



Dorset Council Local Plan Baseline Report

Version 1.0

September 2026



Dorset
Council

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	5
Population	6
Total resident population	6
Population age and sex profile	7
Causes of population change	8
Population projections	9
Population density	10
Diversity	11
NINo Registrations	11
Religion and beliefs	12
Ethnic group	13
Household language	14
Country of Birth	15
Health and Care	16
General health	16
Life expectancy	16
Provision of unpaid care	17
Housing	18
Total dwelling stock	18
Changes to housing stock	21
Affordable housing completions	23
Local housing needs	24
Affordable housing need	25
Housing Land Supply	25
Housing Delivery Test	26
Communal establishments	27
Households	28
Dwelling accommodation types	29
Second and vacant homes	32
Tenure	33
Household size	34
Living Arrangements	36
Affordability of housing	37
Residential distribution	38
Access and Connectivity	39
Car or van availability	39

Travel to work.....	40
Travel to work areas	41
Connectivity.....	43
Road.....	45
Public electric vehicle chargers.....	46
Rail	47
Bus network	48
Cycleway Network	49
Broadband and mobile coverage.....	50
Economy and Skills	52
Local business units.....	52
Business size bands.....	53
Employment of workers by sector in area	54
Jobs density	55
Unemployment.....	55
Workless households	56
Skills.....	56
Gross weekly full-time earnings	57
Enterprise Zones.....	57
Retail.....	58
Comparison shopping	58
Food and grocery shopping	59
Visitor spending	60
Seasonal footfall.....	61
Vacancy rates.....	61
Deprivation	62
Index of Multiple Deprivation: Background.....	62
Overall measure of deprivation.....	63
Barriers to housing and services.....	65
Natural Environment.....	66
National Landscapes.....	66
Green Belt.....	67
World Heritage Site.....	68
Heritage Coast	69
Internationally important habitat sites.....	70
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	75
Local Wildlife Sites	78
Local Geological Sites.....	79
Nature Reserves.....	80
Local Nature Recovery Strategy	81
National Character Areas.....	82

Agricultural Land Classification.....	83
Land uses	85
Pollution and climate change	86
Groundwater source protection zones	86
Greenhouse gas emissions	87
Renewable electricity generation	88
Air quality.....	88
Central Heating	89
Flood Risk areas	90
Historic Environment.....	91
Scheduled Monuments	91
Conservation Areas	92
Listed Buildings.....	93
Registered Parks and Gardens	94
Existing Plans.....	95
Local Plans.....	95
Neighbourhood Plans.....	97
Data sources	100

Introduction

This is the Dorset Council Local Plan – Baseline Report. It contains data and information to help inform the production of the Dorset Council Local Plan. It has been prepared with regard to the government guidance [Gathering baselining information to inform a local plan](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gathering-baselining-information-to-inform-a-local-plan).¹ It is a 'living' document, and will be updated to include further data and information as preparation of the plan progresses. We would welcome suggestions for data and information that could be added to future editions of this document.

Unless otherwise stated, the data presented is for the Dorset Council Unitary Authority (UA) area, and the data is sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Much of the data is derived from the 2021 Census.

It is possible that some figures may not sum due to rounding.

We have tried to present spatial data in map form where possible. Much of the spatial data is available to view on Dorset Council's interactive online map, [Dorset Explorer](#). There are different versions of Dorset Explorer, each of which show different layers. Versions include:

- Planning Public
- Dorset Council Local Plan
- Nature Recovery Dorset
- Dorset Coast Strategy
- Historic Dorset
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

¹ Available from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gathering-baselining-information-to-inform-a-local-plan>

Population

Total resident population

Dorset's population increased by 4% between 2011 and 2021, from 365,200 to 379,600.

This is a smaller proportional increase than the South West (7.8%) and England (6.6%) taken as a whole.

The ONS's mid-year estimate (MYE) of Dorset's population in 2025 is 391,036.² Dorset's population is estimated to have increased by approximately 0.75% each year on average between 2021 and 2025.

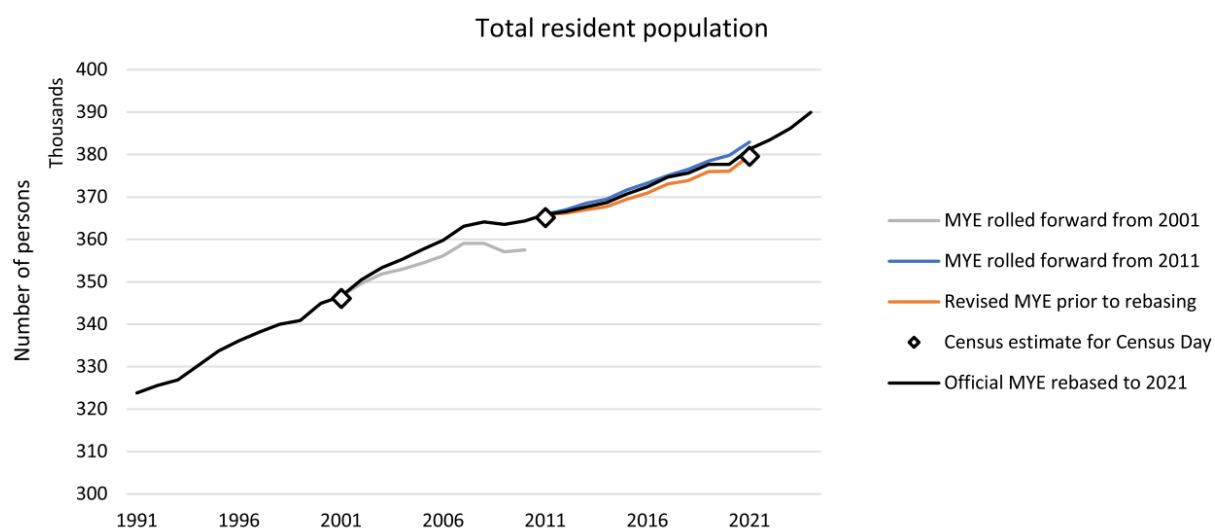


Figure 1 Official population estimates 1991-2024 (from ORS Housing Need Assessment Update 2026).

² ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales June 2025 (published 29 July 2026)

Population age and sex profile

Dorset's population has more females than males (51.6% female and 48.5% male). This compares with England and Wales which overall have 51.0% females and 49.0% males.³ The difference is likely due to females having longer life expectancy on average, and with Dorset having an older population this is more pronounced.

The graph below shows the age profile for Dorset (the blue lines), the South West (green) and England (purple).⁴

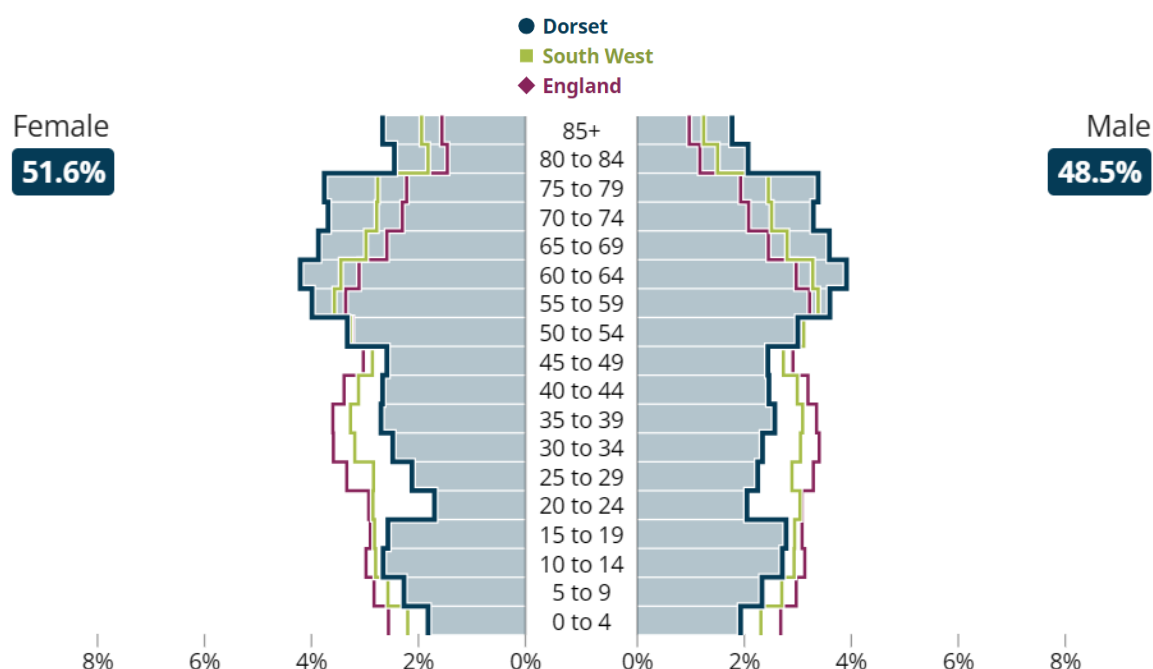


Figure 2 Population age and sex profile in Dorset, the South West and England (2021)

Just over 30% of Dorset's population is aged 65 and over, representing a larger proportion of people in this age group than any other unitary authority in England (the average being just under 20%)⁵.

