, such as improvements in habitat condition, species recovery and water quality.

Monitoring will combine locally gathered information, including activity delivered by land managers, councils, charities and community organisations, with nationally reported data when available. Progress will be reported to Defra and shared locally through accessible tools such as dashboards, maps and infographics. Reporting is expected to begin in 2027 and continue annually thereafter, providing a clear mechanism for tracking progress towards Dorset's nature recovery ambitions.

Defra have emphasised that developing a complete picture of local nature recovery activity will rely on strong partnerships and collaborative data sharing across a range of organisations and individuals. Dorset Council is expected to play a leading role in coordinating this information and supporting a major transformation in local environmental leadership. It will therefore require ongoing efforts to strengthen and expand our partnership approach.

1.3 In what ways is the Local Plan integrating climate and nature considerations?

The Dorset Council Local Plan is at an early stage of production, with a scoping consultation scheduled for September 2026. Climate change and biodiversity loss are key issues that will help shape the plan and inform the policies that guide future development across Dorset. Once adopted, the Local Plan will be a key tool for ensuring that new development supports both climate resilience and nature recovery.

Spatial strategy: A key consideration will be the plan's spatial strategy, which will seek to direct development towards the most sustainable and accessible locations. By locating development where access to services, employment and sustainable transport options is greatest, the plan can help reduce transport related emissions and support more sustainable patterns of growth. It will also consider how best to support renewable energy infrastructure, including wind, solar and battery storage, and reduce recreational pressures on protected habitats.

Climate change mitigation and adaption: The Local Plan will play an important role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. The revised National Panning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the overarching framework for decision-making and seeks to avoid duplication of national requirements and Building Regulations in local plans. However, there remains scope to consider higher standards in specific areas, including:

- water efficiency - where enhanced requirements may be justified in areas of serious water stress.
- energy efficiency - where standards exceeding Building Regulations can be robustly evidenced and shown not to impact the viability or deliverability of development.

These issues will be explored through the Local Plan process. The plan can also influence climate outcomes through the design and layout of development, the provision of green infrastructure, and the promotion of nature-based solutions that support carbon storage, nature recovery and climate resilience. This includes measures such as sustainable drainage systems, habitat creation and urban greening.

The council's commitment to addressing climate change will also underpin the emerging Dorset Design Code, helping to ensure future development is designed to respond positively to climate change impacts while delivering high quality places.

Flood risk and coastal change: Flood risk and coastal change will be important considerations throughout the plan-making process. Supporting evidence, including a strategic flood risk assessment, will help ensure development is located outside of areas of flood risk. The plan can also identify coastal change management areas, helping to manage development in vulnerable locations and plan for long-term adaptation to coastal erosion and sea level rise.

Nature recovery and biodiversity: Nature recovery and biodiversity will be embedded throughout the Local Plan. The Environment Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, while the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) provides a county-wide framework identifying priority habitats, ecological networks and opportunities for nature recovery. The Local Plan will have regard to this evidence, helping to shape policies, site allocations and development proposals that support nature recovery.

A key delivery mechanism for this will be green infrastructure, including parks, woodlands, sustainable drainage systems, habitat corridors and natural flood management measures. These features provide multiple benefits by enhancing

biodiversity, improving climate resilience, storing carbon and supporting health and wellbeing.

In addition, most developments are now required to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), ensuring that the natural environment is left in a measurably better state than before development took place. Dorset Council has published supporting guidance and is progressing habitat banks to help deliver biodiversity gains where they cannot be achieved on-site.

The revised NPPF also allows local plans to set BNG requirements above the statutory minimum for specific site allocations, where this can be fully justified and demonstrated to be deliverable.

Supporting evidence: The council may also undertake a carbon assessment of the emerging Local Plan at an appropriate stage. This would help identify the greenhouse gas implications of the plan and its policies and would complement other evidence, including the Sustainability Appraisal, transport modelling, Renewable Energy Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

Together, these approaches will help ensure that climate change mitigation, climate adaptation, flood resilience and nature recovery are integrated into future development across Dorset.

1.4 Are there measurable targets and performance indicators?

Yes. Dorset Council has a range of measurable targets and performance indicators that support the delivery of its climate and nature ambitions.

At a strategic level, the Dorset Council Plan includes a series of climate and nature-related performance measures which are monitored through the council's corporate performance framework. Progress against these measures is reported regularly to Members, including through the Council Plan Annual Report and the annual Climate and Nature Progress Reports considered by Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

In addition, a number of related strategies and programmes, including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), Local Transport Plan, Biodiversity Duty Action Plan, and the emerging Climate Adaptation Strategy, have their own monitoring frameworks and indicators to measure delivery and outcomes.

The latest Council Plan reporting demonstrates continued progress across a range of priorities, including reducing operational carbon emissions, increasing renewable energy generation, supporting energy efficiency improvements, and accelerating nature recovery. Reporting has also identified climate adaptation and resilience as

an area requiring further focus, which is being addressed through the development of the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy.

The headline climate and nature performance measures currently included within the Council Plan framework are shown below:

KPI / Council Plan Measure	Target	Current position (latest reported)
Reduction in Dorset Council operational carbon emissions (from 2019/20 baseline)	80% by 2030	35% in 2024/25. Annual indicator due to be updated in November.
Council-managed land in positive management for nature	30% by 2030	29% achieved.
Urban verges managed to support wildlife	80% by 2030	62% achieved. More areas now within cut and collect round. more mowers with cut and collect mowers to increase our range further.
Land contributing to nature recovery through Nature Recovery Dorset	79,000 hectares by 2030	Target stated; progress figure not reported in the Annual Report
Improve rights of Way network by 2030	300 miles improved	11.85 miles total achieved. Funding secured for an increase in delivery to begin shortly.
County farmland is managed using sustainable farming practice	70% of land by 2030	53% of land
Household waste reused, recycled or composted	Achieve 65% recycling rate by 2035	59.4% in 2025/26 (59.9% in 2024/25 national statistics).
Reduce Fleet emissions	70% reduction by 2026	19.1% in 2024/25. Annual indicator due to be updated in November.
Ensure all council services have climate adaptation plans in place	March 2026	Initial risk assessment undertaken, but requires finalisation and consultation with services. A revised target date of Q4 2026/27 has been set for its completion.
Reduce staff business travel emissions	At least 25% by 2029	14% in 2024/25. Annual indicator due to be updated in November.
Transition small fleet vehicles to Electric	All small vehicles by 2030	35% of small fleet is battery electric, with more vehicles currently on order for delivery by Q3.
Renewable energy generation on council estate	Additional 5MW of solar PV by 2030	2.2M.W additional solar capacity in delivery.
Oil-fired heating systems replaced with non-fossil fuel alternatives	All oil–fired boilers replaced by 2029	5.88% of council assets using oil-fired heating. Work has begun on surveying the installed Oil-Fired heating systems, with a phased plan to be put together.

Alongside these corporate measures, Dorset Council has recently published its first Dorset Biodiversity Report (2023-2025). The report establishes a framework for

monitoring biodiversity outcomes and statutory duties, using a range of indicators to track progress against local and national targets.

Indicators currently include measures such as:

- extent and condition of priority habitats
- habitat creation and restoration
- tree planting and woodland establishment
- species recovery initiatives
- management of protected sites
- ecological connectivity
- biodiversity enhancements delivered through planning and land management projects, including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The report will be updated annually, providing a transparent assessment of progress towards nature recovery ambitions and helping to identify areas where further action is needed. Monitoring arrangements for the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy are currently being developed and are described in Question 1.2 of this report. Together, these frameworks will provide an increasingly comprehensive picture of Dorset's progress in tackling climate change and supporting nature recovery.

2. Climate resilience

Climate resilience is the third pillar of Dorset Council's Climate and Nature Programme. It focuses on ensuring that council services, communities, infrastructure and the wider county prepared for, and able to adapt to, the current and future impacts of climate change.

This work complements both climate mitigation and nature recovery. The scale of future climate impacts, and therefore the level of adaptation required, will depend in part on how successfully greenhouse gas emissions are reduced. At the same time, nature-based solutions play an important role in building resilience by managing flood risk, improving water quality, reducing overheating and supporting healthier ecosystems.

To date, much of the council's climate and nature activity has focused on reducing emissions and supporting nature recovery. However, climate adaptation and resilience are now becoming an increasingly important area of focus. Work is being progressed at pace to ensure council services are prepared for future climate risks and to support the development of a coordinated, Dorset-wide approach to adaptation with BCP Council and other partners.

2.1 How is the council interpreting and responding to climate projections across key sectors?

As outlined in Section 1, Dorset Council is working with partners to develop a Dorset-wide Climate Adaptation Strategy that will improve understanding of current and future climate risks and identify the actions needed to strengthen resilience across the county.

The council is taking a risk-based approach, drawing on national climate projections and evidence to understand how changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, sea levels and the frequency of extreme weather events could affect Dorset. This includes assessing risks and opportunities across the five sectors identified in the Climate Change Committee's Well Adapted UK report: Health and Wellbeing; Economy; Infrastructure; Land, Nature and Food; and Built Environment and Communities.

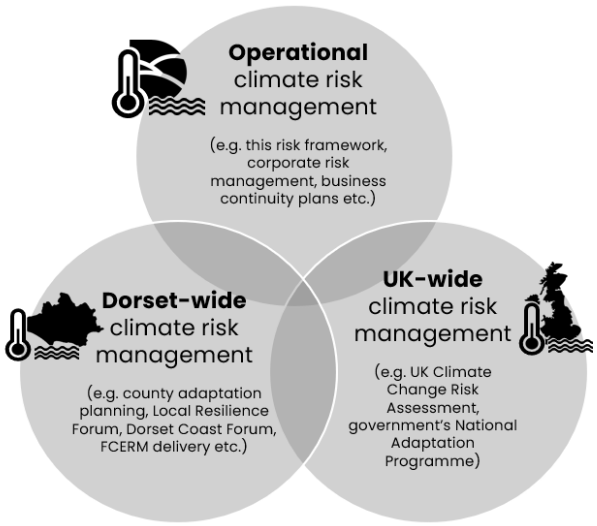
The assessment is being shaped through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and reflects Dorset's specific circumstances, including coastal flood and erosion risks, an ageing and harder-to-adapt housing stock, dispersed infrastructure, an older population, and the importance of climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism.

Alongside this work, Dorset Council is developing an Operational Climate Change Risk Assessment Framework to understand how climate hazards may affect the

council's own services, assets and operations. This will support the integration of climate risk into corporate risk management, service planning, business continuity arrangements and investment decisions.

Climate projections are also informing the council's approach to nature recovery and nature-based solutions. Through the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), climate projections are being considered alongside opportunities for nature recovery to identify where action can deliver multiple benefits, including flood risk reduction, drought resilience, biodiversity recovery and carbon sequestration. This supports a move from responding to individual risks in isolation towards a more integrated, landscape-scale approach that recognises the connections between coastal, river, agricultural and water systems.

Together, these workstreams are helping to build a comprehensive understanding of climate risks across Dorset and identify the actions needed to improve resilience. By combining strategic adaptation planning, climate risk assessment and nature-based solutions, the council and its partners are developing a coordinated approach to strengthening the resilience of Dorset's communities, economy, infrastructure and natural environment.



2.2 What evidence and modelling are being used to understand future climate risks in Dorset?

The Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy is being informed by a range of climate projections, risk assessments and local evidence to understand how climate change may affect Dorset over the coming decades.

The primary source of climate projections is the Met Office UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18), which provides local-scale projections for changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, heatwaves, drought, sea level rise and other climate hazards. In line with UK Government adaptation guidance, planning assumptions will consider 2°C of global warming by 2050 while also assessing the implications of higher warming scenarios of 4°C by the end of the century.

