

FINAL response (green text) by Char Valley Parish Council to Dorset Council's Consultation (black text) on its Climate & Ecological Emergencies Strategy (submitted 19/1/2021)

Dorset Council's Role

We are committed to achieving a Carbon Neutral Council by at least 2040 and must help facilitate the changes required to work towards the whole of Dorset becoming carbon neutral by 2050. However, we recognise that Dorset Council has only limited powers and responsibilities in many of the areas where action is required. Therefore, Dorset organisations and individuals will all need to act collectively to achieve this wider ambition.

The council has three key roles in facilitating the change required and the strategy document is framed into these three areas... Our approach is about understanding what actions Dorset Council can directly influence, indirectly influence [such as through our services or use of our assets] and what we can only influence as part of a wider partnership. Do you agree with our approach?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain why you think this (optional)

The strategy divides potential action by DC into 'Direct', 'Indirect' and 'Influence and Partnership'. 'Influence and Partnership' grossly understates Dorset Council's most important potential role. Just in and around our own parish there are initiatives to clean up the river, to create pesticide free wildlife corridors across the landscape and to create an agroecology training centre. Many leading experts on the science of organic farming, climate change and housing, for example, live locally. In neighbouring Bridport there are multiple initiatives on local food, cooperative housing and tree planting. Dorset's communities are already acting and DC needs to think beyond partnering to championing these initiatives and expertise. DC can, with relatively little money, champion ideas like:

- the local-food-based 'Dorset Diet'
- 'Dorset Lifelines' - pesticide free corridors across the whole county
- 'Regenerative Dorset': a county-wide drive to create a circular local economy that extends product use then recovers and regenerates products and materials at the end of each service life
- the 'Dorset Doughnut' (mapping areas where Dorset has overextended itself and finding ways to become the first county in the UK to live within sustainable boundaries).

By championing these ideas and others that are already underway, DC can get major publicity for Dorset as the most “climate-progressive” county in England - creating a blueprint that others can follow and harnessing the energy, knowledge and skills of residents to make climate and ecological action a part of everyday life for all of us.

Targets

Carbon Targets

The strategy sets two targets: a more ambitious target of 2040 for Dorset Council itself and 2050 for the wider Dorset area (in-line with the government's national target).

(1) Dorset Council ITSELF to become carbon neutral by 2040, ten years earlier than the national target.

(2) The whole Dorset Council AREA to become carbon neutral by 2050, which will require support of central government and everyone in Dorset taking action

Do you agree with the target set for Dorset Council ITSELF as an organisation of 2040?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you agree with the target set for the Dorset Council AREA of 2050?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain your answers (optional)

DC's own strategy document acknowledges that "we have only 8-10 years at the current rate, within which serious action is required to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts". Dorset Council should respect its own advice and demonstrate the seriousness of its commitment by bringing forward these dates to ensure that the targets are met as soon as possible.

CVPC believes that the climate emergency requires a serious and immediate response and we encourage Dorset Council to review the intention to become a net zero organisation. A more ambitious target date (backed by a detailed map and budget for achieving that target) would strengthen the resolve of Dorset Council and Dorset residents to take immediate action. We need a strategy for genuinely cutting (not trading) carbon emissions so as to achieve a zero carbon footprint in the shortest time possible, if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences.

Topic Area – Renewable Energy

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Agree**

We agree at all points

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "renewable energy" area for action?

CVPC strongly supports Dorset Council's commitment to extend the Low Carbon Dorset Scheme.

CVPC also congratulates Dorset Council on looking to generate renewable energy to help in becoming a net zero organisation.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Renewable Energy - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We agree

Please explain why you think this

- ❖ CVPC believes there is a need to prioritise solar energy generation, ground-source and air-source heat pumps (alongside the larger scale renewable energy schemes outlined in the plan).
- ❖ We support Dorset Council's ambition to build sufficient PV and wind generation on its own land to supply its own needs.
- ❖ We also support Dorset Council's intention to explore a strategy for the County Farms and other county land to become exemplar test sites for renewables

Topic Area - Buildings

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Agree**

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "buildings" area for action?

CVPC supports DC's strategy on buildings and agrees with the need to undertake the large-scale retrofitting of the county's housing stock, especially as it will create local jobs and use local skills. Retrofitting social housing should be the number one action with investment to back it up.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Buildings - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We agree

Please explain why you think this

CVPC feels the Action Plan can and should be strengthened as follows:

- ❖ Home retrofit plans should be rolled out as soon as possible across all housing, setting out a clear pathway to reaching zero emissions. These plans should be integrated with widespread local energy planning.