The average median age has increased from 47 in 2011 to 51 in 2021, the joint highest in the SW and significantly higher than England's average median age of 40. The largest growth between the two censuses has been in the number of residents aged 50 to 59 (increasing by 6,900 persons) and aged 70 or over (increasing by 22,300). In contrast, the number of people aged between 15 and 49 years fell by 19,100 persons.

³ From area profile for Dorset Council, available from:

<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/insights/areaprofiles/UnitaryAuthority/dorset-council>

⁴ From <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E06000059-dorset/indicators#population>

⁵ Dorset Council Plan 2024 to 2029

Causes of population change

The graph below shows birth and death rates in Dorset. There is a gap between the two, with the number of deaths exceeding the number of births, and this appears to be increasing over time. This is known as natural decrease. It is indicative of an ageing population where there are more older people, and fewer younger people are having children.

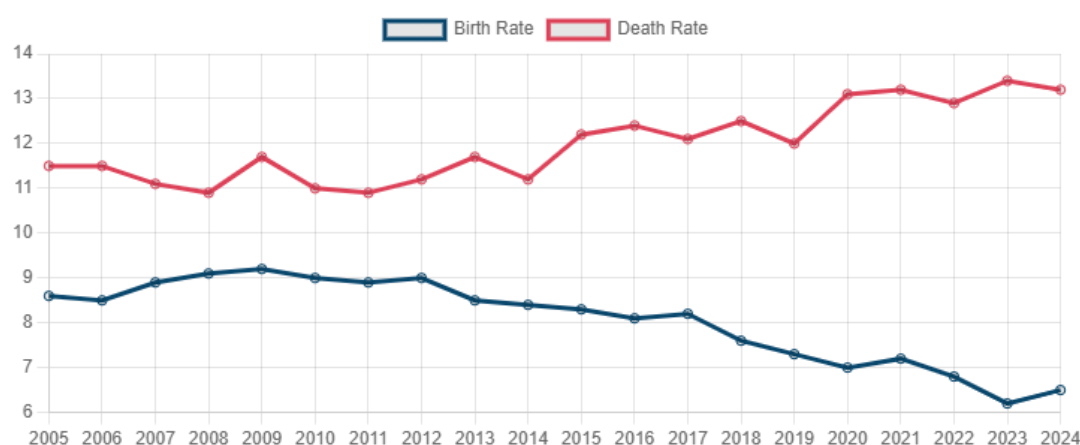


Figure 3 Natural change: birth and death rates in Dorset (note: these are birth/death rates per 1,000 population)

The graph below shows the effect of natural change and net migration on the population over the last 15 years.⁶ Whereas natural change is the difference between births and deaths, net migration is the difference between the number of people moving into the area and the number moving out. In almost every year, positive net migration has been greater than the decrease through natural change, meaning that the population of Dorset has continued to grow.

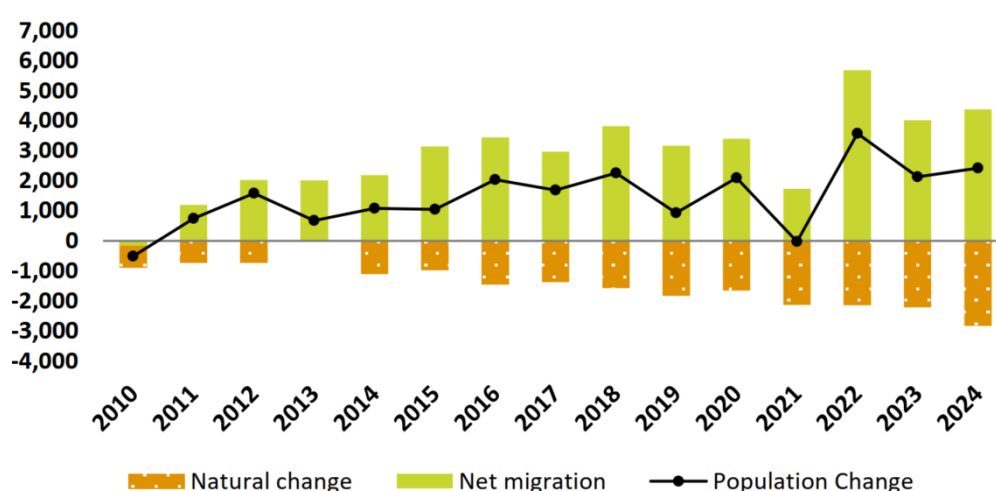


Figure 4 Natural population change and net migration in Dorset

⁶ From the State of Dorset 2025 report available from <https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/insights/topics>

Population projections

The graph below shows population predictions and projections from 2026 to 2046. ONS publish sub-national population projections based on past trends. This shows that the population of Dorset is expected to increase to around 429,600 by 2046.⁷ In addition, the ORS Housing Need Assessment Update 2026⁸ considers two potential population scenarios based on the local housing need figure generated by the government's standard method calculation. In summary, these two scenarios are:

- **Scenario A:** Based on past household formation trends and assumes that the increase in housing supply will enable additional population growth (above recent migration trends). To meet the identified housing need in this scenario, it increases the estimate for the number of people moving to the area until the population is sufficient to occupy the new dwelling stock (with allowances for unoccupied dwellings and additional residents living in communal establishments). By 2046, this would result in a population of 490,900.
- **Scenario B:** Based on increased household formation and assumes that the increase to the housing supply will enable people living in the local area as part of another household who want to live independently to form separate households. By 2046, this would result in a population of 466,400.

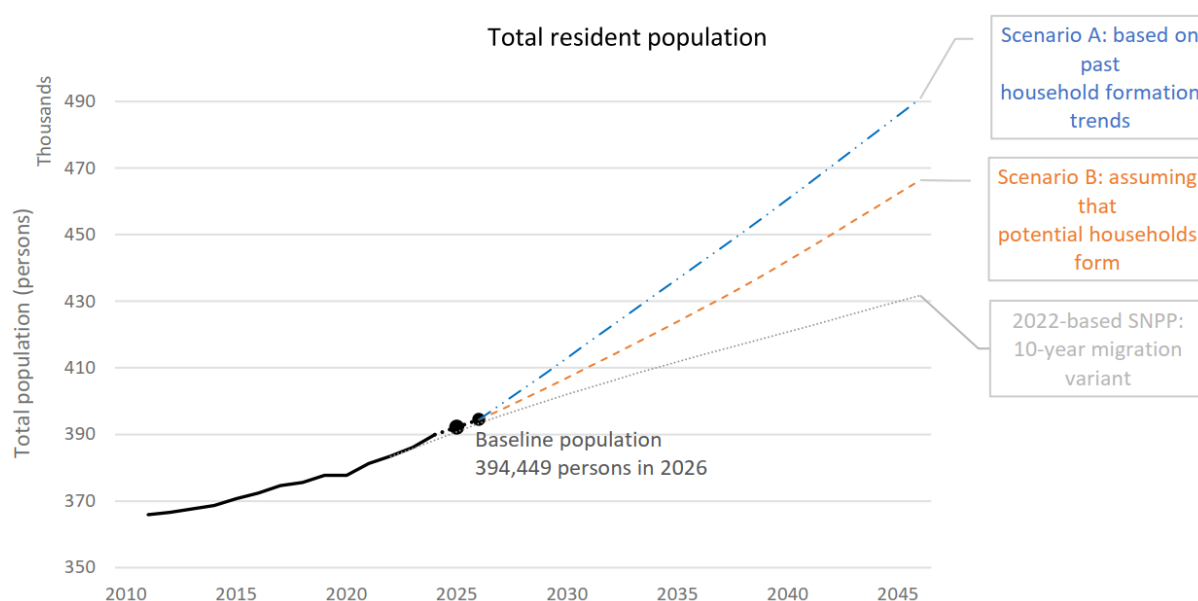


Figure 5 Population estimates and projections 2011 to 2046 (from ORS Housing Need Assessment 2026)

⁷ [Subnational population projections for England - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁸ Due for publication by Dorset Council in Autumn 2026

Population density

Dorset's population density in 2024 was estimated to be 157 persons per square kilometre, compared to 247 in the South West and 450 in England.⁹

Within Dorset population densities vary significantly, as shown on the map below. For example, Dorchester has a population density of just over 3,000 persons per square kilometre, while rural parishes, which cover much of Dorset, can have fewer than 20 per square kilometre.