These projections are being supplemented by national and local datasets, including flood and coastal erosion mapping, strategic flood risk assessments, national mapping and tools, as well as local environmental, infrastructure, health and land-

use data, and evidence from the National Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA4).

Together, this evidence helps identify where climate impacts are likely to be greatest, which communities, assets and services are most vulnerable, and where adaptation measures should be prioritised. Current projections suggest Dorset is likely to experience warmer temperatures, more frequent and intense heatwaves, wetter winters, drier summers, and increased risks from flooding, coastal change and water resource pressures.

Additional modelling and scenario data from flood and coastal risk management partners will also be incorporated where appropriate to strengthen understanding of future risks and inform adaptation planning.

A comprehensive summary of Dorset's climate evidence, including recent climate trends, future climate projections, and key climate hazards, is provided in the Hazards section of Dorset Council's operational climate change risk assessment framework. More detailed climate data and supporting evidence are included in

Data

Table 1: Projections for the count of days crossing a threshold in Dorset, for the present and three levels of global warming.

	Present	1.5°C	2°C	4°C
Warm Days >22°C Explore the data	~40	**43** (32-66)	**58** (39-80)	**145** (121-184)
Very Warm Days >25°C Explore the data (e.g. risk of road melt)	~20	**22** (16-31)	**29** (20-38)	**61** (53-73)
Hot Days >30°C Explore the data ()	~2	**2** (1-6)	**3** (2-7)	**18** (12-24)
Extreme Days >35°C Explore the data	~0	**0** (0-1)	**0** (0-1)	**2** (1-5)
Tropical Nights (Min>20°C) Explore the data	~0	**0** (0-0)	**0** (0-0)	**2** (1-4)
Frost Days (min <0°C) Explore the data	~35	**33** (27-41)	**29** (24-36)	**13** (11-19)
Icy days (max <0°C) Explore the data	~0-1	**0** (0-1)	**1** (0-2)	**0** (0-0)
Plant growth proxy (>5.5°C) Relative to 2000-2020 average Explore the data	-	**+4%** (+0% to +8%)	**+12%** (+2% to +17%)	**+38%** (+30% to +46%)
Heating demand proxy (<15°C) Relative to 2000-2020 average Explore the data	-	**-5%** (-9% to +2%)	**-10%** (-14% to -2%)	**-31%** (-36% to -22%)
Cooling demand proxy (>22°C) Relative to 2000-2020 average Explore the data	-	**+16%** (-14% to -78%)	**+57%** (+5% to 116%)	**+292%** (+227% to 397%)

Source: Met Office Local Authority Climate Service. The plant growth, heating & cooling demand indicators are presented by the Met Office as 'degree days', which is a difficult concept to grasp – so we have here alternatively presented the % change relative to that value for the 2000-2020 average.

Appendix A.

Data

Table 2: The UK Climate Risk Indicators project also provides additional localised projections based on the Mett Office's UKCP18 climate projections

	Present	1.5°C	2°C	4°C
Chance of a heatwave	**~60%**	**69%** (61-79%)	**87.6%** (78-97%)	**100%** (99-100%)
Days with very high wildfire danger	**~19**	**22** (18-33)	**27** (22-44)	**56.6** (46-85)
Chance of Amber heat-health alert	**~17%**	**22%** (19-32%)	**27%** (23-51)	**82%** (75-95%)
Adverse rail travel days (Likely relaxation of service standards)	**~37**	**39** (37-45)	**43** (40-53)	**66** (63-80)
Days with road melt risk	**~24**	**29** (25-38)	**36** (30-51)	**76** (68-96)
12-month severe river drought (% of time)	**~14%**	**16%** (1-20%)	**20%** (10-36%)	**32%** (20-56%)
24-month severe river drought (% of time)	**~14%**	**16%** (1-21%)	**20%** (10-40%)	**38%** (21-66%)
Agricultural drought (SPEI) (% of time)	**~1%**	**11%** (1-20%)	**16%** (12-26%)	**31%** (28-39%)
Change in soil moisture relative to 1981-2010 average	**~ -1.6%**	**-2%** (-4.6 to -0.1%)	**-3%** (-7 to -1.3%)	**-6.6%**(-11.5 to -3.3%)

2.3 How many properties and businesses are currently at risk from coastal erosion, river flooding and surface water flooding?

Dorset Council uses a range of national and local datasets to understand current exposure to flooding and coastal change. These include Environment Agency flood risk mapping, the Risk of Flooding from Surface Water and Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea datasets, National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping, Shoreline Management Plans, and locally developed flood risk evidence.

The most comprehensive property-level dataset currently available is the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water and Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Seas mapping.

Based on the latest available Environment Agency data, **21,514 properties** in Dorset Council area are identified as being **at risk of surface water flooding**, 8.6% of all properties in the area. **13,681 properties** in Dorset Council area are identified as being **at risk of flooding from rivers and seas**, 5.5% of all properties in the area. The extent of overlap between the two datasets is not clear. However, between 1 in 11 and 1 in 7 properties are estimated to be at some level of risk from surface water or river and sea flooding.

Data: Properties at risk from surface water flooding

Level of Risk	Residential Properties	Non-residential Properties	Unclassified	Total number of Properties
High	3,274	1,011	576	4,861
Medium	3,018	805	321	4,144
Low	9,169	2,228	1,112	12,509
Total	**15,461**	**4,044**	**2,009**	**21,514**

Data: Properties at risk from rivers and sea flooding

Level of Risk	Residential Properties	Non-residential Properties	Unclassified	Total number of Properties
High	1,516	905	435	2,856
Medium	1,160	424	159	1,743
Low	5,064	1,548	617	7,229
Very low	1,428	379	46	1,853
Total	**9,168**	**3,256**	**1,257**	**13,681**

Information on flooding is available through Environment Agency flood risk mapping, while coastal erosion risk is assessed using National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping and Shoreline Management Plans. These datasets are being used as part of the development of the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy to better understand the scale and distribution of current and future climate risks across the county.

As work on the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy progresses, these datasets will be combined with wider climate projections and local evidence to provide a more comprehensive picture of the communities, businesses, infrastructure and assets most vulnerable to flooding, coastal change and other climate-related hazards.

2.4 How are these risks being prioritised and actioned in policy and operational plans?

Climate adaptation is already being incorporated into a range of council policies, strategies and operational programmes, including flood risk management, shoreline management planning, emergency planning, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), planning policy, and infrastructure and asset management.

The emerging Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy will strengthen this approach by providing a shared evidence base to identify and prioritise Dorset's most significant

climate risks. This will help ensure adaptation priorities are consistently reflected in future policies, service plans and investment decisions.

Alongside this, Dorset Council's Operational Climate Change Assessment Framework will support the integration of climate risk into corporate and service risk registers, business continuity planning, emergency preparedness, asset management, capital investment and strategic decision-making.

At an operational level, adaptation measures are delivered through council services and partnership-led programmes, working with organisations such as landowners, farmers, conservation bodies and risk management authorities. The overall aim is to embed climate adaptation within existing governance and delivery mechanisms, ensuring climate risks are managed alongside other strategic risks and addressed through day-to-day decision-making and service delivery.

Example

Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)

The Dorset LNRS provides a practical example of how climate risks are being translated into action. Within the strategy, climate risks such as flooding, coastal erosion, drought and biodiversity loss are used to identify priority areas for intervention, helping target action where it can deliver the greatest benefits for both climate resilience and nature recovery. These priorities are being embedded within strategic plans and delivered through partnerships with landowners, farmers, conservation organisations and other stakeholders at a landscape scale.

Tree planting

2.5 How is water supply resilience being considered strategically?

Responsibility for water supply resilience sits primarily with Wessex Water, which is responsible for maintaining and developing water supply infrastructure, managing drought resilience, reducing leakage, and planning for long-term water resource security. Wessex Water's Strategic Direction Statement sets out its approach to delivering safe, reliable water supplies and improving resilience to 2050.

However, Dorset Council also has an important strategic role in supporting water resilience through:

- leading the preparation of the Dorset Local Plan, helping to ensure future growth takes account of water resource constraints, climate change and water efficiency
- flood risk and surface water management as the Lead Local Flood Authority
- climate adaptation and resilience planning
- planning policy and sustainable development
- partnership working with water companies, regulators, developers and communities to improve long-term resilience and manage water demand.

Responsibility for water resilience is therefore shared across a number of organisations:

Function	Lead Organisation
Public water supply resilience	Wessex Water
Strategic water resources planning	Wessex Water, regulated by Ofwat and Environment Agency
Flood risk and surface water management	Dorset Council
Environmental regulation and abstraction licensing	Environment Agency
Emergency planning and resilience coordination	Dorset Council and Dorset Local Resilience Forum
Preparation of Local Plan	Dorset Council

Water resilience is also being considered through the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) through an integrated catchment and nature-based approach to supporting water availability, water quality and resilience to climate change.

The LNRS recognises that healthy ecosystems play a critical role in regulating water systems and reducing vulnerability to both drought and flooding. Key ways it supports water resilience include:

- **protecting and restoring river catchments, wetlands, floodplains** and other water-dependent habitats to improve water retention in the landscape
- **improving water quality** by targeting actions that reduce nutrient pollution, sediment runoff and other pressures affecting rivers, streams, groundwater and coastal waters

- **working with water companies on water quality and pollution reduction**, helping to improve the condition and resilience of freshwater ecosystems.
- **supporting sustainable farming practices** that improve soil health, increase infiltration, reduce runoff and help retain water in the wider landscape
- **promoting nature-based solutions**, such as woodland creation, wetland restoration and natural flood management projects to help regulate water flows, recharge groundwater and improve resilience to extreme weather
- **using spatial mapping to target action** where it can deliver the greatest combined benefits for water management, climate adaptation and nature recovery.

2.6 What support mechanisms exist or are planned for residents dealing with climate impacts?

Dorset Council supports residents experiencing climate-related impacts through a combination of emergency planning, multi-agency response arrangements, public information and community resilience initiatives.

The council works closely with partners through the Dorset Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to prepare for and respond to risks such as flooding, extreme heat and severe weather. During periods of heightened risk, the council works alongside emergency services, health partners and other agencies to support vulnerable residents, coordinate emergency response arrangements, communicate public health advice and respond to emerging issues affecting communities.

The council also promotes national resilience and public health guidance and works with partners to improve local awareness of how residents can prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. This includes supporting wider community initiatives that help residents build resilience to climate impacts, such as local "Cool Spaces" schemes during periods of extreme heat.

Alongside emergency response arrangements, Dorset Council is helping to strengthen community resilience through an ongoing programme led by the Emergency Planning Team and delivered in partnership with the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils. This includes:

- supporting local councils to develop Community Emergency Resilience Plans;
- increasing community preparedness and awareness;
- delivering youth engagement activities focused on resilience; and
- developing public guidance and resources to support communities before, during and after emergencies.

As part of the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy, opportunities will be explored to further enhance support for residents, improve access to information, strengthen local resilience networks and ensure communities are better prepared for the increasing impacts of climate change.

Example

Firewise UK

The Firewise UK programme is a strong example of community resilience in action. Delivered by the Dorset Heaths Partnership, with support from Dorset Council, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, and the Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner, the programme works with communities living near heathlands at risk of wildfire.

Through local networks and community representatives, Firewise provides residents with wildfire alerts, safety information, prevention advice and guidance on how to prepare for and respond to wildfire incidents.

Based on internationally recognised wildfire research, the programme encourages communities to work together to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire and strengthen local resilience.