Topic Area - Food & Drink

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Disagree**

What we can indirectly impact **Disagree**

What we can influence and partnership **Disagree**

We disagree at all three points

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "food and drink" area for action?

We congratulate Dorset Council on the detailed research that has gone into its Food and Drink Strategy and on the way it has noted the many complex interconnections between farming, food production and consumption; health; carbon output, climate change and biodiversity.

Given that Farming and Agriculture is divided between (and somewhat hidden within) 'Food and Drink' and 'Natural Assets', we recommend much better signposting for farmers and agriculture.

We feel that the proposed strategy is piecemeal and misses opportunities as a result. It is a series of important but unconnected and small-scale policy initiatives. In many cases these are vague ("Work to develop opportunities for enhancing Dorset's ecological networks"), unambitious (Reduce use of fertilizers on Council land) and uninspiring ("Explore the adoption of tools to help engage school staff (and potentially students) to create low-carbon meals".)

Individually these can easily be enhanced. But going beyond individual initiatives, we believe that by setting up a clear strategic framework of ambitious and integrated policies, the Council could establish Dorset as a pioneer (rather than a reluctant follower) in its approach to the climate and ecological emergency. Rather than "working to explore the adoption of tools..." at this level Dorset Council could be pioneering radical plans for a 'Dorset Diet' or 'Chemical-Free Dorset', or 'Regenerative Dorset'. These are not just cosmetic changes; they would signal a move from the modest "Influence and Partnership" role (which throughout the DC document understates Dorset Council's most important potential role) to a more visionary "CHAMPIONING" role. In this role, Dorset Council could lead with the (relatively low-cost) task of co-ordinating, encouraging, publicising and facilitating schemes that are already underway across the county – e.g. initiatives to clean up river catchments (Asker, Char), to create pesticide free wildlife corridors across the landscape (Char Valley Lifelines) and to create an agroecology training centre (Bridport Area). Other food initiatives in Weymouth, Bridport, Shaftesbury and elsewhere could be pulled together under one umbrella and be spread into other towns and parishes. In this way, DC could promote campaigns that attract publicity and public engagement (and tourists) and harness the skills and experience of residents and town and parish councils that are **already engaged on projects that are far more ambitious than anything proposed in this draft strategy**. By championing these ideas and others that are already underway, DC can create a blueprint that others can follow and harness the energy and expertise of residents to make climate and ecological action a part of the everyday life.

A crucial component of this strategy (which must straddle 'Food and Drink' and 'Natural

Assets') must be for Dorset Council to support local farmers to help nature recover from years of degradation and promote a regenerative future for local communities. (See our response on 'Natural Assets'.)

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Food and Drink - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

We disagree

Please explain why you think this

The Plan needs 'joining up'. For example, the '**Natural Assets**' Action Plan undertakes to "Work with tenants of County Farm's [sic] to promote and ensure best environmental practices are upheld" and to have "Guidance created & communicated by 2021". However the '**Food and Drink**' Action Plan undertakes to "Work with County Farm tenants to encourage the adoption of more climate and ecological friendly practices" and targets this as "Future action beyond 2023".

We believe that Dorset Council should seize this opportunity to create an inspirational county-wide plan to take its County Farms estate first 'chemical-free' and then 'organic' or 'regenerative'. The Plan can be published in 2021 with target dates in the near future. This will have a far more visible and immediate impact in support of DC's strategy of "demonstrating low carbon, ecologically friendly farming technique" than the vague 'beyond 2023' target currently proposed.

Specifically, the good intentions of the Strategy Document have not been followed through in the creation of the Action Plan, viz:

- ❖ **Areas for Action (Direct) #3** *Increase range of edible fruits, flowers, and vegetables in Council owned parks, rooftops, and open spaces* has become "2 additional orchards developed by March 2023". What happened to the parks and rooftops? Why are only 2 orchards planned?
- ❖ The Strategy Documents lists 5 Areas for Indirect Action but the Action Plan contains only one Indirect Action, scheduled for "Beyond 2023".