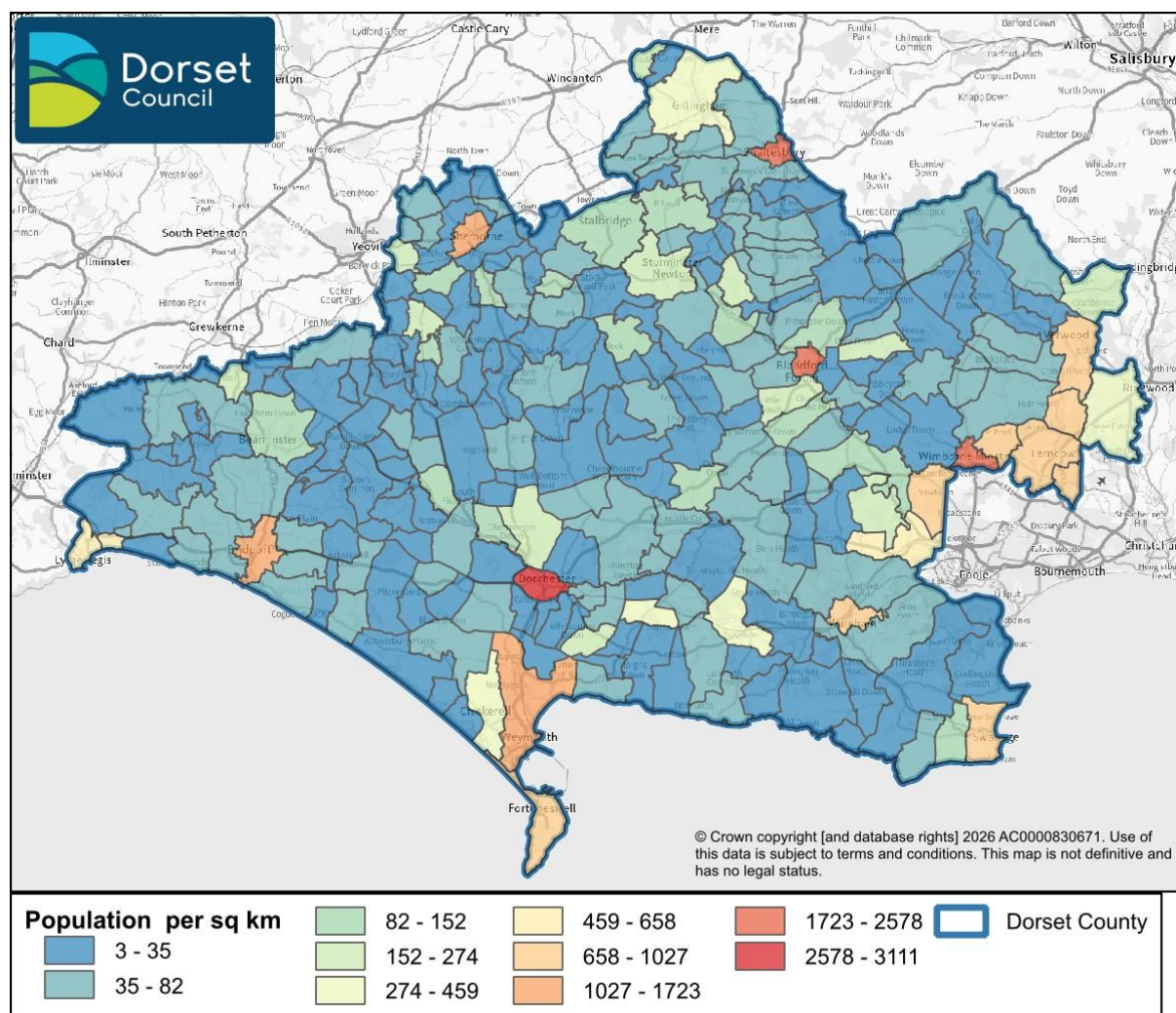


Figure 6 Population densities by parish area across Dorset

⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E12000009-south-west/indicators>

Diversity

NINo Registrations

National Insurance number (NINo) registrations in Dorset to adult overseas nationals dropped notably in 2025 following higher levels in 2022 and 2023, reflecting a national trend. The previous drop in 2020 is likely explained by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that these figures do not reflect total immigration to Dorset.

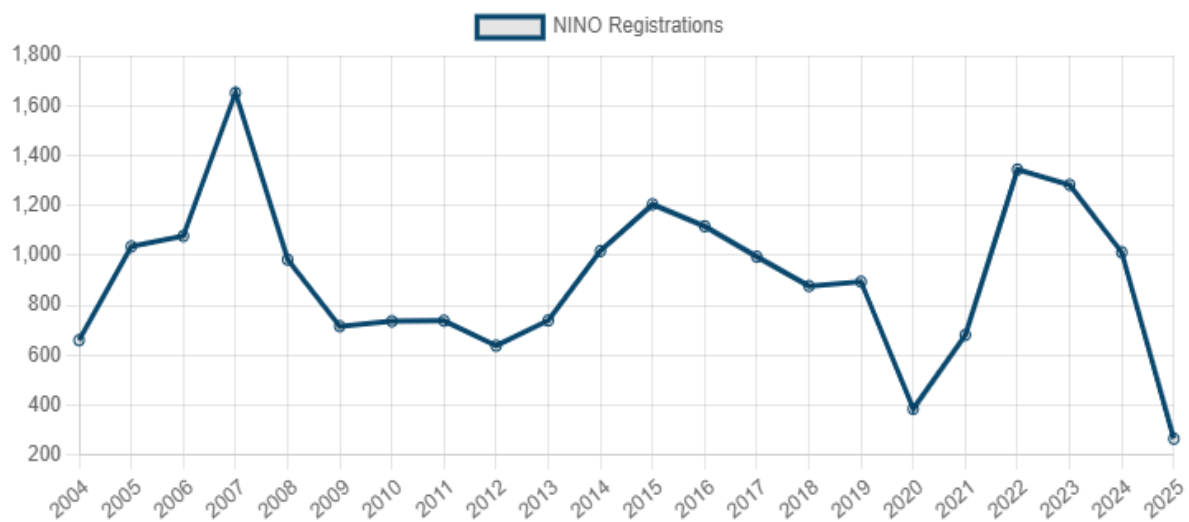


Figure 7 NINo registrations in Dorset to adult overseas nationals

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Religion and beliefs

According to the 2021 Census, the majority of Dorset residents either define themselves as Christian (51.6%) or as having no religion (40.1%). 1.8% recognised themselves as belonging to another religion or faith group, while 6.5% preferred not to state their religion or beliefs.

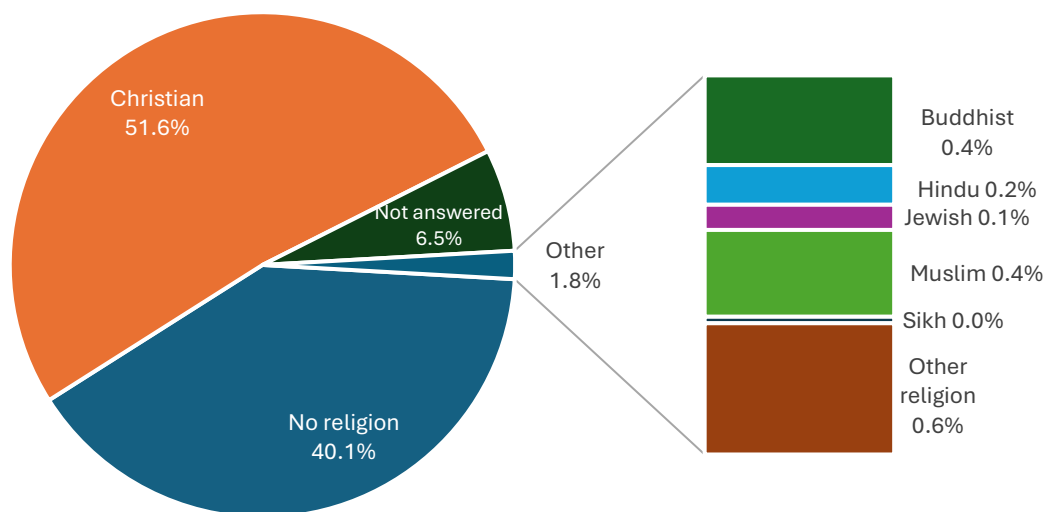


Figure 8 Religion and beliefs in Dorset

Ethnic group

Dorset's overall population is less ethnically diverse than England and Wales as a whole, with 6.1% being BME (black and minority ethnic population), compared to 25.6% in England and Wales.

However, there are some locations that have higher levels of diversity than the rest of Dorset, including Dorchester, Sturminster Newton and Melcombe Regis which have 9.8%, 12.3% and 15.4% being BME respectively.