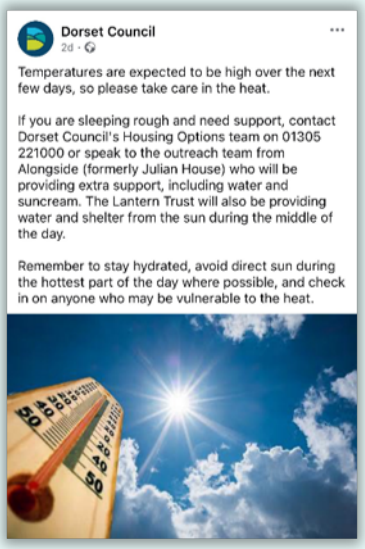
Firewise K9 volunteer

Example

Social media post during heatwave (Aug 26)

As temperatures rose during a summer heatwave, Dorset Council used its channels to share safety advice and promote support services for vulnerable residents. Posts on social media provided practical guidance on staying safe in hot weather and signposted additional support for people sleeping rough.

By providing timely information and connecting residents with support, the council helped communities respond safely to the impacts of extreme heat.



2.7 How are lessons learned from recent climate events being incorporated into future planning?

Dorset Council seeks to embed lessons learned from climate related events into future planning, emergency preparedness and resilience activities.

Following significant incidents, the council undertakes its own debriefing alongside working with partner organisations to review the response, identifying what went well, what didn't go so well and to establish any improvements that can be made. Lessons learned are then used to inform future plans, operational procedures, partnership working arrangements and investment decisions.

For flooding events, Local Authorities also have the powers to instigate formal investigations under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, where appropriate. These investigations examine the causes and impacts of flooding, identify vulnerabilities, and draw on evidence from affected communities and partner organisations to help reduce future risk.

Lessons from recent events will also help shape the Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy and the council's Operational Climate Change Risk Assessment Framework. This ensures that emerging risks, vulnerabilities and effective adaptation measures are reflected in future policies, service planning, infrastructure investment and emergency preparedness arrangements.

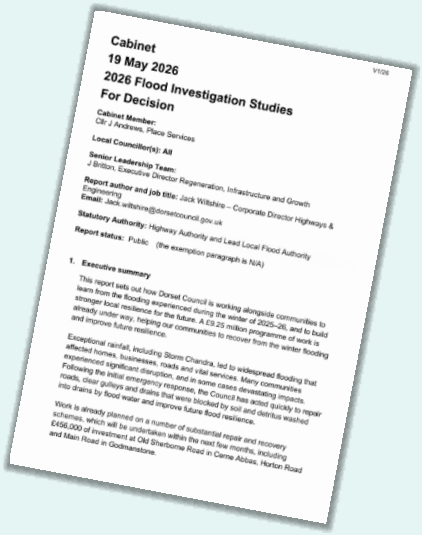
Through this continuous process of review and improvement, the council aims to strengthen Dorset's resilience to the increasing impacts of climate change and more frequent extreme weather events.

Example

Widespread flooding experienced during winter 2025/26

Flood investigation studies following the widespread flooding of winter 2025/26 are helping to improve understanding of local flood risks and inform future resilience planning. The findings are shaping investment priorities and adaptation measures, including drainage improvements, property-level resilience measures and nature-based flood management.

Read the Cabinet report.



Cabinet
19 May 2026
2026 Flood Investigation Studies
For Decision

Cabinet Member:
Cllr J Andrews, Place Services

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:
J Britton, Executive Director Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth

Report author and job title: Jack Wiltshire – Corporate Director Highways & Engineering
Email: jack.wiltshire@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority

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

1. Executive summary

This report sets out how Dorset Council is working alongside communities to learn from the flooding experienced during the winter of 2025-26, and to build stronger local resilience for the future. A £9.25 million programme of work is already under way, helping our communities to recover from the winter flooding and improve future resilience.

Exceptional rainfall, including Storm Chandra, led to widespread flooding that affected homes, businesses, roads and vital services. Many communities experienced significant disruption, and in some cases devastating impacts. Following the initial emergency response, the Council has acted quickly to repair roads, clear gullies and drains that were blocked by soil and detritus washed into drains by flood water and improve future flood resilience.

Work is already planned on a number of substantial repair and recovery schemes, which will be undertaken within the next few months, including £456,000 of investment at Old Sherborne Road in Came Abbas, Horton Road and Main Road in Godmanstone.

3. Projects and programmes

Delivery of Dorset Council's climate and nature ambitions is supported through a wide range of programmes, projects, partnerships and service activities. While some initiatives are directly funded and delivered by the council, many rely on external funding, partnership working, policy development and enabling action by communities, businesses and other organisations. This reflects the council's wider leadership role in coordinating and supporting climate and nature action across Dorset.

The responses to the following key lines of enquiry focus on programmes and projects funded through the council's capital programme, including both council investment and external funding secured by Dorset Council. These projects represent an important element of delivery, but form only part of the wider programme of activity, influence and partnership working that contributes to climate and nature outcomes across the county.

3.1 Beyond EV rollout, what wider infrastructure changes are being delivered?

Dorset Council is delivering a broad programme of infrastructure investment that supports climate mitigation, climate resilience and nature recovery. While electric vehicle infrastructure forms part of this work, significant investment is also being made in council buildings, renewable energy generation, transport infrastructure, flood resilience, waste facilities and green infrastructure.

Council buildings and energy infrastructure

The council's climate operational programme is supporting improvements to the energy performance of its estate through building retrofit projects, including LED lighting upgrades and improvements to building fabric and insulation.

Investment is also being made in renewable energy generation. An additional 2.2MW of solar PV capacity across 42 council sites is currently being procured for delivery over the next year. Alongside reducing carbon emissions, these projects will help reduce dependence on purchased energy and improve the resilience of the council's energy supply. A pilot programme exploring solar PV installation on leased assets is also being developed.

The programme has also supported the transition of the council's diesel refuelling infrastructure to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) and enabled additional carbon

reduction measures to be incorporated into planned maintenance works across the council estate.

Transport and highways infrastructure

Dorset's Local Transport Plan 2026-2041 will play a key role in shaping future transport infrastructure across Dorset. A key objective of the plan is to combat climate change by prioritising investment that supports walking, wheeling and cycling, including safer routes to schools and local destinations, alongside improvements to bus services, accessibility and passenger facilities.

Dorset Council is using Government bus grant funding to invest £2.3m revenue per year in improving local bus services and £1.7m capital per year in improving passenger facilities across Dorset. Revenue funding is supporting the operation and enhancement of key bus routes, helping to protect socially necessary services, increase service frequencies, introduce additional evening and weekend journeys, and provide continued support for community transport.

Capital investment is focused on improving the passenger experience and future-proofing the network through upgrades to real-time passenger information, renewal of bus stop infrastructure, accessibility improvements, bus priority measures, and the electrification of the Swanage bus fleet.

Climate resilience is also increasingly being incorporated into transport and highway projects through improved drainage, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), tree planting, verge management and other measures designed to reduce flooding and improve resilience to extreme weather.

In addition, Dorset Highways is embedding sustainability within its operations by adopting lower-energy technologies and more sustainable construction methods where practical, helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve the long-term resilience of transport infrastructure.

The council is also delivering a county-wide streetlighting replacement programme, improving energy efficiency and reducing operational carbon emissions. As set out in the 9th September 2025 Cabinet paper and 29th January 2026 Cabinet paper.

Example

Fairfield Road, Dorchester

Phase 2 of the Fairfield Road scheme, due to be delivered in autumn 2026, will strengthen links between Dorchester South and Dorchester West stations while incorporating sustainable drainage and nature-based solutions.

New rain gardens, trees and planting will capture and filter surface water runoff, helping to reduce pressure on drainage systems, improve water quality and lower flood risk during heavy rainfall.

Alongside these resilience benefits, the scheme will enhance biodiversity, improve the local environment and provide cooling during hot weather, demonstrating how everyday infrastructure projects can deliver multiple climate and community benefits.

Flood and coastal resilience infrastructure

Following the exceptional flooding experienced during winter 2025/26, significant investment is being made to improve Dorset's flood resilience.

Immediate works were undertaken to repair highway damage, cover and fill potholes, and patch and resurface roads. Additional funding was made available for gully and drain cleaning. This builds on top of an existing budget of £800k from Dorset Council for immediate response and reactive maintenance, and £2.8m from the Department for Transport for Flooding Related Road Maintenance.

Future works are being identified through a programme of flood investigations and community flood reviews, supported by the £5 million Flooding Resilience Capital Programme approved by Cabinet in May 2026. These projects will help reduce flood risk and strengthen resilience across some of Dorset's most affected communities. Read 19th May 2026 Cabinet Report here for more details.

The Coastal Risk Management (CRM) Team is delivering a programme of coastal protection and resilience projects across Dorset over the next three years. Key capital projects currently being delivered, or programmed for delivery, include:

- Weymouth Harbour Walls F & G Replacement
- Lyme Regis Environmental Improvement Scheme Phase 5 (The Cobb Strengthening)
- Swanage Beach Renourishment Scheme (sand recharge, seawall strengthening and rock armour improvements)
- Chesil Cove Coastal Protection Scheme (seawall strengthening)
- West Bay Harbour Walls A & B Strengthening
- Weymouth Harbour Wall E Strengthening

- Newton's Cove Coastal Protection Improvements

These projects will help reduce flood and coastal erosion risk to communities, businesses and infrastructure across Dorset. Where coastal assets are being strengthened, renewed or improved, future climate change impacts, including projected sea level rise and increased storminess, are considered as part of the design and appraisal process.

Waste infrastructure

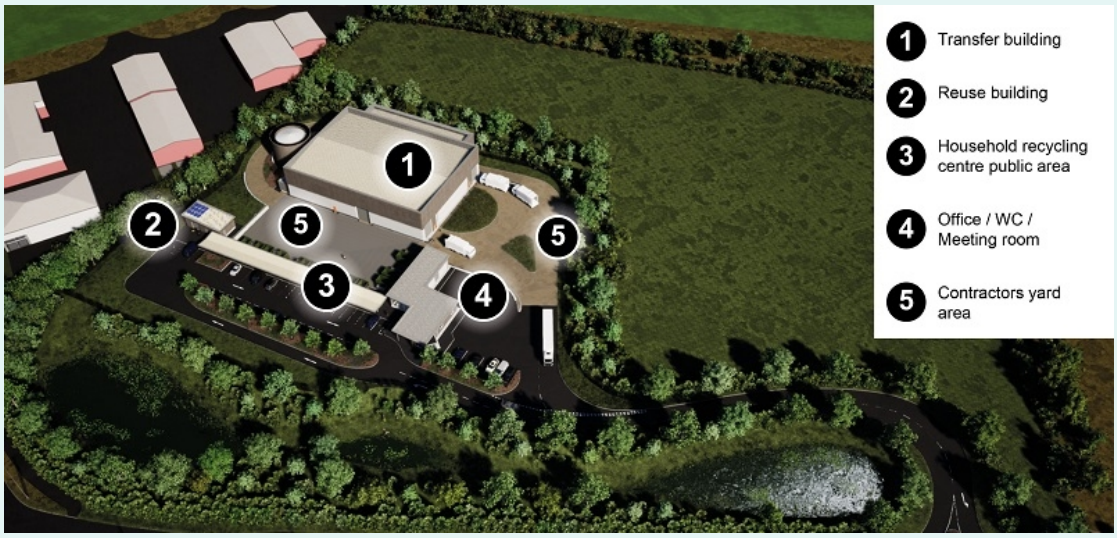
Dorset Council is constructing a new Blandford Waste Management Centre, due to open in spring 2027. The facility has been designed to provide a modern, efficient and environmentally responsible waste and recycling service for residents and businesses while incorporating climate mitigation and adaptation considerations.

Alongside this, a strategic review of the wider waste estate is underway to ensure future facilities are aligned with service requirements, decarbonisation objectives and the council's long-term priorities.

Example

Blandford Waste Management Centre

The centre will replace the outdated site at Blandford Heights Industrial Estate, which no longer meets the needs of Dorset's growing waste services.
This new facility will offer; better access, separate areas for public and commercial use, and stronger environmental protections.
Read more on the Dorset Council website.