A number of the initial targets and actions are vague and unnecessarily delayed. We understand that Dorset Council does not have the time, money or human resources to do everything at once, but:

- ❖ **Action 2:** There is no need to "undertake audit" of the use of chemical fertilizers on Council land. We urge Dorset Council simply to set a deadline to stop using them. Cutting the audit would save time and money.
- ❖ **Action 4:** There is no need to defer the plan for County Farms to "beyond 2023". Some County Farms are already organic and the model and practice exists. We urge Dorset Council to start the transition programme to low-carbon, regenerative agriculture on County Farms in 2021.

This leads us to a general concern about the role of the County Farms Estate and its existing Management Plan (2016-2021), viz:

- ❖ The **Estate Management Plan** says *“It is therefore considered good practice to actively pursue options for investment in land which offer significant improvement to the Estate and/or the possibility of substantial future capital receipts.”* There is no such undertaking in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy document or the Action Plan.
- ❖ Given the important role attributed to the County Farms Estate, there should be a clear undertaking in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy document not to sell off any more County Farms.
- ❖ The **Estate Management Plan** says: *“POLICY: ... where appropriate and in the interests of the Estate and the County Council small areas of land will be leased to Parish Councils for Parish Allotments.”* This would be an easy way for DC to *“Promote home growing and allotments to Dorset residents”* but the policy has not been carried over into the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, which refers only to using the “Planning Process” to ensure that allotments are provided by developers.

Overall, Dorset Council’s Action Plan in this area contains 9 actions, of which 6 are scheduled for action “beyond 2023”. The overriding impression is that Dorset Council’s visible impact in this area will be to promote the Green Kitchen Standard locally (the basis of 3 of the 9 actions) and open 2 community orchards before 2023. Given the importance attached to Food, Drink and Agriculture in the Council’s “FOOD & DRINK Detailed Technical Paper” we feel that the proposed actions are a woefully limited and delayed response in a year when the pandemic has highlighted the real and present risks to our food security and to the health and safety of our communities that could arise as consequences of social, economic and political disruption in the wake of mass migration, disputes over food and water rights overseas, structural financial constraints in the wake of government Covid bailouts, etc. What the Action Plan must recognise as a result is the urgent need to build sustainable, regenerative resource networks in and between local communities across the county.

Topic Area - Economy

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Disagree**

We disagree at point three

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "economy" area for action?

CVPC supports the Economy Strategy, especially the reference to supporting Dorset becoming a circular economy. We also support and endorse the Low Carbon Dorset strategy.

DC's plan already commits to developing a circular economy and this is the opportunity to focus on redistributing jobs and wealth within the county. Measures reflecting physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing, social equity, shared access to nature, rather than strict GDP measures, are being championed by the OECD and by all the Scandinavian countries (amongst others). We believe it is time for Dorset Council to adopt such measures and take the lead in pursuing **equitable and sustainable** economic growth.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Economy - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We disagree

Please explain why you think this

CVPC fully supports the Action Plan (as explained above) where it is predicated on continued, **sustainable** economic growth. This should be a key component of all actions in this topic.

There is also considerable emphasis in the Action Plan on the Dorset Innovation Park with many projects clustered around east Dorset. CVPC would like to see a commitment to spreading the benefits of project investment more widely across the whole county.

CVPC calls on Dorset Council to immediately implement an ethical banking and investment policy and to divest from all companies and funds that extract, process or profit from fossil fuels.

Topic Area - Waste

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Disagree**

What we can influence and partnership **Disagree**

We disagree at points two and three

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "waste" area for action?

CVPC broadly supports the Waste Strategy, especially the reference to supporting Dorset becoming a circular economy. Unfortunately this is not convincingly followed-up in the Action Plan.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Waste - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We disagree

Please explain why you think this

CVPC feels the Action Plan can and should be strengthened with greater vision and ambition for a circular economy in the county. Specifically, we note the action plan elements:

- Carry out scenario modelling for waste collection and treatment options in order to establish appropriate waste infrastructure to support the circular economy.
- Implement findings of scenario modelling

This is not a breathtaking vision for residents to gather behind in a wave of popular support.

We believe that Dorset Council could adapt these actions to start to build a vision for a 'Circular Dorset' where restoration, repair, repurposing and upcycling are at the centre of a drive to reduce consumption, create local jobs, reduce our carbon footprint and build communities based on resource sharing.

Many of Dorset's rural communities could be at the centre of an ambitious programme to share and repair tools of all sorts, creating skilled new jobs in the heart of those communities. Engagement with local schools and colleges and local businesses should be at the heart of this programme.

