

# Climate Emergency Engagement Feedback

## Introduction

This report summarises responses received to Dorset Council's 'Climate Emergency Call for Ideas' public engagement activity. The consultation ran from 16 December 2019 to 28 February 2020.

The Climate Emergency Call for Ideas focused on asking members of the public to submit ideas on how Dorset Council might be able to help tackle climate and ecology concerns.

## Engagement overview

The Call for Ideas was open to everyone through the Council's website and was promoted widely through the local media and the Council's social media channels.



When submitting ideas individuals were asked to provide responses to the following questions:

1. Regarding your chosen theme, what can Dorset Council do to help tackle the climate and ecological emergency?
2. What are the barriers to implementing these actions?
3. How could the barriers be overcome?
4. Are there any wider social, economic, or environmental benefits?
5. What should be the priority for immediate action?
6. Who should take the lead and who should be involved in implementing?
7. How should it be funded?
8. Are there any other issues Dorset Council should consider?

Once the consultation period had ended the ideas received were examined and a shortlist was created. The shortlisted submissions were then invited to present their ideas directly to the Council's Executive Advisory Panel on Climate Change at one of the Inquiry Day sessions.

Of the **783 ideas received** in the Council's Call for Ideas, 32 were invited to present at one of the two Inquiry Day sessions which took place at South Walks House, Dorchester on Friday 21 February and Tuesday 3 March respectively.

Each presenter had 5 minutes to submit their idea, councillors of the EAP then had the opportunity to ask questions. An overview of the shortlisted ideas and their presentations can be [viewed here](#).

## Key findings

### IDEA CATEGORIES

When submitting ideas individuals and organisations were asked to choose a category (Buildings, Natural Environment, Waste & Energy, Transport, Leadership & Influence).

The most commonly selected was Transport, with 26% of all ideas submitted falling within this category. The category with the fewest submissions was leadership with just 8% of the ideas.



### TOP 3 IDEA TOPIC AREAS

The top 3 three topic areas that featured most commonly in people's ideas were:

#### 1. Planning (19%)

151 of ideas submitted focused on planning restrictions and considerations (these ideas centred around tighter restrictions on developers, relaxed planning for listed buildings, and development on brownfield sites)

#### 2. Improved local transport links (17%)

131 of ideas submitted focused on making improvements to local transport links, (these included ideas on footpaths, cycleways, bus provision and rail network)

#### 3. Renewable Energy Generation (14%)

107 of ideas submitted focused on renewable energy generation, (these included ideas on solar, wind, hydro, tidal, wave, heat-pumps, anaerobic digestion and other multi-measure renewable energy approaches)

### TOP 3 BARRIERS TO ACTION

The top 3 barriers to implementing ideas identified by people were:

#### 1. Funds (31%)

#### 2. No barriers (23%)

#### 3. Resistance to change (17%)

## RECURRING THEMES

When analysing the submissions recurring themes soon became evident.

**Planning** – This was the most commonly mentioned theme, with 151 (19%) of all ideas focusing on planning considerations and restrictions. Within this theme ideas centred around three main topics:

- Tighter restrictions on developers
- Relaxation of planning restrictions for listed buildings
- Prioritisation of brownfield sites for development

Of these topics the most commonly mentioned was imposing tighter restrictions on housing developers. These ideas ranged from, making sure all new buildings are built with solar panels and EV charge points, to stopping developers from felling mature trees with many between.

**Transport & Travel** – This was another very common topic with many people mentioning the need to develop Dorset's transport links, specifically calling for improvements to be made to the county's footpaths and cycleways, and investment in bus and rail services.

An increase in EV charging points, and increased traffic control measures were also mentioned frequently. Along with other common suggestions including increasing park and ride schemes, introducing car-free days in towns, using parking charges to discourage unnecessary car journeys and introducing no-idling zones.

**Renewable Energy Generation** – 107 of all the ideas submitted mentioned renewable energy generation. Ideas focusing on solar power in Dorset were the most common. Examples of these ideas include installing solar PV on the roofs of all Council owned buildings, the introduction of grant schemes to help residents install solar PV on domestic properties and incentivising solar installation through reduced business rates.

Other renewable technologies commonly mentioned were wind, tidal, heat-pumps, hydro, wave, anaerobic digestion, and multi-measure approaches. With several people calling for the Navitus Bay offshore wind farm plan to be re-visited.

**Waste Services** – Many of the ideas in this area focused on improving the waste collection and recycling services in the county. With people calling for an increase in recycling facilities, clearer instructions on what and how to recycle, and the adoption of a circular waste economy in Dorset.

Other recurring themes included initiatives to reduce litter, the introduction and enforcement of single-use-plastic policies, and waste heat schemes.

Several ideas called for the Council to block any plans for a waste incinerator at Portland.

**Leading the way** – A high proportion of ideas submitted focused on the leadership role of the Council, and key changes it can make to its own operations and behaviour to set an example for the rest of the county. Recurring themes under this heading included:

- Investment in electric or biofuel vehicles
- Following examples of others
- Implementing stricter laws
- Reducing the footprint of the Council's buildings
- Making changes to the Council's operations
- Working with partners
- Lobbying central government
- Developing and publishing plans
- Making changes to street lighting
- Divesting from fossil fuel investments
- Public consultation
- Monitoring, recording & publishing data

**Communication & support** – Lots of the ideas called on the Council to provide more information and support on understanding climate change and the steps that can be taken to tackle it. With the key audiences for this support identified as residents, businesses, farms and schools. Ideas included the development of a support platform or hub, increased communication and education, and the sharing of best practice.

Support for community action was another recurring theme under this heading. Many people suggested that the Council should help facilitate and support new and existing community-led projects.

**Natural Environment** - Tree planting schemes featured heavily in the ideas submitted, with a lot of people wanting the Council to plant more trees and support others to do the same. People also suggested re-wilding schemes that could be introduced in the county, and the need for this approach to be reflected in wider policy making and planning decisions.

People also asked for an increase in environmental protections, changes in greenspace management and a reduction in the use of harmful pesticides and herbicides.

Several people suggested adopting a less impactful approach to verge side management – something that Dorset Council pioneered.

## **Next steps**

Feedback from the Call for Ideas public engagement activity will now feed into the development of the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Key findings and recurring themes raised in the ideas submitted will be used to help shape the Council's approach to tackling and mitigating climate change in Dorset.

Individual actions and ideas proposed will be drawn upon and reflected in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.