Green infrastructure and nature recovery

Investment is also being made in Dorset's natural infrastructure to support biodiversity, carbon storage and climate resilience.

This includes the creation of additional low-fertility roadside verges, investment in equipment to support more wildlife-friendly verge management, the expansion of nature reserves, and the restoration of priority habitats such as lowland heathland.

Work is also underway to improve the resilience of rights of way and sections of the South West Coast Path to the impacts of climate change.

Looking ahead, Dorset Council is developing a pipeline of nature recovery projects aligned with the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This will help identify and support strategic projects capable of delivering the greatest benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience and ecosystem recovery across the county.

Together, these investments demonstrate that Dorset Council's climate and nature programme extends well beyond EV infrastructure, encompassing energy, transport, flood resilience, waste management and green infrastructure to support a more resilient and sustainable Dorset.

3.2 How many EV roadside charge points are already installed vs planned, and what is the projected coverage?

As of July 2026, Dorset has **766 publicly available EV charge points**, including both publicly and privately funded infrastructure recorded through the national DfT/Zapmap dataset.

This equates to 196.4 public charge points per 100,000 population, which is above both the South West average (156.7) and the UK average (174.9).

To further expand the network, Dorset Council is delivering the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme, which will install 1,125 on-street residential charge points (2,250 sockets) at more than 300 locations across the county. The programme is focused on areas with high numbers of households that do not have access to off-street parking, with installations concentrated in Dorset's main towns and urban areas.

The LEVI Programme will be delivered over five years, with the first installations scheduled for September/October 2026 in Chickerell, Portland and Weymouth. The initial phase will be delivered through four workplans covering locations across the county, as shown in the map below. These may be subject to change as the programme develops.

In addition, the LEVI Pilot Programme is due to resume following the appointment of a new charge point operator. Sixty-eight new sites have been identified for this scheme, primarily in rural locations, with the potential to deliver between 120 and 150 additional charge points.

Together, these programmes will significantly increase Dorset's public charging network, improving access to charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking and helping support the transition to electric vehicles across both urban and rural communities.

3.3 How is the council working with partners (EA, water companies, farmers, community groups)?

Dorset Council recognises that climate change and nature recovery are complex challenges that cannot be addressed by any single organisation acting alone. Many of the factors influencing carbon emissions, climate resilience and biodiversity are outside the direct control of the council and require action across communities, businesses, public sector organisations, landowners, farmers, infrastructure providers and environmental partners.

Working in partnership enables the council to combine expertise, resources and influence, ensuring that actions are coordinated, evidence-led and delivered at the scale required to achieve meaningful outcomes. Partnerships also help maximise external funding opportunities, avoid duplication of effort and align local activities with regional and national priorities.

This collaborative approach is embedded across the council's climate and nature work and is reflected in initiatives such as:

- developing and delivering the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) with a wide range of environmental, farming, land management and community partners
- working with public-sector and private partners to support residents and businesses through programmes like Healthy Homes Dorset and Low Carbon Dorset
- engaging communities through joint initiatives such as the Dorset Citizens' Climate Panel, Litter Free Dorset and the Dorset Heaths Partnership
- working with town and parish councils, farmers, landowners and community groups to deliver practical climate and nature projects across Dorset
- working with BCP Council, the Environment Agency, water companies, catchment partnerships and the Dorset Local Resilience Forum to strengthen climate adaptation and resilience planning
- supporting national programmes like the Climate Ambassadors alongside the DfE and Met Office.

By working together, Dorset Council can deliver greater environmental, social and economic benefits than would be possible through council action alone, helping to create a more sustainable, resilient and nature-rich Dorset for current and future generations.

Example 1
Dorset Land Managers Group

Coordinated by Dorset Council, this group brings together representatives from farming, forestry, nature recovery and other rural sectors.

The group supports delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by sharing knowledge, identifying common challenges and opportunities. And, by working together, the group can develop practical solutions for land managers.

It supports sustainable farming, nature-friendly land management and local food production.

Read more here.

Example 2
Bring a Picnic Not a BBQ campaign

Dorset Council, Dorset Heaths Partnership (DHP), Litter Free Dorset (LFD) and Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS) have been working together to campaign to prevent wildfire.

Heathlands, unfortunately, are often misused, and incidents of wildfire – whether deliberate or accidental – are becoming more common.

The partnership's effort aims to reduce the use of BBQs and fires on heathlands in a bid to reduce the number of forest wildfires each year.

Read more here.

4. Communications and engagement

Effective communication and engagement are essential to achieving Dorset Council's climate and nature ambitions. Many of the actions needed to reduce emissions, prepare for climate change and support nature recovery rely on informed and engaged residents, businesses, communities and partner organisations.

Dorset Council therefore uses a combination of communications, engagement and behaviour-change approaches to raise awareness of climate and nature issues, provide practical support, encourage action and ensure residents have opportunities to help shape local priorities and solutions. Communications activity is delivered through a mix of digital and traditional channels and is complemented by a range of partnership-led programmes that engage specific audiences and communities.

4.1 What is the council doing to inform and engage residents about climate risks, behavioural change, and support?

Dorset Council uses a proactive, multi-channel approach to help residents understand climate change, climate risks and nature recovery, while providing practical advice and support to encourage behavioural change. Communications focus on local issues such as flooding, coastal change, extreme weather, energy use and nature recovery, alongside highlighting the actions residents can take to reduce risks and support a more sustainable Dorset.

Recent activity has included:

- **the Home Habitats campaign**, which helped residents access personalised advice on improving home energy efficiency, reducing energy bills and lowering carbon emissions. The campaign signposted residents to the Homewise energy advice tool, Healthy Homes Dorset support and available grant funding
- **engagement linked to Dorset's Citizens' Climate Panel**, helping residents understand climate risks and shape Dorset's approach to climate adaptation
- **launch of Down in Dorset nature podcast,** bringing together local voices to discuss farming, climate change and nature recovery. The podcast reached the UK Top 20 charts and helped broaden engagement with climate and nature issues
- **communications on flooding, groundwater flooding and flood recovery**, providing practical advice and encouraging residents to prepare for and respond to climate-related events
- **public engagement on coastal change** through the Future Coast Dorset programme and community workshops

- **targeted campaigns and communications** promoting electric vehicles, active travel, pollinator-friendly gardening, peat-free compost, No Mow May and other actions that support Dorset's climate and nature ambitions.

The council also works through several hosted partnerships that use behaviour-change approaches to reach residents and influence action:

- Litter Free Dorset delivers campaigns on litter reduction, water quality, dog fouling, single-use plastics and responsible waste disposal through schools, community groups, businesses, volunteer networks and public awareness campaigns
- Dorset Heaths Partnership uses wardening, community events, volunteering opportunities, school programmes and campaigns such as Dorset Dogs and Firewise UK to encourage responsible behaviour and protect Dorset's heathlands
- Dorset Coast Forum works with communities, businesses and young people to improve understanding of coastal change, flooding and climate adaptation, while supporting community-led resilience and environmental stewardship.

During the development of the Dorset LNRS, a dedicated Communications Group was established, bringing together communications professionals from partner organisations to coordinate engagement and awareness-raising activities in relation to nature recovery. This group helps ensure consistent messaging, promotes nature recovery opportunities through a range of channels, supports stakeholder and community engagement, and works collaboratively to communicate the evidence, priorities and achievements of the LNRS to audiences across Dorset.

Looking ahead, delivery of the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will include the expansion of the Nature Recovery Dorset Network, bringing together communities, landowners, businesses and environmental organisations. Planned activity includes workshops, webinars, guidance for town and parish councils, and targeted campaigns to increase awareness of and participation in nature recovery across Dorset.

Example 1

Home Habitats campaign

Home Habitats was an award nominated behaviour change campaign that helped residents make their homes warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to run. Using audience insight and behavioural science, the campaign focused on practical benefits such as lower energy bills and improved comfort, connecting residents with the Homewise energy advice tool and wider retrofit support.

The campaign achieved an estimated reach of 950,000 people, generated 6,033 visits to retrofit webpages and drove 1,763 Homewise interactions. Campaign videos were viewed over 160,000 times, and more than 1,000 residents selected a personalised retrofit plan, demonstrating how effective communications can turn awareness into action.

4.2 What communication strategies are in place to reach different communities effectively?

Dorset Council adopts an audience-led, multi-channel approach to ensure climate and nature communications are accessible, relevant and inclusive. Communications are designed to reach residents through the channels they already use and to reflect the differing needs, motivations and preferences of Dorset's communities.

Key elements of this approach include:

- **a mix of digital and traditional communications**, including local media, Dorset Council News, e-newsletters, social media, direct mail, consultations,

community events and workshops. This helps ensure information reaches both online and offline audiences

- **targeted audience channels**, including dedicated communications for businesses, town and parish councils, councillors, partners and government stakeholders
- **audience insight and behavioural science**, using local research, resident personas and behavioural frameworks to design campaigns that address barriers to action and focus on messages most likely to resonate with different audiences
- **tailored messaging**, focusing on practical benefits such as lower energy bills, warmer homes, health benefits and quality of life improvements, rather than climate messages alone where appropriate
- **partnership delivery**, working through trusted local organisations, community networks and specialist groups to amplify messages and engage audiences that may be harder to reach through council communications alone
- **two-way engagement**, including consultations, focus groups, community workshops, podcasts and citizen panels, enabling residents to help shape priorities and inform future communications.

This approach helps ensure communications are proportionate, targeted and effective across Dorset's diverse communities.

4.3 What levels of resident engagement have been achieved (e.g. participation in schemes, uptake of grants/support)?

Dorset Council's climate and nature communications programme has achieved significant levels of resident engagement across a range of campaigns, consultations, events and support programmes.

A particularly successful example was the Home Habitats campaign, which combined targeted communications with practical support and exceeded all key performance targets. The campaign generated:

- estimated reach of 950,000
- 6,033 visits to the council's home energy advice webpages
- 1,763 Homewise online energy advice tool interactions
- 1,032 residents selecting a personalised retrofit plan for their home
- 160,000+ campaign video views
- uplift in energy efficiency grant and low-interest loan enquiries.

These results suggest that the campaign successfully moved many residents from awareness into active consideration of home energy improvements.

Resident uptake of climate and nature support programmes

Alongside communications and engagement activity, Dorset Council has delivered a range of programmes that help residents improve the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce energy costs and support the transition to low-carbon living.

Homewise

Homewise is a free online energy advice tool developed by the Energy Saving Trust and tailored specifically for Dorset. Dorset Council launched the service in January 2026 to provide residents with simple, personalised guidance on improving the energy efficiency of their homes.

More than 2,000 households have now used the tool to find out how they can make their home warmer, greener, and cheaper to run.