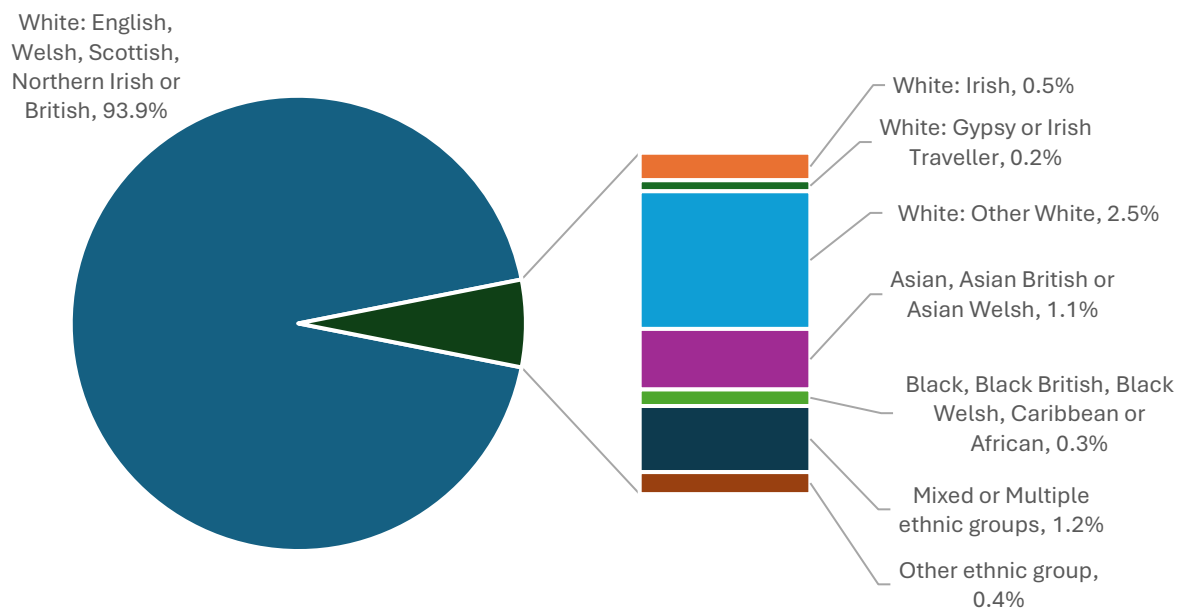


Figure 9 Ethnic groups in Dorset

Household language

According to the 2021 Census, a greater proportion of Dorset's households have at least one adult who has English as a main language (98.9%) than the average for England and Wales (93.8%).

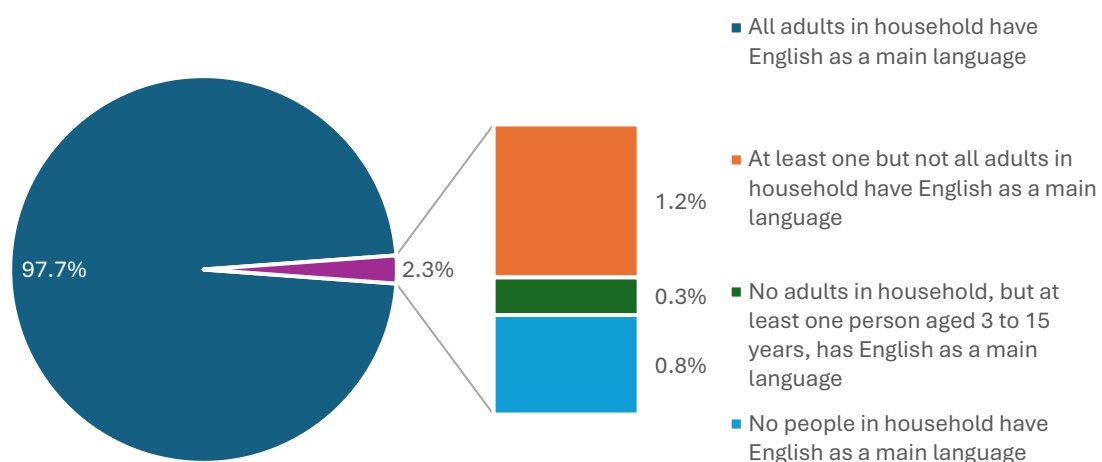


Figure 10 Household languages in Dorset

Country of Birth

Fewer of Dorset's residents were born outside the UK than in England and Wales taken as a whole (6.5% compared with 17.8%).

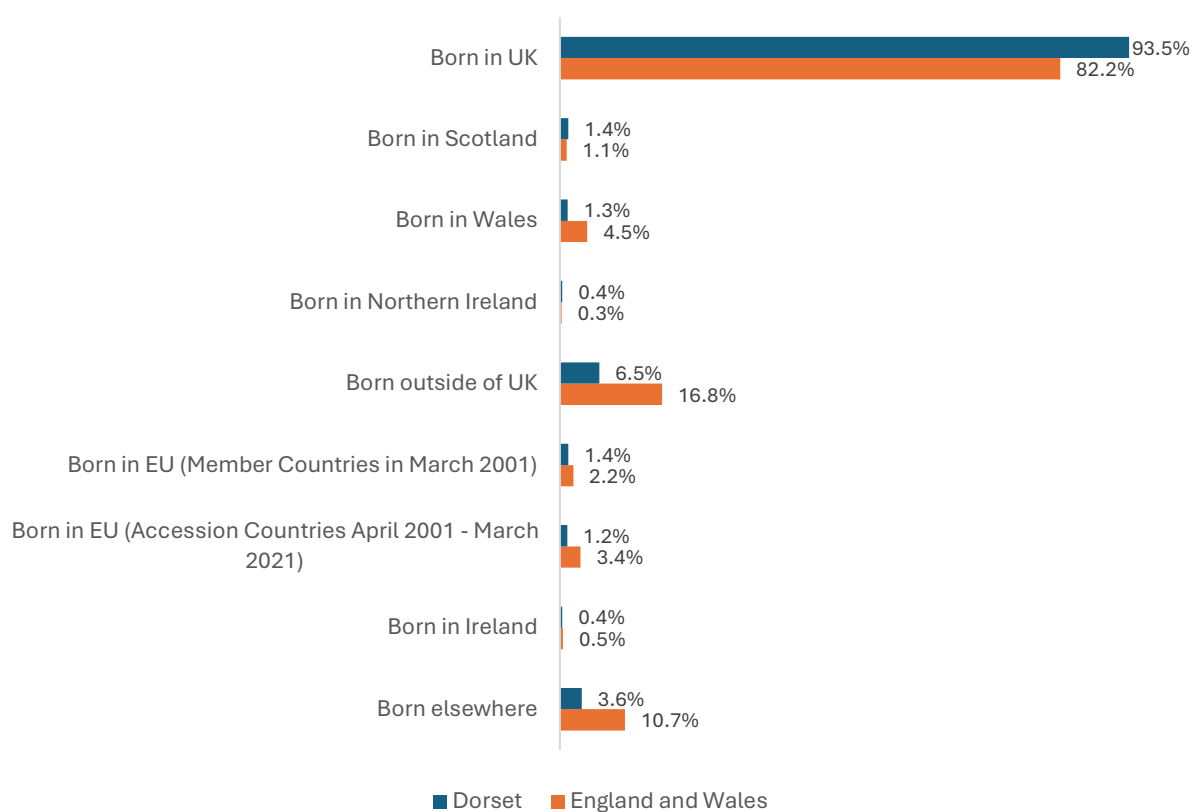


Figure 11 Countries of birth in Dorset and England & Wales

Health and Care

General health

Self-reported health varies depending on location. The 80.7% share of Dorset residents who report their health as very good or good broadly aligns with the England average, but there are locations where this proportion drops notably. This figure drops to 72.4% in Melcombe Regis ward in Weymouth for example.

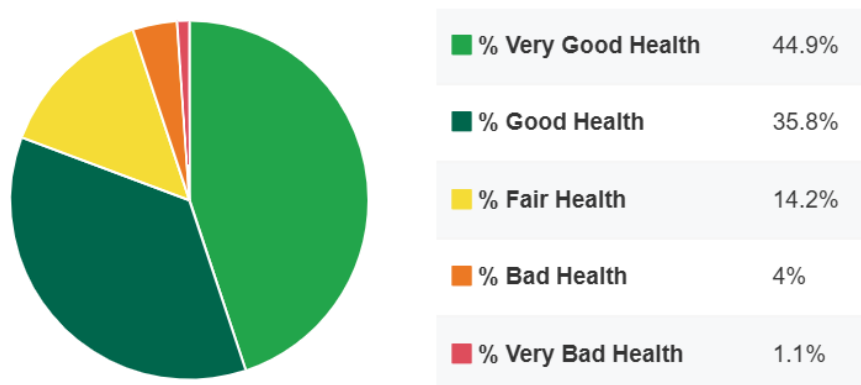


Figure 12 Self-reported general health in Dorset

Life expectancy

In the last 10 years, female life expectancy at birth has fallen from 85.0 to 84.8 years, while for men it has remained at 80.8 years.

The gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and least deprived areas of Dorset is 4.9 years for men and 3.2 years for women.

Provision of unpaid care

9.7% of residents in Dorset aged 5 and over provide unpaid care.

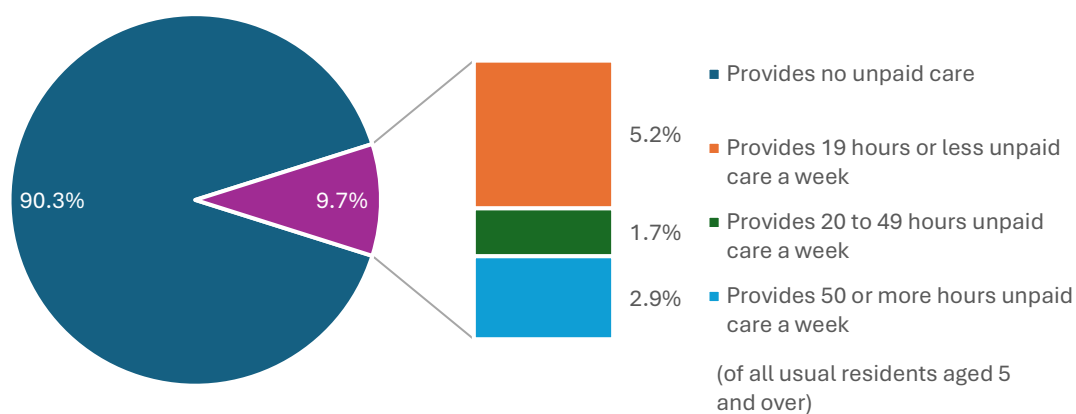


Figure 13 Provision of unpaid care in Dorset

Housing

Total dwelling stock

These figures are based on data in MHCLG Table 125 (dwelling stock estimates by local authority district).¹⁰ These estimates are based on a combination of Census data and annual housing completion statistics that Dorset Council provides.