Specifically, we believe that Dorset Council policies should be adapted to include circular economy aspects and embed material re-use and redeployment systems and tools into the procurement process, including requiring businesses to take responsibility for the full costs of waste disposal including collection. Beyond this, DC should set a target of 2030 for a fully developed circular economy, managing all its own waste and resources.

Topic Area - Water

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Disagree**

We disagree at point three

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "water" area for action?

CVPC notes that the Strategy contains only one material reference to Dorset's rivers and watercourses and none to seawater quality. Currently the water quality in Dorset's rivers is at an alarmingly low state: less than 50% meet EU river water quality standards.

Fortunately, Dorset AONB and Dorset Wildlife Trust have considerable expertise in this area and are already working on community action programmes for the rivers Asker and Char.

We feel the strategy should be strengthened with the addition of an intention to develop a **pioneering** partnership programme to enhance and improve river water quality across the county. Such a programme could engage farmers and landowners, schools and the general public and it would be relatively easy and inexpensive to develop a powerful visual campaign to show improvements as they take place across the county – mapping river catchments 'turning blue' as they start to meet national water quality standards. This is the kind of adjustment that can help DC turn a worthy strategy into a visionary one capable of inspiring local residents, businesses, farmers and families.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Water - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We disagree

Please explain why you think this

CVPC feels the Action Plan can and should be strengthened with greater urgency and ambition, e.g.

- ❖ Create an Action Plan intention to bring sea quality up to the highest standards (EU water quality standards or equivalent) for all the Dorset shoreline, and make similar progress for sites used for wild water swimming.
- ❖ Connect the banning of chemical use on County farms **and** work with landowners, farmers and septic tank owners to protect waterways from fertiliser and slurry run-off and sewage that can pollute water supplies and are causing rising Nitrogen levels **and** the proposed long-term action (see 'Natural Assets') to work toward a Chemical-Free Dorset to create an overall plan for restoring water quality in the county's rivers and watercourses.

- ❖ Make a commitment to meet and exceed EU river water quality standards across the county (currently less than 50% meet these).

Topic Area – Natural Assets

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Disagree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Disagree**

We disagree at points one and three

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "natural assets" area for action?

Here and elsewhere in the strategy document, the Ecological Emergency seems to have been added as an afterthought. Although it's mentioned in paragraph 1 of the Foreword, by paragraph 2 we read that the Panel's job is to "make recommendations to Dorset Council's Cabinet on actions that will help mitigate against climate change." No mention here of the ecological emergency.

In addition, **adaptation** to both the climate emergency and the ecological emergency needs to be given equal status with mitigation and carbon reduction efforts, particularly in this topic. Investment in adaptation and vulnerability impact assessment needs to be scaled up to match investment in mitigation and carbon reduction.

Once again, CVPC notes that Dorset Council's policies are lacking in ambition and scope appropriate to the Emergency outlined. In particular, Dorset Council should:

- ❖ develop a Dorset Pollinator Action Plan.
- ❖ act to reverse the depletion of soils and make their own farms an exemplar of regenerative soil management.

A crucial component of this strategy (which must straddle 'Food and Drink' and 'Natural Assets') must be for Dorset Council to support local farmers to help nature recover from years of degradation and promote a regenerative future for local communities. The strategy **must** help and encourage the farming and landowning community to restore, rather than weaken, the soil, and to adopt regenerative management strategies for field margins and hedgerows, rivers, pollinators and biodiversity as a whole. This vital task (which DC can only undertake indirectly with local farmers, but in collaboration with AONB and Dorset Wildlife Trust and with local groups like the Landworkers Alliance) is hidden away in 'Natural Assets' as: "Communicate to businesses and land owners good practice in terms of protecting and enhancing ecological value, carbon sequestration and climate resilience". This needs to become something like "Pioneer a Revolution in Dorset Farming" which translates into an ongoing campaign to educate, support and encourage Dorset's farmers to create, manage and restore diverse and wildlife-rich habitats, create and manage dynamic woodlands, healthy soils and clean rivers (through the adoption of agroforestry and other regenerative agriculture practices) – as well as to work together to access financial support and ELMS funding and to reach tourists and local customers for their food and other services.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Natural Assets - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We disagree

Please explain why you think this

CVPC feels the Action Plan can and should be strengthened with greater urgency and ambition, and be joined-up with the Action Plan on Water and on Food and Drink, e.g.