Healthy Homes Dorset

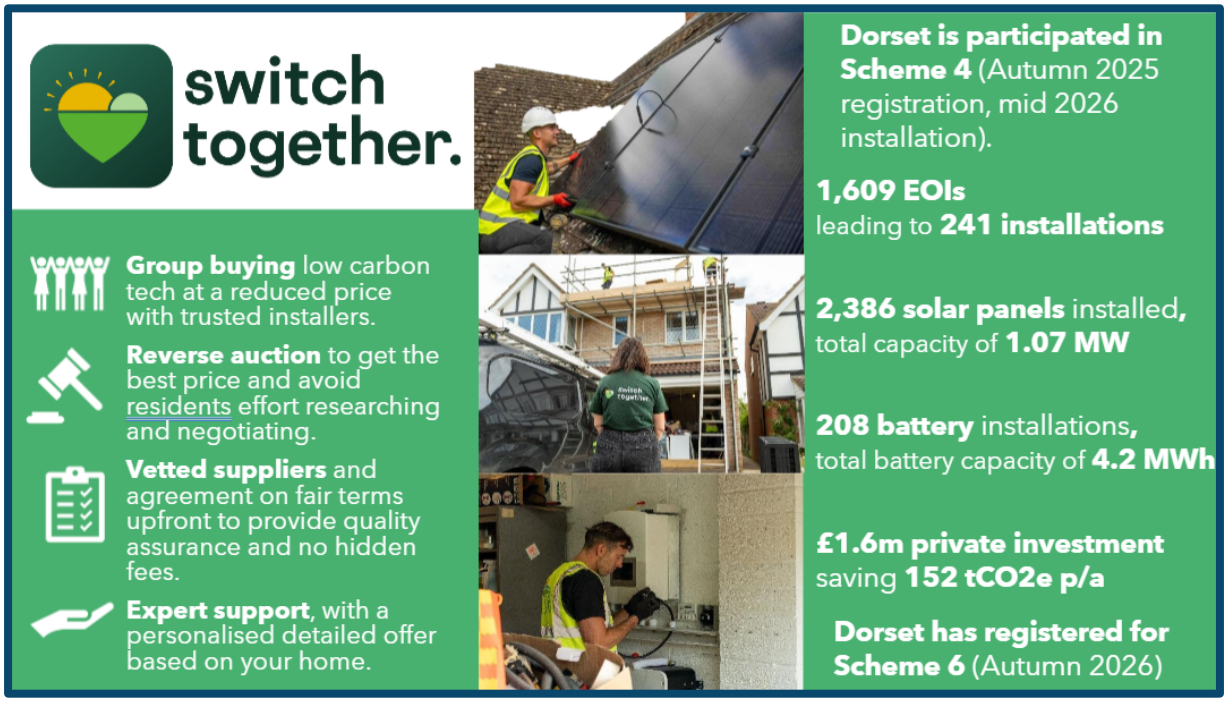
Healthy Homes Dorset is a partnership between Dorset Council, BCP Council and Public Health Dorset, delivered by local retrofit specialist Ridgewater Energy.

The programme provides residents with advice and support to improve home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. Through the programme more than 1,000 homes have received energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades, helping residents reduce energy bills, improve home comfort and lower carbon emissions.

Switch Together

Dorset Council joined the Switch Together scheme in 2025, with 241 installations across the county in the first scheme, and the second round launched in August this year.

The scheme enables residents to benefit from group purchasing of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage systems. By aggregating demand, the programme helps secure competitive prices from trusted installers, making renewable energy technologies more accessible and affordable for Dorset households.



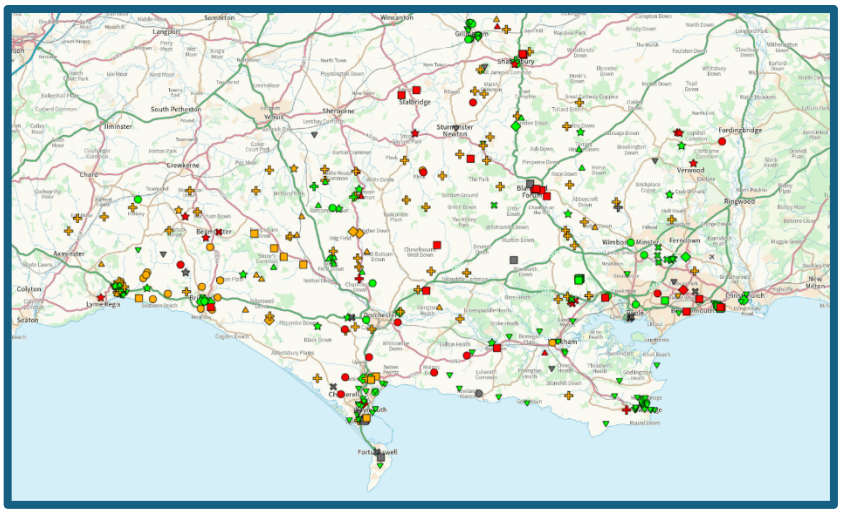
Low Carbon Dorset

Low Carbon Dorset is Dorset Council's flagship low-carbon grants and business support programme. Originally established through European funding, the programme provides technical advice and financial support to help businesses and community organisations reduce energy use and carbon emissions.

To date, the programme has supported nearly 900 organisations and awarded almost £8 million in grants, helping to leverage close to £22 million of additional local investment. Beyond reducing emissions, the programme demonstrates how investment in clean energy can strengthen local supply chains, create economic opportunities and deliver benefits within Dorset's communities.

Nature Recovery Dorset Network

The Nature Recovery Dorset Network continues to provide a mechanism for engaging landowners, community groups, businesses, environmental organisations and public bodies in nature recovery activity across Dorset.



Membership has grown steadily from 265 members in June 2025 to 322 members in June 2026, demonstrating increasing participation in nature recovery activity across the county.

Nature Recovery Dorset Network figures (up to June 2026):

- **322** network members, up from 265 in June 2025
- **226** members based within the Dorset Council area
- **23,384** hectares reported as created, enhanced or managed for nature
- **21,605** hectares delivered within the Dorset Council area.

Community engagement through hosted partnerships

Dorset Council's hosted partnerships also deliver significant levels of engagement and behaviour change across Dorset.

- **Dorset Heaths Partnership (2025/26)**
  - 2,810 Dorset Dogs members
  - 293 engagement events delivered
  - 2,559 people engaged directly
  - 9,363 pupils engaged through 227 education sessions delivered to 61 schools
  - 220,000+ Facebook views linked to Dorset Dogs activity
- **Litter Free Dorset**
  - Great Dorset Beach Clean: 346 volunteers removed 650kg of litter from 21 beaches
  - Disposable BBQ campaign: 509,000+ social media views and engagement with retailers and partner organisations
  - #MyWeymouth campaign: 15 volunteer rangers recruited, eight engagement events delivered, a 37% reduction in cigarette litter and a 30% reduction in general litter within target areas
  - Weymouth Water Quality Project: 8 community events delivered, 43 accommodation businesses, 40 restaurants and cafés, 4 schools and 19 boating organisations engaged.
  - Electrical Reuse Project: 6 repair café partnerships formed, 1,918 service users supported, 12 repairers trained, 23 events held, 5 tonnes of electrical items donated, 116 home collections, 2.8 tonnes recycled and 1.6 tonnes reused in Dorset households.

Together, these figures demonstrate strong and growing levels of participation across Dorset. They show that communications, engagement and support programmes are helping residents, businesses and communities move from awareness to action, contributing to Dorset's climate resilience, carbon reduction and nature recovery ambitions.

5. Funding

Funding plays an important role in delivering Dorset Council's climate and nature ambitions, but it is important to recognise that not all relevant investment is held within the council's dedicated climate budget. Many programmes contribute to carbon reduction, climate resilience and nature recovery while having broader service objectives, such as maintaining infrastructure, managing flood and coastal risk, supporting sustainable transport or improving public assets.

This section focuses on how climate and nature projects are prioritised and funded, the distinction between committed and aspirational projects, the level of investment secured to date, and the future funding required to continue delivering Dorset Council's climate and nature ambitions.

5.1 How does the council distinguish between committed vs aspirational projects, and how are priorities determined?

Committed vs aspirational projects

Dorset Council's Capital Strategy requires service managers to submit bids for capital projects. These bids are reviewed by the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Group (CSAM), which assesses proposals against service priorities, deliverability and financing requirements before making recommendations to Cabinet. Only schemes approved through this process and subsequently approved by Cabinet and Full Council form part of the formal capital programme.

In 2026, the council reviewed its capital programme to strengthen the focus on deliverability and removed unapproved or stalled schemes to ensure the programme reflects realistic and achievable investment priorities.

For the purpose of this report:

- **Committed projects** are schemes that have secured approval through the council's governance process and are included within the approved capital programme.
- **Aspirational projects** are proposals, emerging priorities or unapproved capital bids which have not yet secured approval, funding and delivery commitment, and therefore do not form part of the agreed programme.

Determining priorities

For Dorset Council, climate and nature priorities are not determined by a single programme or team. They are informed by a combination of council policies, statutory duties, evidence, engagement and funding opportunities.

Key influences include:

- the Dorset Council Plan,

- supporting strategies such as the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan
- statutory requirements and national policy
- evidence relating to carbon emissions, climate risks and nature loss
- engagement with members, partners, communities and stakeholders.

These priorities are then translated into programmes and projects that can demonstrate the greatest contribution towards the council's net zero, nature recovery and climate resilience ambitions, while remaining affordable and deliverable and capable of providing wider environmental, social and economic benefits.

Example

How carbon reduction priorities are translated into projects

The Council Plan and Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy set clear objectives for reducing Dorset Council's carbon emissions. Analysis of the council's carbon footprint shows that energy use within buildings and fuel consumption from fleet vehicles are the largest sources of operational emissions. As a result, these areas have been prioritised for action.

Specific projects are identified through feasibility studies, energy assessments, carbon-reduction modelling, business case development and consideration of available funding opportunities. Projects are then prioritised based on factors including carbon savings, cost effectiveness, energy savings, deliverability and wider organisational benefits.

For example, Dorset Council secured approximately £18 million through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to support building retrofit and heat decarbonisation projects. And, in addition, detailed feasibility studies have been undertaken across the council estate to identify priority opportunities for solar photovoltaic (PV) installations and future building decarbonisation investment.

Around 90 Heat Decarbonisation Plans have now been completed, providing a robust evidence base to ensure future investment targets the buildings and interventions capable of delivering the greatest carbon savings and value for money for the council.

5.2 How many infrastructure projects related to climate adaptation / mitigation are; fully funded and in delivery, are approved but not yet funded, are aspirational only?

Many infrastructure projects delivered by Dorset Council contribute to climate mitigation, climate resilience or nature recovery, even where these are not their primary purpose. For example, flood defence, coastal management and transport projects are often delivered to protect communities, infrastructure and public services, but also help Dorset adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The council's dedicated climate capital programme funds a number of projects specifically intended to reduce carbon emissions. Other programmes deliver climate and nature benefits indirectly through wider service objectives.

Programmes that have been explicitly funded for climate purposes through the climate capital budget or EV funding have been highlighted within the table below:

Committed	Aspirational
▪ Local nutrient mitigation fund ▪ EV charging infrastructure - public property ▪ DC vehicle replacement programme ▪ Investing in cycle ways ▪ Building retrofit programme – energy efficiency measures ▪ EV charging infrastructure – DC sites ▪ Climate schemes ▪ Streetlighting schemes ▪ Installation of new PV ▪ Low Carbon Dorset ▪ Portland Underhill to Wyke Regis FCERM Strategy ▪ PHNWS Cliff Monitoring Scheme ▪ Weymouth Harbour & Esplanade FCRM Scheme ▪ Swanage Town Coastal Defences OBC ▪ Swanage Beach Renourishment Scheme (OBC) ▪ Weymouth FCRM OBC ▪ Weymouth Harbour Walls (W&PBC) ▪ Newton's Cove Scheme ▪ Swanage & Durlston Bay Cliff Management ▪ Swanage Beach Coastal Protection	▪ Chesil Cove stabilisation ▪ Weymouthcove harbour and esplanade FCRM (Phase1) ▪ Swanage Town Coastal defences ▪ Climate schemes

5.3 What are the financial gains, impacts and costs associated with delivery of this work?

The capital costs associated with the delivery of climate and nature programmes are set out in sections 3.2, 5.1 and 5.4 of this report.