Table 1 Total housing stock and annual change in Dorset, the South West and England

	Dorset total dwelling stock	Annual % change	South West total dwelling stock	Annual Change	England total dwelling stock	Annual change
2011	171,812		2,401,289		22,976,066	
2012	173,001	+0.69%	2,419,859	+0.77%	23,116,851	+0.61%
2013	173,808	+0.47%	2,436,712	+0.70%	23,247,462	+0.57%
2014	174,686	+0.51%	2,456,577	+0.82%	23,389,956	+0.61%
2015	175,506	+0.47%	2,479,446	+0.93%	23,566,538	+0.75%
2016	176,848	+0.76%	2,503,142	+0.96%	23,762,072	+0.83%
2017	177,987	+0.64%	2,528,963	+1.03%	23,985,307	+0.94%
2018	179,226	+0.70%	2,556,256	+1.08%	24,213,477	+0.95%
2019	180,752	+0.85%	2,583,257	+1.06%	24,461,243	+1.02%
2020	182,183	+0.79%	2,608,023	+0.96%	24,709,834	+1.02%
2021	183,571	+0.76%	2,630,834	+0.87%	24,927,588	+0.88%
2022	185,389	+0.99%	2,655,037	+0.92%	25,162,050	+0.94%
2023	187,076	+0.91%	2,679,804	+0.93%	25,396,342	+0.93%
2024	188,556	+0.79%	2,700,971	+0.79%	25,617,751	+0.87%
2025	190,239	+0.89%	2,722,035	+0.78%	25,826,351	+0.81%

¹⁰ [Live tables on dwelling stock \(including vacants\) - GOV.UK](#)

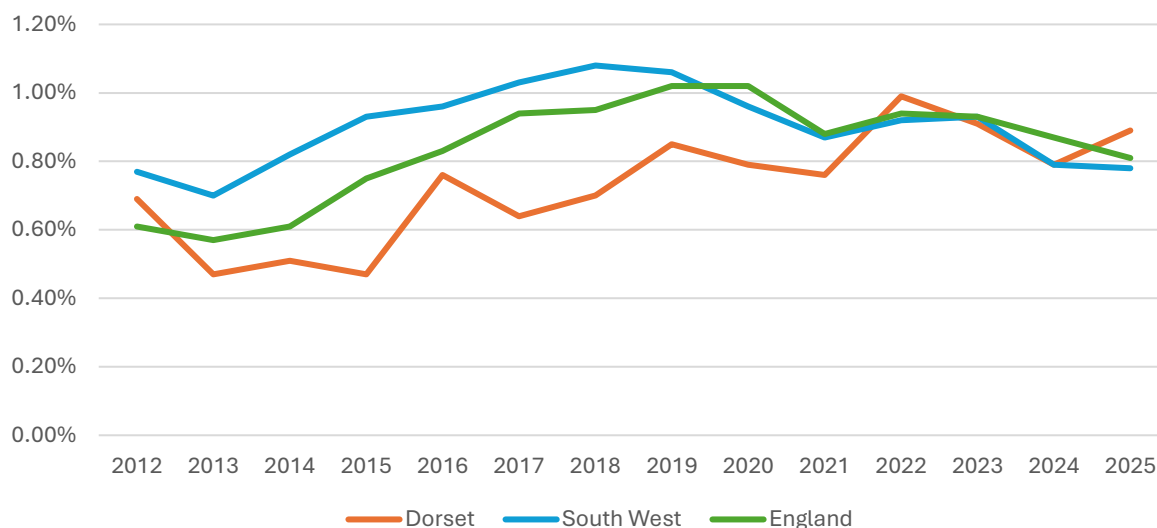


Figure 14 Annual percentage increase in total dwelling stock in Dorset, South West and England in years 2012-2025

Between 2011 and 2025, the average annual growth rate (AAGR) in housing stock for Dorset was 0.73%. In contrast, over the same period the AAGR for the South West was 0.90% and for England 0.84%.

In more recent years (from 2019 onwards), the AAGR for Dorset has increased to 0.86%, which more closely matches that for the South West (0.88%) and England (0.91%). Looking even more recently (from 2021 onwards), the AAGR for Dorset is 0.90%, which is greater than the South West (0.86%) and England (0.89%).

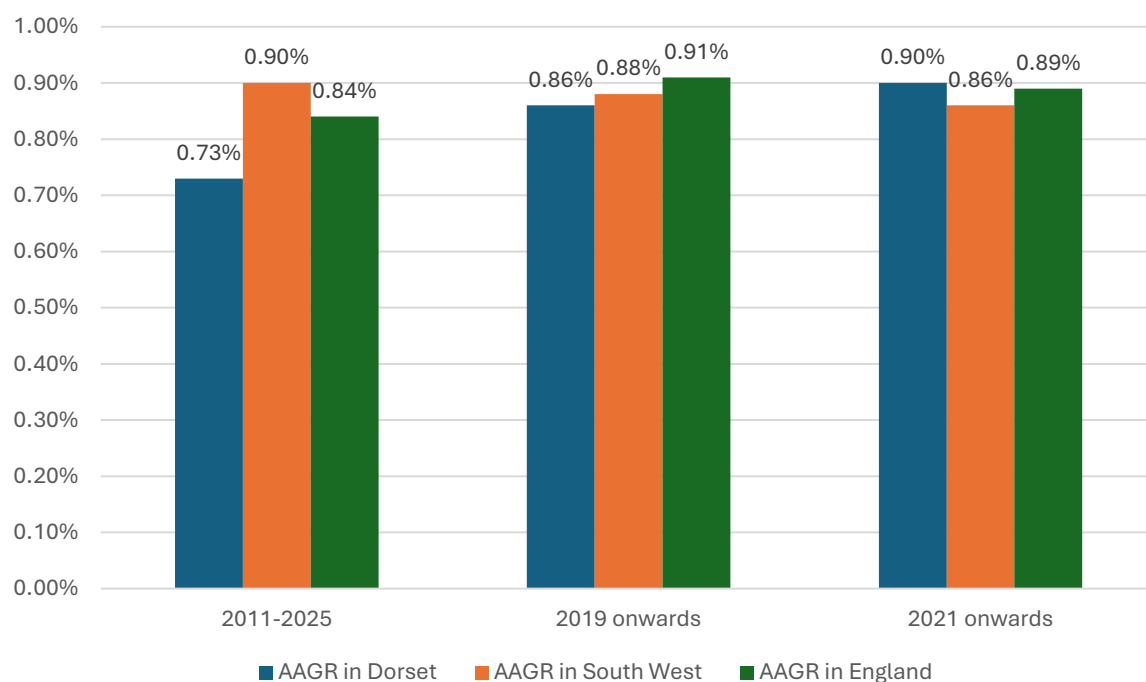


Figure 15 AAGRs in Dorset, the South West and England

The bar chart below shows net annual housing completions in Dorset between 2011 and 2025. In order to highlight trends over 4 and 5 year periods, it includes lines showing the average completion rate over these periods of time. The overall trend is that completions rates have been increasing.

