

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Taking action to address the Climate and Ecological Emergency cannot be done solely by officers working from the centre. It will need a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on skills and resources from across the organisation and with wider partners. It will need to be part of the way we do things and embedded in the way we deliver our services.



Figure 35

Dorset Council have placed the Climate and Ecological Emergency at the heart of our Corporate Plan. This strategy document provides a framework for services to integrate our response to the climate emergency into their planning. We will be using this paper as a driving force to move our approach to the climate emergency forward at pace.

To make the strategy happen, there are several key things we need to put in place.

Leadership & Governance

We will lobby government for additional resources and the national policy framework to support climate action in Dorset. In addition, we will actively input into national forums and consultations to encourage policy development in this area.

We will ensure organisational structures are in place to take forward action across the Council. We will review our structures currently in place to develop this plan to ensure governance at the highest level, involving key decision-makers with a clear mandate for action. This is as well as ensuring all staff are aware of their responsibilities in the delivery of actions, and that departments are linked at a strategic level (e.g. waste and planning).

We will ensure enough human resource is in place to drive forward action either through Council departments or involvement of wider partners.

We will develop tools to undertake robust impact and policy appraisal to ensure climate change priorities and targets are considered in all key corporate projects, programmes, and strategies, and will utilise whole-life costing when assessing all capital projects.

We will ensure climate emergency is embedded in our key strategies and plans, such as the developing Dorset Local Plan and our asset management plans.

We will strengthen our understanding and approach to risks of climate change, adaptation and resilience and address it appropriately within our risk management and business continuity processes.

Funding the response

Tackling the climate emergency will require significant investment at all levels of society. Dorset Council alone will need to invest many millions of pounds (over £100m) over the next 20 - 30 years just to become a Carbon Neutral Council. Many measures will have a financial return on investment, but many may not. However, many will have wider health and economic benefits which can be realised. As further work is done to draw up detailed implementation plans for our buildings, vehicles, and energy infrastructure, we will need to develop a detailed financial strategy. It is a challenging, financial time for us all, especially Local Authorities.

We will develop a finance strategy to enable us to deliver this climate emergency response by identifying and implementing ways for our finance department to actively support climate change action. This includes establishing invest-to-save schemes, such as our transformation fund, capital receipts through asset rationalisation, and building into our capital programme. We will also explore options to raise additional funds, such as through borrowing or council tax.

Wider action across the County is likely to require several billion pounds of investment from the government, organisations, and individuals. It is anticipated that further funding and incentives will be forthcoming from central government to support the shift to a low-carbon future.

We will work with partners and lobby government to seek additional support and external funding and to maximise opportunities for external funding from government and others, making sure Dorset gets its fair share. This is in addition to securing innovative financial arrangements for climate change projects and programmes and giving significant weight to climate change in the procurement process.

Engagement & communications

We all need to take action to address the climate emergency and support the transition to a low-carbon future. Many organisations and individuals in Dorset are already actively involved in addressing the climate emergency. With the highest proportion of town and parish councils in the UK declaring a climate emergency, we know there are many knowledgeable individuals and organisations in Dorset, with good practice examples that others can follow.

Through our initial call for ideas, Dorset residents told us they wanted Dorset Council to help with understanding climate change and the steps that can be taken to tackle it. The key audiences for this support identified as residents, businesses, farms, and schools. Our staff are also key to our success and have told us they wish to be more involved.

We already undertake many awareness and behaviour change activities in areas related to tackling carbon emissions and improving ecology, such as active travel, household waste, and school recycling. In order to tackle this emergency head on, we need to put the climate at

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the forefront of our communications. We will do this by:

Developing a comprehensive communications strategy for our approach to the climate and ecological emergency. This strategy will draw upon a variety of media and approaches to deliver key messages on climate change issues and help drive change in Dorset, with a focus on raising awareness, supporting community action, and engaging stakeholders in the decision-making.

Some of the key actions we will take are -

RAISING AWARENESS **We will** look to provide more accessible and digestible information on climate change and ecology and the actions we can all take through a range of channels. These will include upgrading our climate change website, developing an online information hub for sharing information, and best practice. This is as well as directing information to residents through Council literature and encouraging an open and ongoing dialogue between the Council and Dorset residents.

We will improve the awareness, engagement, and knowledge of our staff and service providers through staff awareness campaigns, with a focus on how employees can reduce their carbon emissions. This is in addition to increasing their climate resilience in the workplace and at home and integrating key climate change messages into induction programmes. Furthermore, **we will** organise targeted briefings and training sessions for officers, members, and decision makers on the benefits and opportunities of tackling climate change, highlighting this contribution to other Council priorities. We will also establish an internal climate change champions programme.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ACTION **We will** support Town and Parish Councils to develop and implement their organisation and area wide climate action plans. This is as well as helping them engage with residents to encourage community action and drive change at a grassroots community level.

We will help to facilitate and support new and existing community-led projects and community organisations active in this area. Furthermore, **we will** work with these groups to signpost and communicate shared messages.

ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

We will consult with residents and organisations on this strategy and plans as they develop, using existing and new consultation processes.

We will build support from stakeholders and the wider public by informing and educating on the benefits and opportunities of acting on climate change and creating, maintaining, and developing partnership working on all aspects of climate change action. **We will** seek to develop a Dorset Climate Emergency partnership group.

We will facilitate the development of a Dorset-wide partnership with other key public, private, and third sector partners in order to develop a partnership approach to driving forward some of the fundamental changes that will be required to deliver a carbon neutral county.

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Monitoring and progress reporting



To ensure we are on track to meet our targets and not exceed our carbon budgets, we need a robust baseline and regular progress monitoring of both carbon emissions and ecological indicators. Our current baseline is at present incomplete.

We will develop a robust baseline for Council and County carbon emissions and ecology; developing in-house data collection systems to draw data from all the former Councils now forming Dorset Council.

This is as well as considering wider emissions from Council activities (Scope 3) such as procurement.

We will further explore and expand the Dorset county footprint, beyond the data provided by Central Government, to provide a wider understanding of Dorset's emissions. This will include other GHG, agriculture, and land use and consumption where feasible.

This strategy sets out the key areas for action and will be supported by more detailed plans, which will develop over time. A separate detailed action plan will be published, which will be a live document and updated as work develops in this area.

We will monitor and report on actions and progress in achieving carbon reduction by producing an annual report of progress on climate change targets, budgets, and actions.

[View detailed MAKING IT HAPPEN action plan](#)