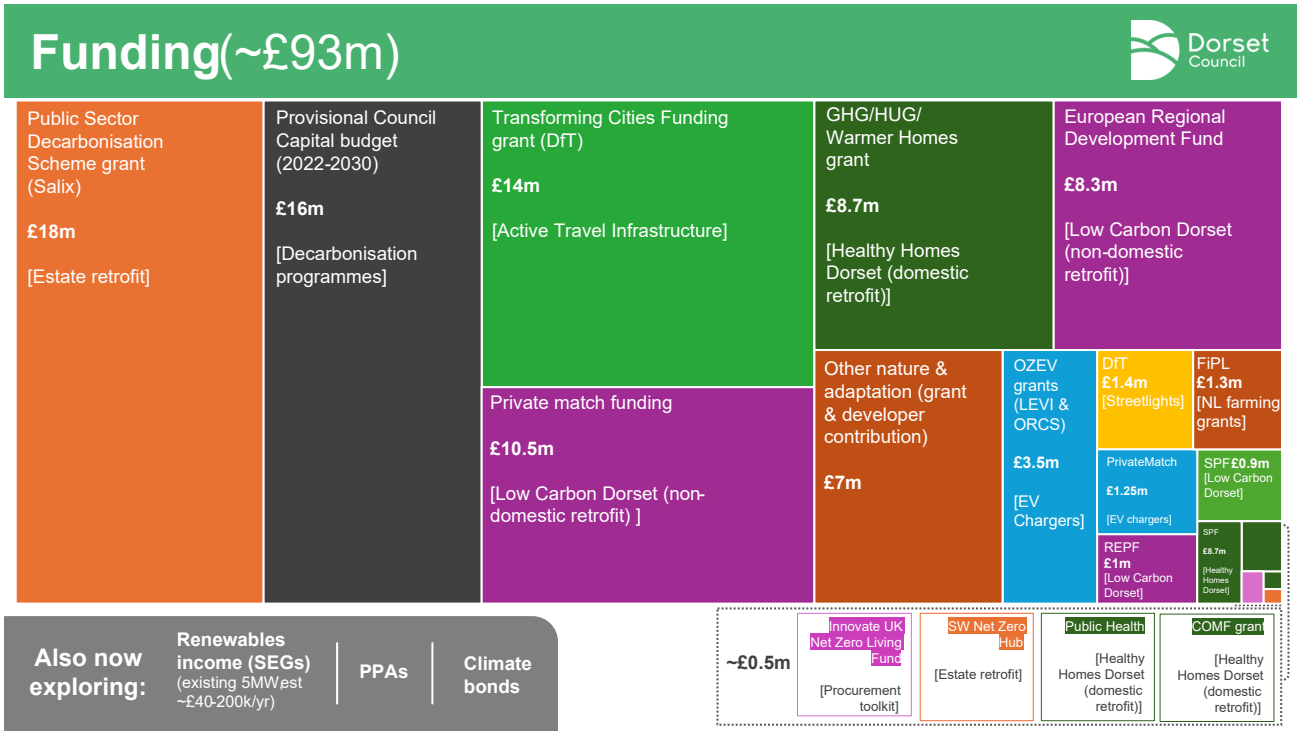
Investment in climate and nature programmes supports delivery of Dorset Council's response to the climate and nature emergencies by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, supporting nature recovery and improving resilience to the impacts of climate change. While these environmental outcomes are the primary objective, many programmes also deliver wider economic and social benefits for Dorset's communities, residents and businesses.

Many projects generate multiple benefits simultaneously. For example, habitat restoration and wetland creation can support nature recovery, reduce flood risk and increase carbon sequestration. Energy efficiency programmes, such as Healthy Homes Dorset, help residents reduce energy costs, improve the comfort and quality of their homes and can contribute to improved health and wellbeing. Similarly, active travel schemes can support healthier lifestyles, improve air quality and reduce transport emissions.

A key principle of Dorset Council's approach is to maximise the impact of its own investment by securing external funding and working in partnership with government, businesses, communities and other organisations.

Since the declaration of the climate and nature emergencies, climate and nature related programmes have attracted approximately £93 million of investment. Around 85% of this funding has come from external sources, including government grant schemes such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, together with contributions from private sector and delivery partners. Dorset Council funding accounts for approximately 15% of the total investment. This demonstrates the council's ability to use relatively modest levels of local funding to unlock significantly larger levels of external investment and deliver outcomes that would not otherwise be achievable.

Figure 1: Make up of climate and nature funding to date



Examples of financial return on investment

Several programmes demonstrate particularly strong returns on investment:

- **Low Carbon Dorset** has used relatively limited council investment (approximately £350,000) to support local organisations in reducing energy use, developing low carbon technologies and bringing forward innovative projects. The programme has helped stimulate more than £22 million of low carbon investment and leveraged over £15 million of private sector funding, supporting growth of Dorset's low carbon economy while reducing carbon emissions.
- **Dorset Coast Forum** continues to demonstrate strong value for money. Against Dorset Council's core contribution of £15,000 in 2026/27, the Forum is forecast to secure approximately £265,000 of additional external income and project funding. This equates to around £17.70 of external funding for every £1 invested by Dorset Council, enabling the delivery of coastal management, climate adaptation, partnership and community engagement projects far beyond what could be achieved through core council funding alone.
- **Litter Free Dorset** similarly provides a strong return on investment. Dorset Council's annual contribution of £15,000 has supported the attraction of over £200,000 of additional external funding in the current financial year. This means that every £1 invested by the council generates approximately £13.35 of additional funding, supporting behaviour change campaigns, education

programmes, volunteer initiatives and environmental improvements across Dorset.

Energy savings and income generation

Climate and nature programmes can also provide direct financial benefits. Investment in building retrofit, renewable energy generation and energy efficiency measures across the council estate has contributed to:

- approximately 46% reduction in electricity consumption
- approximately 32% reduction in gas consumption
- approximately 28% reduction in streetlighting energy use.

These measures are estimated to avoid more than £3.7 million per year in additional energy costs compared with maintaining previous levels of consumption.

The council has also installed around 6MW of solar photovoltaic capacity across its estate. Depending on export volumes and market rates, surplus electricity generation has the potential to generate between £40,000 and £150,000 per year in additional income.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that climate and nature programmes are not solely an environmental investment. They can deliver financial savings, attract external funding, generate income, support local economic activity and provide wider benefits for residents, communities and the natural environment.

5.4 What funding has been allocated specifically to climate resilience measures?

As outlined in section 5.2, the capital programme includes a range of schemes that contribute to climate resilience objectives. While these projects are not all funded specifically for climate resilience, they provide important resilience benefits and help reduce vulnerability to climate-related risks.

A key area of investment is Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM). All FCERM projects currently in delivery, or programmed to commence within the next three years, are designed to improve resilience to the impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion, sea level rise and increased flood risk.

FCERM projects are typically funded through a combination of government grant funding and local partnership contributions. Partnership funding may be secured from a range of sources, including local authorities, Risk Management Authorities, utility providers, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Section 106 agreements and private sector partners.

The current FCERM capital programme includes projects at various stages of development, from schemes already in delivery through to projects progressing

business case development and funding approvals. Funding packages are assembled on a scheme-by-scheme basis and are subject to the availability of both government and partnership funding.

This includes schemes on the open coast, such as Chesil Cove and Lyme Regis, as well as harbour infrastructure projects, including those within Weymouth Harbour and West Bay Harbour, where infrastructure improvements contribute to the long-term resilience of coastal communities and assets.

Section 3.1 covers further detail on flooding and coastal resilience infrastructure, including highways and coastal resilience measures.

In addition, we have been awarded £185,000 per annum for the next 3 years to deliver the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which will support the strategy through covering staff costs, monitoring, and convening.

5.5 What is the total costed pipeline of climate-related projects versus unfunded need?

Costed pipeline of climate-related projects and future funding requirements

The council does not maintain a fully costed climate programme covering the next 10 to 20 years. Instead, investment requirements are identified and costed in stages, aligned to corporate priorities, approved carbon reduction targets and delivery milestones within the Council Plan and Climate Strategy.

This approach reflects the challenges associated with forecasting long-term costs, given changing technologies, evolving government policy and fluctuations in construction, energy and equipment costs. It also recognises that over time many climate-related activities will become part of normal asset management and replacement programmes, such as building maintenance, boiler replacement, vehicle renewal and energy infrastructure upgrades.

The current climate capital programme is focused on achieving an 80% reduction in operational carbon emissions by 2030 against the 2019 baseline. Progress is reported to Place and Resources scrutiny committee each autumn / winter, with the most recent reported reduction being 31%. Read the most recent Climate and Nature progress report here. The next quantitative report is due December 2026.

Existing funded programme

In 2022, Dorset Council approved a £10 million climate capital programme to support carbon reduction across its operations. This funding has been allocated across a

range of workstreams including estate decarbonisation, renewable energy generation, energy efficiency improvements, fleet electrification and nature-based carbon sequestration projects.

Following a review of delivery requirements, a further £25 million investment need was identified in March 2025 to accelerate progress towards the council's carbon reduction targets. Cabinet (Cabinet report - 25.03.25) approved an initial allocation of £6.025 million, with the remaining £18.975 million identified as a future funding requirement.

The combined programme supports:

- LED lighting upgrades across the council estate
- energy efficiency and retrofit improvements to council buildings
- replacement of fossil fuel heating systems with low carbon alternatives
- installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at council sites
- expansion of the council's electric vehicle fleet and pool cars
- deployment of additional solar photovoltaic systems on council buildings
- incorporation of carbon reduction measures through planned maintenance programmes
- development of nature-based carbon sequestration projects.

Identified future funding requirement

The council's current quantified future funding requirement is £18.975 million, comprising:

- £7m for continued building retrofit and gas boiler replacement
- £3.55m for replacement of remaining oil-fired heating systems
- £0.5m for completion of LED lighting upgrades within council buildings
- £3.8m for further solar photovoltaic deployment across the estate
- £0.55m for additional electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- £0.6m for expansion of the electric vehicle pool car fleet
- £0.85m for expansion of nature-based carbon sequestration projects
- £2.1m for replacement of remaining street lighting with LED technology.

Longer-term unfunded need

Beyond the currently identified £18.975 million requirement, additional investment is likely to be needed to achieve net zero operations and maintain progress towards the council's wider climate ambitions. Areas likely to require further investment include the replacement of remaining fossil fuel heating systems, larger-scale renewable energy generation, battery storage, estate decarbonisation and expanded nature-based carbon sequestration schemes.

At this stage these longer-term requirements have not been fully costed, and detailed business cases will be developed as technologies, funding opportunities and

delivery priorities continue to evolve. Consequently, the council's currently quantified climate investment requirement is the £18.975 million pipeline identified above, with further funding needs expected to emerge through future programme reviews.

Alternative funding opportunities

Continued delivery at scale will require a blended finance approach utilising, public, private and community finance. We continue to explore a range of potential funding routes and to keep abreast of a rapidly evolving government policy and funding framework. Areas actively being explored now include:

- **Climate bonds**
  Issuing green or climate bonds to raise capital specifically for projects that support carbon reduction, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate resilience. This can provide access to large-scale investment while demonstrating a clear commitment to environmental outcomes and community benefit.
- **Community energy partnerships**
  Working with community energy organisations to unlock local investment and grant funding for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. These partnerships can also increase community engagement, help retain economic benefits within the local area. Driven by the new government Local Power Plan.
- **GB Energy funds and finance mechanisms**
  Great British Energy is expected to provide funding opportunities, investment programmes and financing mechanisms to support local renewable energy generation and clean energy infrastructure. These could offer new routes to funding as national programmes develop.
- **Private sector partnerships**
  Collaborating with private sector organisations can bring investment, expertise and innovative delivery models for climate projects. Opportunities may include joint ventures, sponsorship arrangements, energy service contracts, or direct investment in council-led initiatives.
- **Other government funding (e.g. Public Sector Decarbonisation)**
  Further government funding streams may become available as national climate and energy policies continue to evolve. Maintaining readiness to bid for emerging programmes will help maximise external funding opportunities for council priorities.
- **Income opportunities (e.g. Smart Export Guarantee (SEG), Power Purchase Agreements (PPA))**
  The council can generate ongoing revenue from renewable energy assets through mechanisms such as exporting surplus electricity to the grid under SEG arrangements or securing long-term income through PPAs with energy

suppliers or large energy users. These revenues can support reinvestment into further climate initiatives.