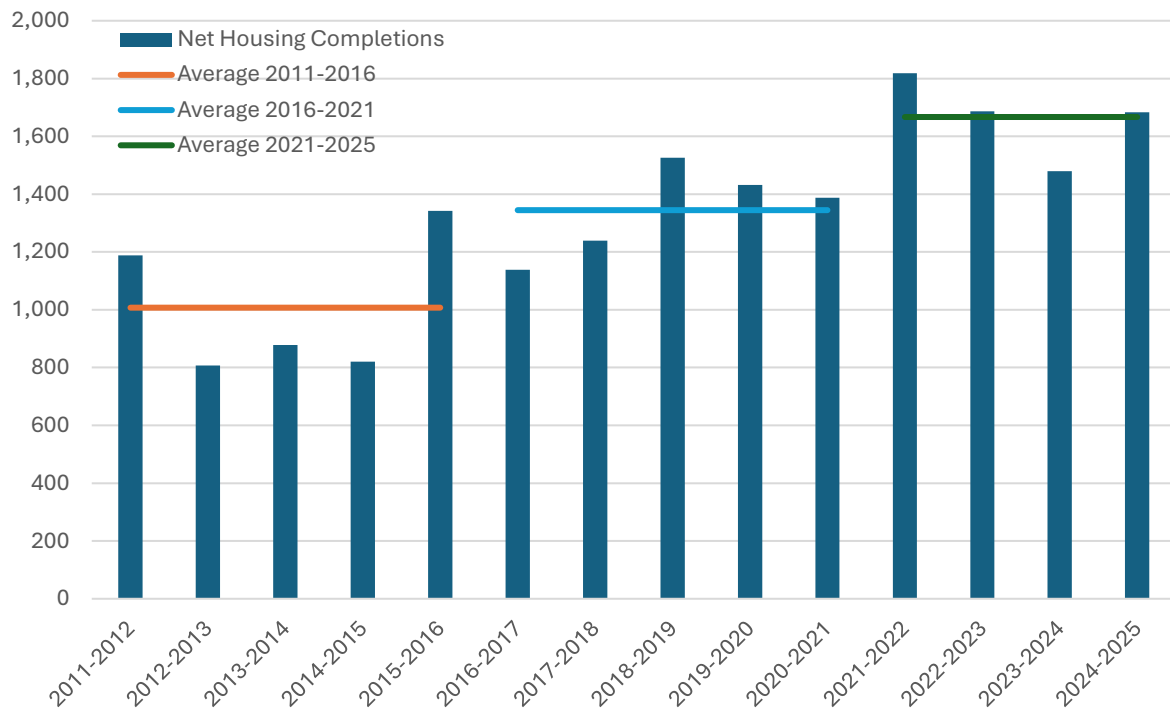


Figure 16 Net annual housing completions in Dorset

The general trend is that net housing completions have been increasing in Dorset over the last 14 years. While there are fluctuations from year to year, the average rate between 2011 and 2016 (five-year period) was 1,007. It increased to 1,345 between 2016 and 2021. Most recently, it has averaged 1,667 between 2021 and 2025.

Changes to housing stock

We have undertaken analysis to see where net additional dwellings have gone between 2011 and 2021. The pie chart below shows the proportions by parish. Dorchester saw the largest increase (which will largely be down to the development of Poundbury), followed by Weymouth. More than 26% of the growth was seen at these two towns. Another 25% of growth was split between Wimborne & Colehill, Shaftesbury, Portland and Sherborne. Another 26% of growth was split between a further nine parishes/settlements.

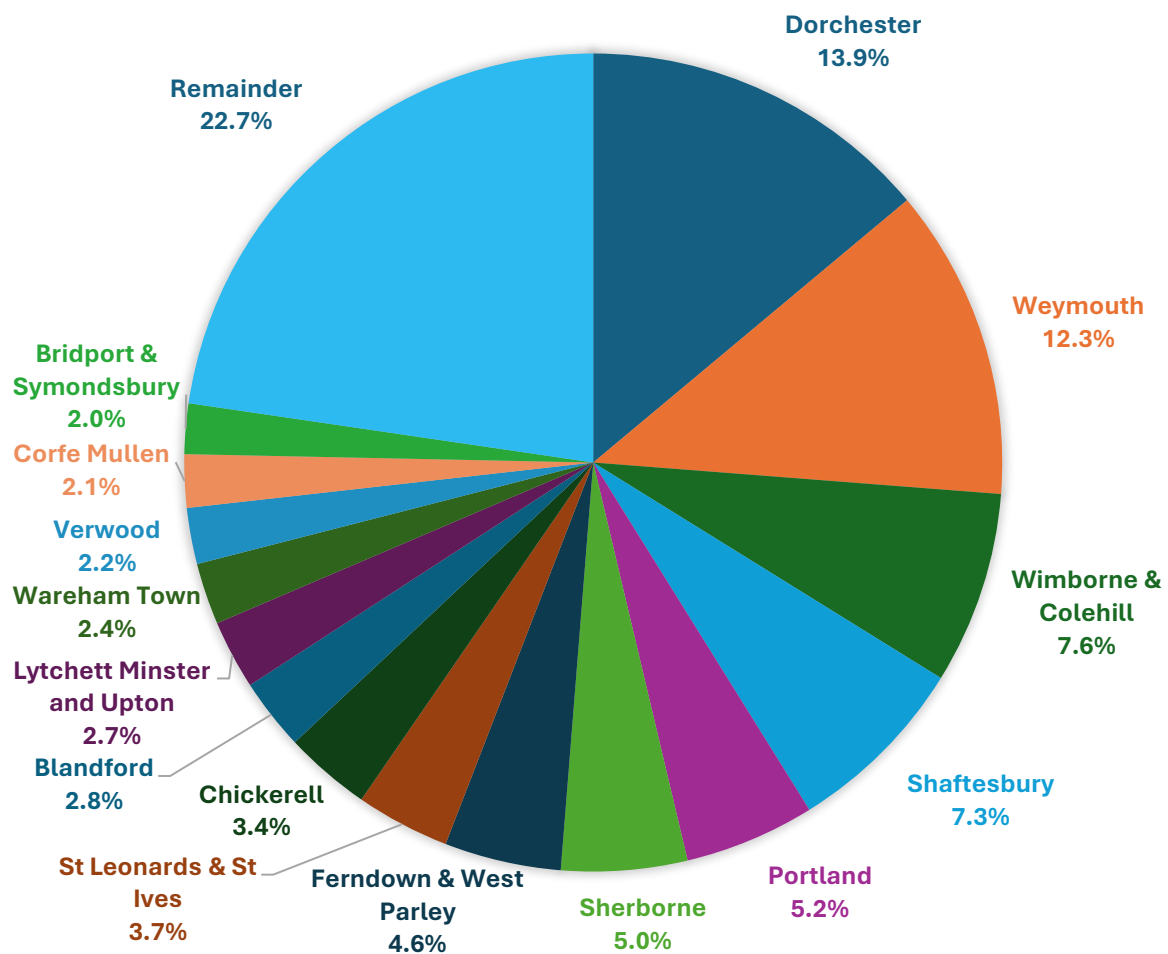


Figure 17 Net additional dwellings between 2011 and 2021 (parish share)

Between 2019 and 2025, Wimborne & Colehill saw the greatest number of housing completions (16%), followed by Dorchester (9%). Together they saw one quarter of housing completions. Five more settlements made up the next quarter (Weymouth, Blandford, Sherborne, Shaftesbury and Chickerell). The next quarter was made up of another 10 settlements, consisting largely of towns with the exception of Charminster. The final quarter was made up of everywhere else.

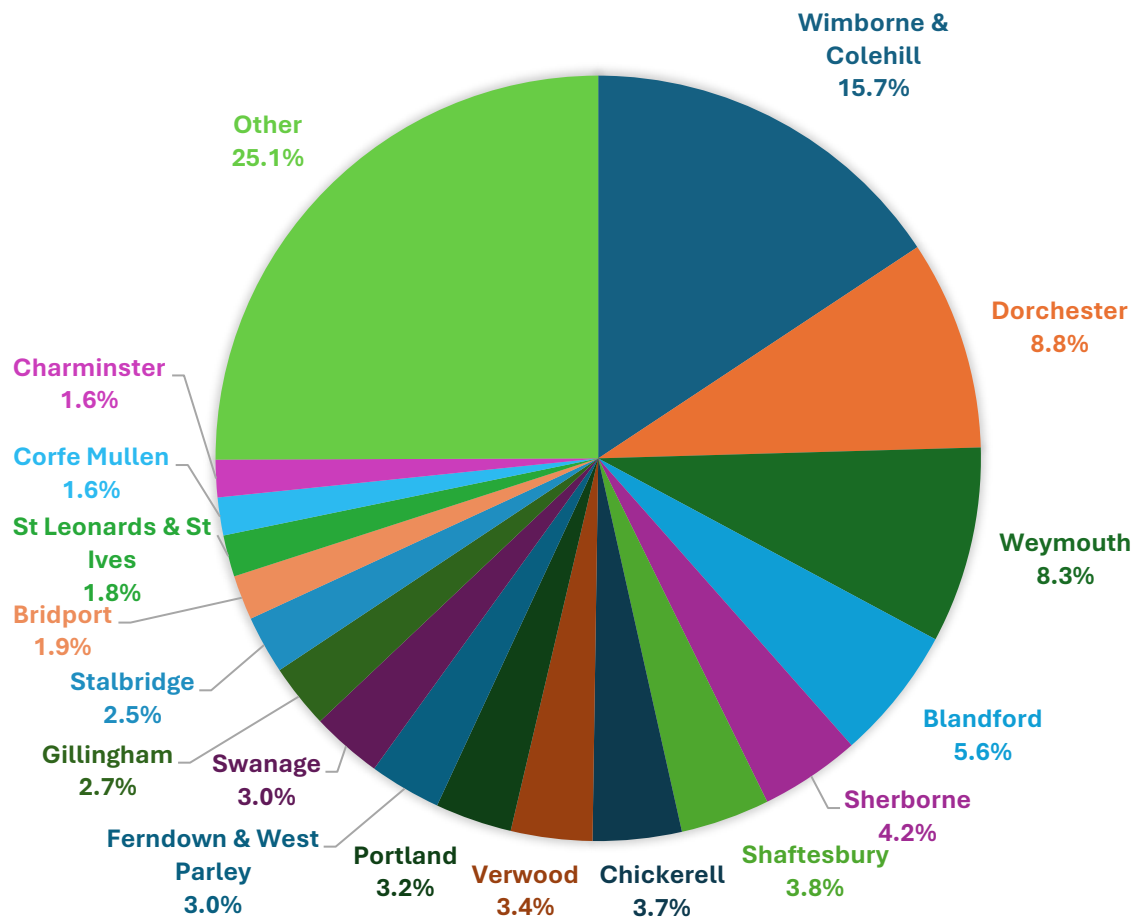


Figure 18 Net housing completions 2019 to 2025 (parish share)

Affordable housing completions

Affordable housing is housing for sale or rent for those whose needs are not met by the market. It includes a number of different tenures. For the full definition, including a summary of the tenures, see the definition in the glossary of the NPPF.