- ❖ Connect the banning of chemical use on County farms **and** work with landowners, farmers and septic tank owners to protect waterways from fertiliser and slurry run-off and sewage that can pollute water supplies and are causing rising Nitrogen levels **and** the proposed long-term action to work toward a Chemical-Free Dorset to create an overall plan for restoring water quality in the county's rivers and watercourses.
- ❖ Dorset Council should invest in sensitive and sustainable land management methods in areas that it controls directly and use its role as a champion to pioneer actions to improve water quality across Dorset's rivers (see 'Water') and to create wildlife and habitat connectivity by supporting and extending initiatives like Char Valley Lifelines (to create pesticide free wildlife corridors across the landscape).

As noted in our response to 'Food and Drink', we believe that Dorset Council should seize this opportunity to create an inspirational county-wide plan to take its County Farms estate first 'chemical-free' and then 'organic' or 'regenerative'. The Plan can be published in 2021 with target dates in the near future. This will have a far more visible and immediate impact in support of DC's strategy of "demonstrating low carbon, ecologically friendly farming technique" than the woolly 'beyond 2023' target currently proposed.

Topic Area - Transport

Do you agree with what we have proposed?

What we can directly impact **Agree**

What we can indirectly impact **Agree**

What we can influence and partnership **Agree**

Please explain why you think this and if there is anything fundamental that you feel we have missed in "transport" area for action?

CVPC broadly supports the Transport strategy and action plan. As a rural parish we would also strongly encourage Dorset Council to:

- ❖ adopt land-use policies that reduce the need to travel
- ❖ rejuvenate villages and small towns with improved local services, mass transport and encouragement of micro-businesses (as part of the 'Circular Dorset' proposal set out in our 'Waste' topic response
- ❖ develop a sustainable network of routes for all members of the community, including ones to enable "slow" travel for walking, horse riding and cycling by people of all ages, abilities and needs.

Action Plan

We have identified a number of initial targets and specific actions that Dorset Council can take to address the areas above.

Transport - The action plan identifies where we see Dorset Council can take action. Do you agree with what we have proposed?

We Agree

Please explain why you think this

As explained above, we propose adding three action points to the Plan:

- ❖ adopt land-use policies that reduce the need to travel
- ❖ rejuvenate villages and small towns with improved local services, mass transport and encouragement of micro-businesses (as part of the 'Circular Dorset' proposal set out in our 'Waste' topic response.
- ❖ develop a sustainable network of routes for all members of the community, including ones to enable "slow" travel for walking, horse riding and cycling by people of all ages and needs.

Making it Happen

Engagement & Communications

We all need to take action to address the climate emergency and support the transition to a low-carbon future. We need to put the climate at the forefront of our communications and encourage and support action by everyone in Dorset.

We have identified several key actions Dorset Council can take to raise awareness of the issues, support action at a community level and engage with wider stakeholders to tackle some of the major challenges the Climate and Ecological Emergency raises.

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.

Do you agree with what we are proposing for engagement and communications actions

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

CVPC agrees with the statement of principle by Dorset Council but it is immediately apparent that it has not yet been able to apply it.

DC's Strategy and Action Plan are long and detailed documents (and need to be), but they fail to engage residents and the general public, especially young people.

We have highlighted elsewhere in this response the opportunity for Dorset Council to lead with a small number of important, attention-getting county-wide initiatives that could draw national attention, inspire and enthuse local people, help to unite public opinion around the possibility of action on the climate and ecological crisis.

Working with the many committed and enthusiastic local groups and drawing on the pool of local knowledge and expertise, Dorset Council could set ambitious targets for carbon reduction (not offsetting) and visionary ambitions for the county in terms of its rivers, agriculture, pesticide use and circular economy. By doing this, DC would necessarily gain publicity, enthuse families, students and school pupils, farmers and local businesses and other residents, positioning Dorset as the UK's "Climate Change County" and, in the process, drawing tourists and investors in green business.

In short, CVPC believes that Dorset Council needs to tighten its strategy document into a revolutionary manifesto – not one to terrify voters but one to win the hearts and minds of anyone concerned with the quality of life we are creating for our children and grandchildren. To start this process it should include responsibility for responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency in every employee's job description and undertake to ensure that all spending related to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is "climate smart" and fully in line with DC's commitments on the Climate and Ecological Emergency.