6. Appendix A: Further information and resources

This appendix provides additional information and resources referenced throughout the paper. Resources are grouped into 6 sections:

1. Dorset Council policies, strategies and programmes
2. Climate projections and evidence
3. Flood and coastal erosion risk management framework
4. National adaptation strategies and plans
5. Wider policy and resilience frameworks
6. Additional evidence, resources and information

A1. Dorset Council policies, strategies and programmes

The following Dorset Council strategies, plans and reports support local climate resilience and adaptation activity:

- Dorset Council Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy
- Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Dorset Council Operational Climate Change Risk Assessment Framework – *currently in draft*
- Dorset Citizens' Climate Panel final report
- Dorset Council's flood management programme (including links to flood investigation reports)
- Dorset Council's coastal protection and management programme
- Flood Investigation Studies Committee Report (May 2026)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2025 to 2028 - Dorset Council
- Dorset Council building decarbonisation programme – Dorset Explorer Map
- Beneficiaries of Dorset Council's Low Carbon Dorset programme – Dorset Explorer Map

A2. Climate projections and evidence

A summary of Dorset's climate evidence, including recent climate trends, future climate projections, temperature change, rainfall change, flood risk, coastal change, heat and drought impacts, will be presented in the Hazards section of Dorset Council's Operational Climate Change Risk Assessment Framework.

Further links to data and evidence used to inform the development of Dorset Council's climate adaptation strategy and internal risk framework can be found below.

Local climate evidence

- The Climate Report for Dorset (Met Office Local Authority Climate Service)
- Dorset Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), which considers climate change impacts to the end of the century
- Government maps of long-term flood risk using the latest NaFRA2 model, incorporating UKCP18 climate projections for river, surface water and reservoir flooding

National climate data and tools

- UK Climate Risk Indicator Tool (Institute for Environmental Analytics / UK Climate Resilience Programme)
- Met Office Climate Data Portal, including local authority-scale maps of climate hazards such as temperature and rainfall change
- Climate Just Map Tool – shows the geography of vulnerability to climate change at a neighbourhood scale.

National climate risk assessments

- A Well-Adapted UK (Climate Change Committee, 2026)
- Well-Adapted UK: Future Flood Risk (prepared in support of UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 4, 2026)

A3. National flood and coastal erosion risk management framework

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) operates through a hierarchy of national and local assessments, plans and strategies. The framework increasingly incorporates climate change projections, including UKCP18 climate scenarios and Environment Agency climate change allowances for river flows, rainfall intensity, sea level rise and storm surge.

The 2022 FCERM Strategy Roadmap strengthened the use of adaptation pathways, supporting flexible decision-making under climate uncertainty.

Key documents and tools include:

National assessments and strategies

- National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA) and associated Data Explorer
- National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) and associated Data Explorer
- National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020) and ongoing refresh programme

Coastal management

- Shoreline Management Plans - adaptation plans for England's coast, updated between 2019-2023. They set policies over three horizons (0-20yrs, 20-50yrs, 50-100yrs) of four types: hold the line, advance the line, managed realignment, and no active intervention.

Local risk management

- Local Flood Risk Management Strategies (LFRMS) produced by Lead Local Flood Authorities, including Dorset Council, covering local flood risks from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA), which form part of the evidence base for Local Plans and planning decisions.

A4. National adaptation strategies and plans

Several national adaptation-specific strategies are being developed or updated to improve resilience across key sectors:

- Environment Agency refreshed National FCERM Strategy (expected 2027)
- Department for Transport Climate Adaptation Strategy for Transport
- Ministry of Justice Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- Office of Government Property Estate Adaptation Framework
- Government Office for Science Climate Adaptation Research and Innovation Framework

A5. Wider policy and resilience frameworks

Climate adaptation and resilience are also embedded within broader national resilience, planning, health and environmental programmes.

Civil contingencies and emergency resilience

- UK Government Resilience Framework
- Resilience Action Plan
- Flood Forecasting Centre
- Met Office Civil Contingencies Advisors
- Met Office Hazard Manager
- Natural Hazards Partnership

Planning and development

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- UK Building Regulations
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment requirements within the planning system

Health resilience

- UK Health Security Agency Adverse Weather and Health Plan

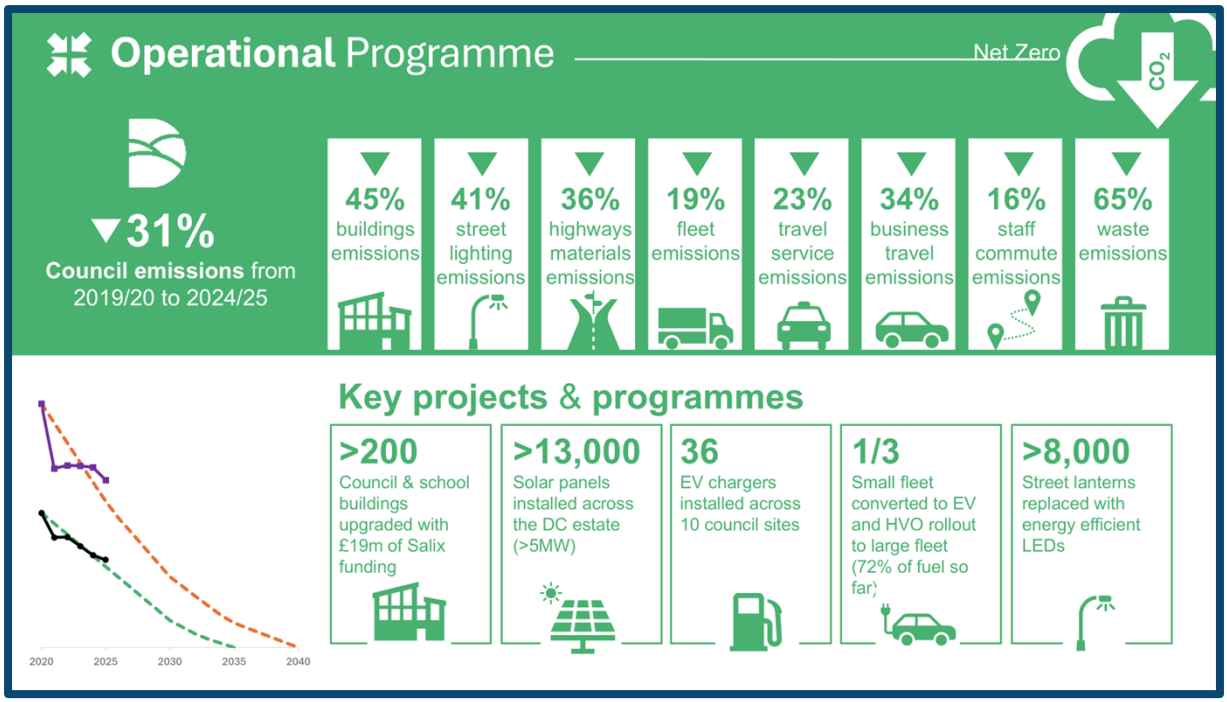
Environment, land use and food systems

- Defra Environmental Improvement Plan
- Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs)
- Farming Roadmap

A6. Additional evidence, resources and information

Operational programme achievements

- Key headlines of Dorset Council's operational climate programme



Communication channels and metrics

- Audiences and channels

  Residents:

  - Local media via press releases and pitches (print, radio and tv helps reach our offline audiences)
  - Social media – Facebook (48k followers), Instagram (9.8k followers) and Tik Tok (1.7k followers)
  - Dorset Council News (this is delivered to all Dorset homes and has an audience reach of 360,000, and is an important channel for reaching an offline audience)
  - Residents e-newsletter (25k subscribers)
  - Focus groups (for campaigns)

  Businesses:

  - LinkedIn (14.2k followers)
  - Business e-newsletter (5k subscribers)

  Town and Parish Councils:

  - Town and parish newsletter (168 subscribers)
  - Direct mailing

  Councillors:

  - Members newsletter to all 82 members
  - Direct mailing

MPs/government:

- Dorset Council Policy Team

Partners and peers:

- Trade and local government press
- LinkedIn
- Direct mailing

- Climate and nature comms monthly engagement summary (Jan-Jul 2026)

Month (2026)	Key activity highlights	Estimated reach / engagement
Jan-Mar	Home Habitats campaign	See campaign case study
January	Future Coast, Morwind, carbon plan	2.2m+ media reach; 8,000+ opens
February	Flooding, podcast, retrofit, EVs	4m+ reach; 16,600+ opens; 55k+ social views
March	Climate Panel, biodiversity, LNRS	4m+ reach; 22k+ opens; 37k+ social views
April	Flood recovery events	12k+ opens; 35k+ social views
May	No Mow May, Go Electric!, resilience	2.3m+ reach; 43k+ opens; 116k+ social views; 400+ attendees
June	Podcast, biodiversity, pollinators	4m+ reach; 46.5k+ opens; 71k+ views
July	Green Flag, wildfire, Rights of Way	200k+ reach; 55k+ opens; 184k+ views

- Climate and nature comms activity summary (Jan-Jul 2026):

Date (2026)	Action	Channel/Format and coverage/insight
Jan - Mar	Home Habitats campaign	**Multi-channel campaign** with estimated measurable reach of ~950,000.
Jan	Press release Help shape plans for dealing with coastal changes - Dorset Council	**Press release** generated coverage in: • Bournemouth Echo • MSN UK • Dorset Eye Extending awareness of the Future Coast Dorset consultation beyond Dorset Council's own channels. Estimated potential reach was ~15,000 in print and 25,000 to 75,000 online, giving a combined estimated reach of 40,000 to 90,000 people.
	Dorset Council backs Morwind feasibility study to drive growth and	**Press release** generated coverage across local, trade and syndicated media including; Dorset Echo, GRID UK and APN News. The coverage delivered an estimated potential reach of more

	power Dorset's future - Dorset Council	than 2.1 million monthly online users and an estimated direct readership of 3,500-16,000 people. **Residents e-newsletter** – over 8,000 people opened the newsletter and 126 people clicked on the link to read more.
	£2m council plan to cut energy bills and carbon goes to Cabinet - Dorset Council	**Press release** secured at least 6 pieces of earned and syndicated media coverage, including Dorset Echo, Hits Radio Bournemouth & Poole, Blackmore Vale Magazine and BBC/MSN syndication. Coverage reached local, regional and online audiences, generating an estimated readership of 15,000 to 45,000 and a potential reach exceeding 2 million users.
Feb	Dorset communities urged to prepare for groundwater flooding - Dorset Council	**Press release** secured coverage across local media, national syndication and community information networks, including Dorset Echo, MSN, Gillingham Town Council and Help & Kindness. Coverage is estimated to have reached between 10,000 and 42,000 readers, helping raise awareness of record groundwater levels and encouraging residents to take practical steps to prepare for flooding. **E-newsletters** - business e-newsetter carried specific advice for businesses affected by flooding. This email was opened by more than 2,600 people. Residents e-newsletter was opened by more than 14,000 people and 1,816 clicked the link for more information on this story **Social media** - Facebook post received 53.4k views, Instagram received 1.6k views
	Press release + Dorset Council News + socials + enewsletters New podcast brings Dorset's farmers and residents together for honest conversations about nature and food - Dorset Council	**Press release** - Dorset Council's launch of the *Second Nature: Down in Dorset* podcast secured coverage across local and specialist channels, including Dorset Eye and the Second Nature platform. The series brought together farmers, residents and environmental groups to discuss food production, farming and nature recovery in Dorset. The podcast went on to achieve national success, reaching the UK Top 20 podcast charts and ranking within the top 10-25% of podcasts worldwide. Estimated audience reach exceeded 250,000 people across media, digital and podcast channels. **E-newsletters** - Residents e-newsletter was opened by more than 14,000 people and 64 people clicked the link to listen to the full podcast **Dorset Council News** - article featured in March edition. **Social media** - On-going monthly promotion of new podcast episodes on socials + enewsletters
	Press release + business newsletter	**Press release + sponsored social media posts**