MHCLG publish annual data tables on affordable housing supply, including additional affordable homes provided by tenure.¹¹ Data from Tables 1006 to 1008 are presented in the graph below for Dorset for the period 2010 to 2025 showing net additional affordable homes provided. These figures suggest that while there has been a fall in affordable homes provided since 2010, in more recent years it has risen, resulting in a new peak in the most recent year available (2024-25).

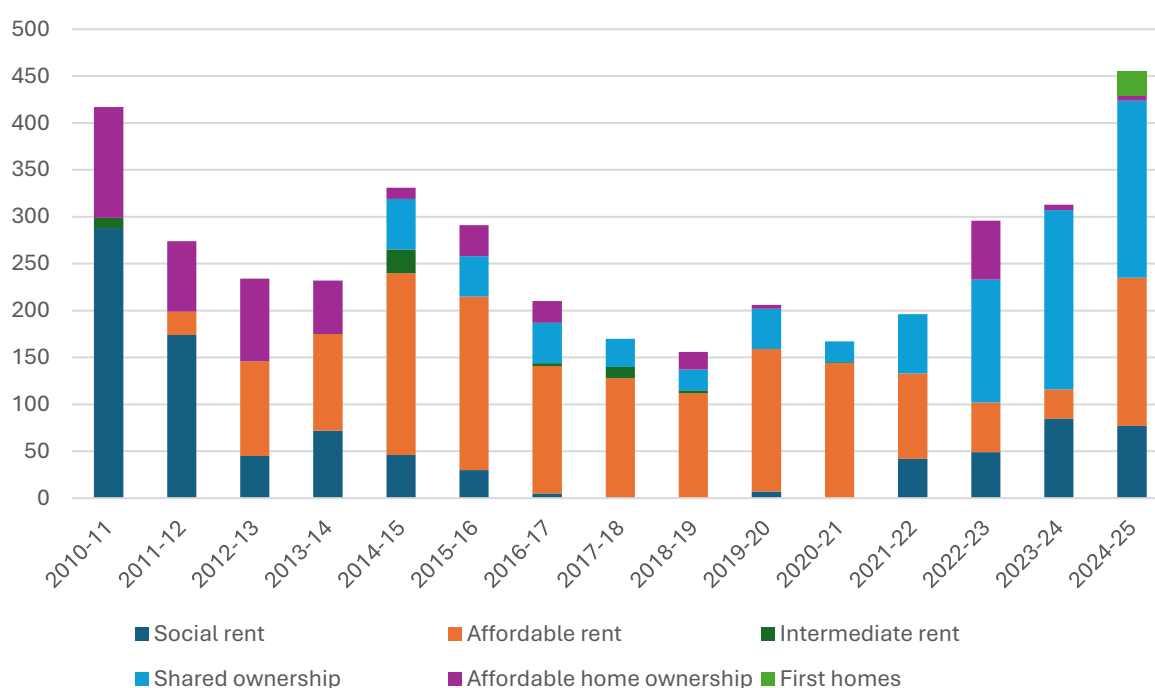


Figure 19 Additional affordable homes provided in Dorset, 2010-25

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>

Local housing needs

The government's policy is that local housing need (LHN) for local authority areas is calculated using the 'standard method'.¹² In 2021 the standard method figure for Dorset was 1,757 dwellings a year.¹³ The government revised the standard method in December 2024. The standard method figure for Dorset in 2025 is now 3,246 dwellings a year.¹⁴ This represents an 85% increase on the 2021 figure. Of particular note, the latest standard method figure is approximately twice the average completion rate over the last 5 years. This suggests that while completion rates have been progressively increasing since 2011, they are still a long way off the government target.

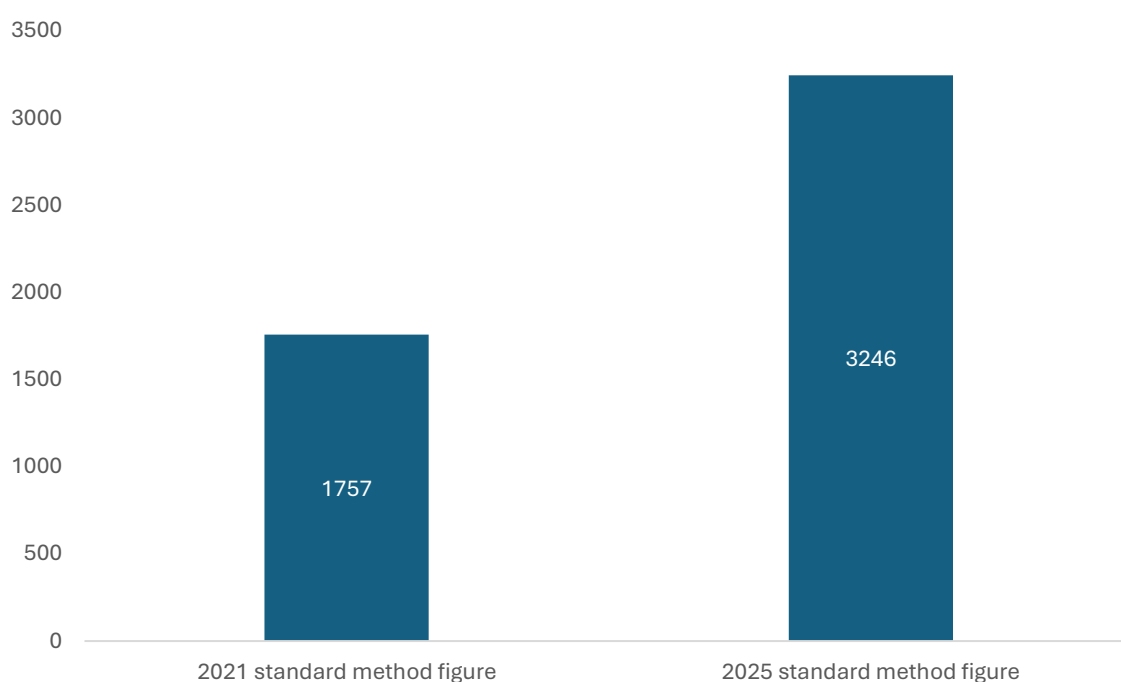


Figure 20 Standard method figure for Dorset in 2021 and 2025

¹² The standard method formula is set out in [Housing and economic needs assessment - GOV.UK](#)

¹³ BCP and Dorset Local Housing Needs Assessment (Iceni, 2021) [caac9843-8acc-66bd-91f3-554b75c70091](#)

¹⁴ Dorset Local Housing Needs Update (ORS, due for publication by Dorset Council in Autumn 2026)

Affordable housing need

A recent report commissioned by Dorset Council concludes that there is a need for around 29,500 dwellings to be delivered as Affordable Housing over the period 2026-2046. The majority of the need (79%) would be for social rented homes, with affordable rent (4%) and affordable home ownership (17%) making up the remainder. In terms of size, the greatest need is for 1-bedroom properties (44%), followed by 2-bedroom properties (33%), and then 3-bedroom properties (20%). More details of this can be found in the ORS Dorset Housing Needs Assessment (July 2026).

Housing Land Supply

Available housing land supply is published annually. The most recent housing land supply position statement is for 1st April 2025, and was published in October 2025. The particular focus of the annual position statement is calculating the 5-year supply, which is the amount of housing anticipated to be completed over the next 5 year period. However, the document also lists details of sites anticipated to be completed over longer time periods.

Table 2 Sources of Housing Land Supply, 1st April 2025

Source of supply	Total estimated supply (number of homes)	Amount deliverable in 5-years
Major sites: with full planning permission	6,300	4,933
Major sites: with outline planning permission	2,090	717
Local Plan allocations	3,001	636
Neighbourhood Plan allocations	731	189
Specific Large Sites	2,633	258
Minor sites: with planning permission	1,381	1,381
Windfall estimate: minor sites	381 per annum	525

More details regarding these sites can be found in the 5-year housing land supply position statement (October 2025) and subsequent updates.¹⁵

The position statement found that taking the above sources into account, and the amounts expected to be delivered over the next 5 years, there was a **2.53 year supply** when measured against the local housing need figure. This is below the government's requirement to have at least a full 5-year supply.

¹⁵ Available from <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-planning-policy-monitoring-1>

Housing Delivery Test

The government publish the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) for local authorities. It measures the delivery of new homes (and communal accommodation such as care homes) against government targets.

The most recent HDT is for 2025 and was published on 17 August 2026. The figures for Dorset are:

Table 3 Dorset Housing Delivery Test

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
a) Number of homes delivered	1,724	1,483	1,626	4,833
b) Number of homes required	1,871	1,810	1,782	5,463
HDT measurement (a ÷ b)	-	-	-	88%

The HDT measurement for 2025 is 88%. This means that Dorset has provided fewer new homes than the government targets require over the last 3 years.

