

Place and Resources Overview Committee – 1 October 2026

Public Participation

Question from Richard Daw

The Lyme Regis Dog Owners Group is asking Dorset Council to allow dogs off lead on Lyme Regis Town Sandy Beach before 10am and after 6pm from May to September, while retaining the current unrestricted access from October to April.

Dorset Council has acknowledged that the adjacent beaches are unsuitable for many people with mobility issues. Yet the current restrictions leave disabled and less able-bodied dog owners without a safe, accessible alternative for five months of the year.

The impact extends beyond disability. Local families and visitors who want to enjoy the beach with their dogs are also excluded during the summer months. Shift workers, whose working hours may not fit within the permitted times, can also be affected.

For some people, their dog is their only companion, their reason to leave the house and an opportunity to socialise. For families, being unable to bring their dog can mean missing out on a shared beach visit.

Our campaign has provided date-stamped photographs showing how frequently the beach is empty during the hours we are requesting. A Freedom of Information response also confirms that no fines for dog fouling have been issued on Lyme Regis Beach in the past three years.

We are not asking for unrestricted summer access. We are asking for a reasonable compromise that accommodates other beach users while allowing more people to enjoy the beach.

My question is:

How has Dorset Council assessed the impact of the proposed restrictions on disabled and less able-bodied people, local families, visitors and shift workers, and what evidence demonstrates that refusing a limited early morning and evening compromise is necessary and proportionate, particularly when the Town Sandy Beach is the only safe and accessible beach available to some people?