	+ sponsored posts on social media Dorset businesses offered 50% discount to help residents find trusted local trades - Dorset Council (This tied in with Home Habitats campaign as one of the barriers to retrofitting your home is a lack of trust in traders)	Dorset Council's offer of a 50% discount for local retrofit businesses joining the Buy With Confidence accreditation scheme secured coverage in Bournemouth Echo, Dorset View, APN News and The New Blackmore Vale. The story promoted trusted local tradespeople, supported Dorset's retrofit sector and encouraged residents to undertake energy-efficiency improvements through accredited providers. Estimated audience reach exceeded 650,000 people across local and regional media channels.
	Press release announcement + Dorset Council News EV-olution - Dorset's journey to a greener future - Dorset Council	**Press release** - Dorset Council's announcement of a £16.5 million programme to deliver more than 3,000 on-street EV chargepoints generated widespread local and sector media coverage, including Bournemouth Echo, Dorset Echo, Loop South West, TransportXtra, The New Stour & Avon Magazine and Connected Kerb. The story highlighted Dorset's commitment to greener transport, improved charging accessibility and carbon reduction, achieving an estimated audience reach of 1.5 million+ people across digital, print, sector and syndicated media channels. **E-newsletters** - Residents' e-newsletter was opened by more than 12,000 people – and 378 people clicked the link to read more information. **Socials** – LinkedIn: 3.4k views Dorset Council News article featured in March edition.
March	Press release + socials + Dorset Council News + enewsletters Dorset residents set out bold new ideas to help county prepare for a changing climate - Dorset Council	**Press release + socials + Dorset Council News** The publication of Dorset Council's Citizens' Climate Panel report generated regional media coverage, including Bournemouth Echo and Bridport News. The coverage highlighted community-led recommendations to help Dorset adapt to climate change, including flooding, extreme weather and environmental resilience. Supporting digital content was published through Dorset Council channels, helping achieve an estimated audience reach of 750,000+ people **Dorset Council News** article featured in March edition. **Socials** - 31 March Facebook video interview with panel member Catherine: 4.9k views. 31 March Instagram video of Catherine: 530 views. 4 April Facebook video interview with panel member Jonny: 3.8k views

	Press release Dorset Council highlights two years of action to support wildlife and nature recovery - Dorset Council	**Press release** - Dorset county-wide media and trade press The biodiversity report press release generated coverage in the Dorset Echo and New Blackmore Vale. Based on publicly available circulation and audience data, the coverage achieved an estimated print readership of 73,000 to 91,000 people, alongside potential digital exposure through publications reaching more than 2.2 million website visits. **E-newsletters** - 20 March residents enewsletter - more than 10,000 people opened the newsletter and 63 people clicked the link for more information **Social media** - Facebook reel featuring the main achievement stats against video imagery of wildflowers, bees and trees – 4.8k views
	Dorset unites to launch landmark Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Dorset Council	**Press release -** The launch of Dorset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy secured publication across Dorset Council and partner channels, including support from BCP Council and Nature Recovery Dorset stakeholders. A search of publicly indexed media coverage identified limited independent press pickup. This is probably because the publication of the strategy in December 2025 received press coverage- that announcement secured coverage across key Dorset media including Dorset Echo, Bournemouth Echo and Dorset View, alongside partner amplification through BCP Council channels. Based on publicly available circulation and audience data, the coverage achieved an estimated print readership of approximately 22,000 to 25,000 people and generated digital exposure to audiences exceeding 1.8 million online visits. **E-newsletters** - 27 March residents newsletter was opened by nearly 12,000 people and 126 people clicked on the link for more information **Social media** - Facebook post: 20.3k views, LinkedIn: 3.5k views
April	Drop-in events for flood affected communities	**Social media** - Facebook: 35k views, Instagram: 650 views **E-newsletter** - 10 April residents newsletter was opened by more than 12,000 people and 116 people clicked the link for further information
May	No Mow	**Socials across May** Start of May – encouraging people to take part and explaining the benefits. Facebook post – 24k views End of May appeal to hear people's no mow May stories, Facebook post – 23.5k views and 37 people sharing their views (comments were

		more on council's verge cutting rather than sharing their own stories) Instagram post – 380 views
	Experience the future of driving as Go Electric! comes to Weymouth - Dorset Council	**Press release** The Go Electric! Weymouth press release secured coverage in Dorset Echo, MSN and local community channels, generating an estimated readership of 7,500 to 33,000 people. The event itself delivered direct engagement with more than 400 residents and visitors and facilitated 26 electric vehicle test drives, helping raise awareness of EV ownership and Dorset Council's charging infrastructure programme. **Enewsletter** 8May residents newsletter was opened by over 10,000 people and 105 people clicked the eventbrite link where they could register to attend the event **Social media** Ad campaign on Facebook and Instagram – total reach 41.8k people 3 LinkedIn posts – 3k views
	Working with communities to learn from flooding and build Dorset's future resilience - Dorset Council	**Press release** The announcement secured coverage in Dorset Echo, APN News and specialist flood-resilience channels, helping communicate Dorset Council's £9.25m flood recovery and resilience programme. Coverage generated an estimated readership of between 4,000 and 12,000 people, reaching both local residents and professional stakeholders involved in flood management and climate resilience. **Enewsletter** 15 May residents newsletter was opened by more than 11,000 people and 177 people clicked the link for more information **Socials** Facebook post – 15.5k views
	Press release and pics:Air quality testing targets action to protect Dorset's precious heathlands - Dorset Council	**Press release** The press release on Dorset's heathland air quality monitoring project secured coverage across regional, specialist and national media, including Bournemouth Echo, MSN, AOL UK, LocalGov and AirQualityNews. Based on publicly available audience information and industry-standard estimations, the coverage achieved an estimated potential audience reach of 1.6 to 2.5 million people, while also reaching highly relevant audiences in environmental policy, nature recovery and local government sectors. **Enewsletter**

		22 May residents newsletter was opened by more than 11,000 people and 102 people clicked the link for further information. Social media Facebook post with carousel of photos – 11.7k views LinkedIn – 714 views
	E-scooter trial proposal to be considered by Dorset councillors - Dorset Council	**Press release** The proposed e-scooter trial generated coverage across local, community and syndicated media, including Dorset Echo, MSN, KeeP 106 and Blackmore Vale Magazine. The story achieved an estimated readership of between 15,000 and 58,000 people, with the strongest reach coming from Dorset Echo coverage and MSN syndication. The issue continued to generate media interest beyond the initial announcement through follow-up reporting on committee consideration of the scheme.
June	Popular Dorset podcast reconnecting people with nature set to continue after chart success - Dorset Council	**Press release** The announcement generated positive regional and stakeholder coverage, including Bridport & Lyme Regis News, Dorset National Landscape and Blackmore Vale Magazine. Combined with partner-channel promotion, the story is estimated to have reached between 3,000 and 12,000 people. The coverage reinforced the success of the Second Nature: Down in Dorset podcast, which reached the UK Top 20 and secured continued funding following strong audience engagement. **Socials** Facebook post – 21.6k views Instagram post – 2.4k views LinkedIn – 900 views
	Planting progresses at North Dorset waste site to boost biodiversity and support nature recovery - Dorset Council	**Press release**: The announcement on biodiversity and habitat creation at the new Blandford Waste Management Centre secured coverage across Dorset Echo, Bournemouth Echo, MSN and APN Industry News. Based on publicly available audience data and industry-standard estimates, the coverage achieved an estimated print readership of 22,000-25,000 and a potential overall audience reach of approximately 2-3 million people **Enewsletter** 29 May residents newsletter was opened by more than 16,000 people and 203 people clicked on the link for further information. **Socials** Facebook post and video – 5.9k views Linkedin - 1.1k views

	From barren to buzzing: bats, bees, birds and bugs benefit from community-led scheme - Dorset Council	**Press release:** The announcement of the Milldown Nature Reserve extension and habitat restoration project generated strong regional media interest, securing coverage in Dorset Echo, Bournemouth Echo, The New Blackmore Vale, The Blackmore Vale Magazine, Somerset Live and Greatest Hits Radio Dorset, where a spokesperson interview was broadcast. The story also attracted interest from ITV Meridian, Countryside Matters and the British Birds website. Combined estimated audience reach exceeded 1.8 million. **Enewsletter** 19 June residents newsletter was opened by more than 13,500 people and 350 people clicked the link for more informatoin **Socials** Facebook video – 15.3k views Instagram – 1.6k views Tik Tok – 1k views LinkedIn – 500 views
	Let's bloom in June – to show it's not just about 'no mow May'	**Enewsletter** 6 June residents newsletter was opened by 17,000 people and 72 people clicked the Dorset Nature Recovery network link **Socials** Facebook post – 9.9k views Instagram – 700 views
	Peat-free compost awareness	**Social media post** Facebook June post – 6.2k views
June-July	Guide to pollinator friendly planting	**Video for social media** Facebook, June post with tips 5.4k views Facebook, July video views 3.8k Instagram – June post 700 views Instagram – July video 1.3k views Tik Tok – July video 375 views
July	Dorset parks and nature reserves awarded coveted Green Flag Awards as they are officially recognised as some of the country's best - Dorset Council	**Press release** The announcement secured coverage across local, regional and national online media, including Dorset Echo, Bournemouth Echo, Yahoo News UK and MSN. Coverage is estimated to have reached between 10,000 and 40,000 readers, helping reinforce Dorset's reputation for high-quality parks and nature reserves following the award of five Green Flag Awards and a Green Heritage Site Accreditation **E-newsletter** 17 July residents enewsletter was opened by more than 13,500 people and 179 people clicked the link for further information. **Socials** Facebook post – 8.2k views
	Dorset Council and Litter Free Dorset	**Press release**

	urge retailers to suspend disposable barbecue sales during extreme heat - Dorset Council	The announcement generated coverage across local, regional and national media, including Dorset Echo, Bournemouth Echo, Swanage News, Dorset View and AOL. Coverage is estimated to have reached between 15,000 and 54,000 readers. The combination of extreme weather conditions, wildfire prevention messaging and environmental protection generated strong media interest and helped amplify public safety messages across Dorset and beyond. **Enewsletter** 10 July residents newsletter was opened by 13,500 people and 96 people clicked the link for more information **Socials** Facebook post – 42.1k views Instagram – 2.4k views LinkedIn – 550 views
	Residents invited to help shape the future of Dorset's rights of way network - Dorset Council	**Press release** The consultation launch generated coverage across key local media and stakeholder channels including Bournemouth Echo, Dorset View, KeeP 106 and Bridport Town Council. Coverage successfully communicated Dorset Council's call for residents to help shape the future Rights of Way Improvement Plan and highlighted ambitions to improve accessibility, connectivity and active travel opportunities across Dorset's public rights of way network. A total of five external pickups were identified, with an estimated potential audience reach of around 100,000 people **Enews**letter 24 July residents newsletter was opened by more than 13,000 people and 356 people clicked the link for further information. **Socials** 21 July Facebook post – 103.3k views 31 July Facebook post – 22.6k views Linked In – 770 views Instagram – 880 views
	Could your home be more energy efficient – promoting the Homewise tool and how energy efficiency can also help with cooling homes	**Enewsletter** 31 July residents newsletter was opened by more than 15,000 people and 278 people clicked the link for further information **Socials** Facebook post – 3.6k views