Communal establishments

A communal establishment is defined as a place that provides managed full-time or part-time supervision of residential accommodation. Communal establishments include care homes, boarding schools, prisons and military bases. They do not include sheltered accommodation (since 2021), serviced apartments, nurses' accommodation, and houses rented to students by private landlords (these are households).

Residents who live in communal establishments make up a small proportion of Dorset's overall population (2.1%). The table below shows that the number of residents living in communal accommodation has fallen slightly between 2011 and 2021.

Table 4 Households and communal establishments in Dorset in 2011 and 2021

	2021 Count	%	2011 Count ¹⁶	%
Residents who live in households	371,757	97.9%	356,068	97.5%
Residents who live in communal establishments	7,841	2.1%	9,085	2.5%

The table below breaks down communal accommodation by type and shows where the changes have been between 2011 and 2021. While prisons have seen an increase in population, there has been a greater decrease in those in detention centres. There were declines in the population of care homes and education (e.g. boarding schools). These declines may have been related to the Covid-19 pandemic at the time.

Table 5 Change in residents in communal accommodation by type

Communal Establishment Type	Change 2011-2021
Other establishment: Prison service	+253
Medical and care establishment: Other: Care home with nursing	+85
Other establishment: Staff/worker accommodation only	+60
Medical and care establishment: Other: Children's home (including secure units)	+37
Medical and care establishment: NHS: Mental health hospital/unit (including secure units)	+18
Medical and care establishment: Other: Other hospital	+1

¹⁶ Includes total usual residents of all categories of communal establishment management and type. Some changes to the housing definitions in the 2021 census led to some communal establishments being redefined as households from communal establishments and vice versa. However, the changes have only resulted in a small number of households and communal establishments being redefined.

Medical and care establishment: NHS: Other hospital	-2
Other establishment: Approved premises (probation/bail hostel)	-3
Other establishment: Holiday accommodation (for example holiday parks)	-9
Medical and care establishment: Local Authority: Children's home (including secure units)	-11
Other establishment: Religious	-11
Medical and care establishment: Other: Mental health hospital/unit (including secure units)	-13
Medical and care establishment: Registered Social Landlord/Housing Association: Home or hostel	-16
Other establishment: Hostel or temporary shelter for the homeless	-38
Medical and care establishment: NHS: General hospital	-54
Medical and care establishment: Local Authority: Care home without nursing	-104
Other establishment: Defence	-108
Medical and care establishment: Other: Other establishment	-128
Other establishment: Hotel: guest house; B&B; youth hostel	-139
Other establishment: Other	-161
Medical and care establishment: Other: Care home without nursing	-275
Other establishment: Education	-309
Other establishment: Detention centres and other detention	-318

Households

A household is defined as one person or more people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room, or dining area. A household must contain at least one person whose place of usual residence is at the address.

The table below shows that the average household size in Dorset is shrinking. This is the continuation of a long-term trend that has been taking place for decades. It is one of the reasons why more homes are needed even if the overall population stays the same.

Table 6 Households and communal establishments in Dorset in 2011 and 2021

	2021	2011
Number of residents living in households	371,757	356,068
Number of households	169,261	158,738
Average household size	2.20	2.24

Dwelling accommodation types

The most common type of dwelling in Dorset is the detached home (41%), followed by semi-detached (23%) and terraced homes (19%).¹⁷

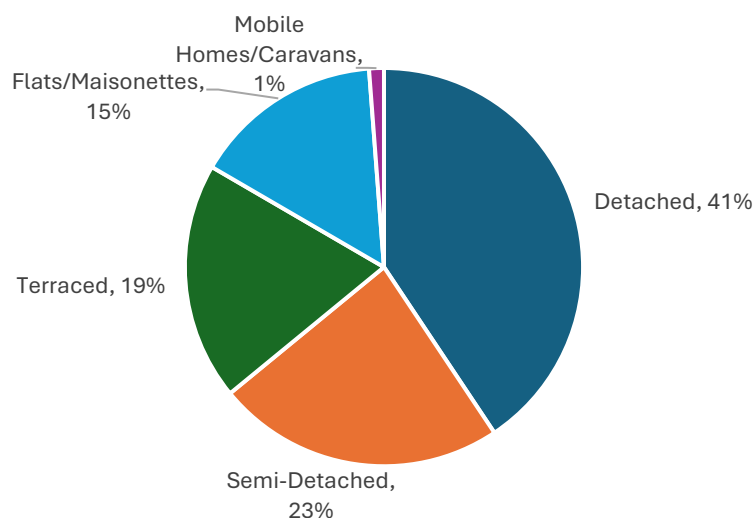


Figure 21 Percentage of dwelling accommodation types in Dorset

However, a greater number of flats and maisonettes have been built over the 10 year period up to 2021 than other forms of dwelling, while terraced homes and caravans/other temporary structures have made up a smaller element of the additional homes.

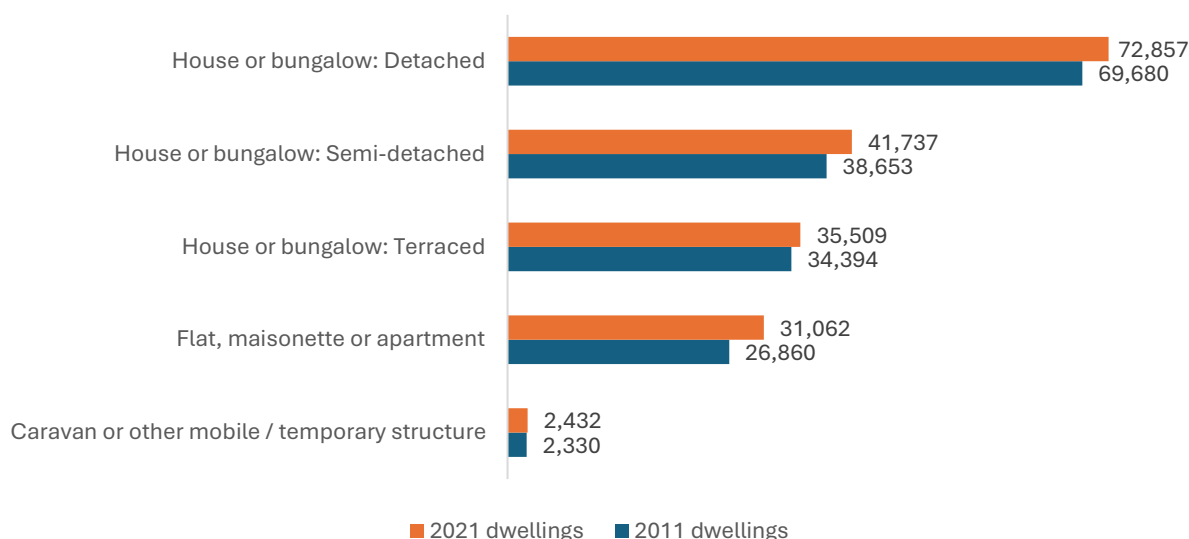


Figure 22 Number of dwellings by accommodation type in Dorset – comparison between 2021 and 2011

¹⁷ “Dwellings” is used here as a simplified term for households and unoccupied dwellings combined. Unoccupied dwellings include vacant dwellings and second homes with no usual residents. In rare cases, a dwelling may contain more than one household space.

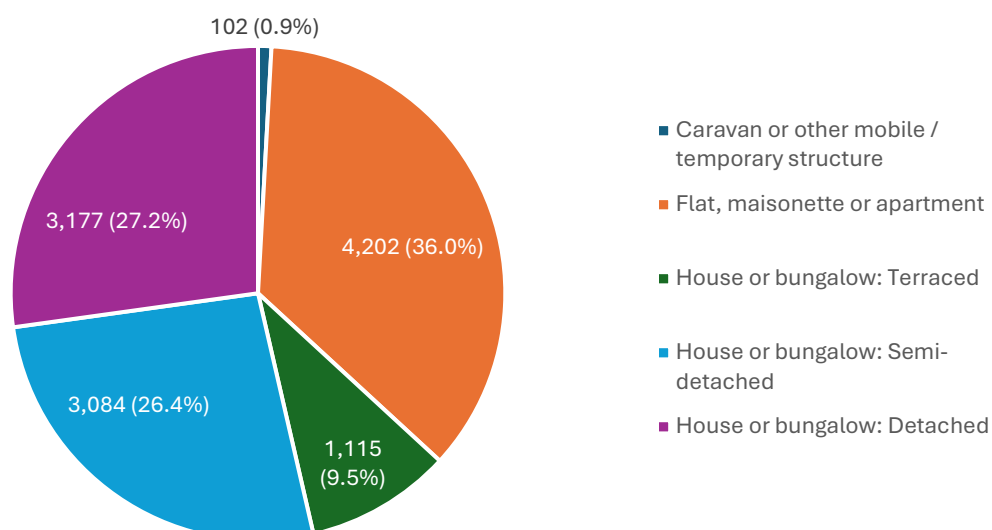


Figure 23 Additional dwellings by accommodation type provided in Dorset between 2011 and 2021 (and percentage of total additional provision)

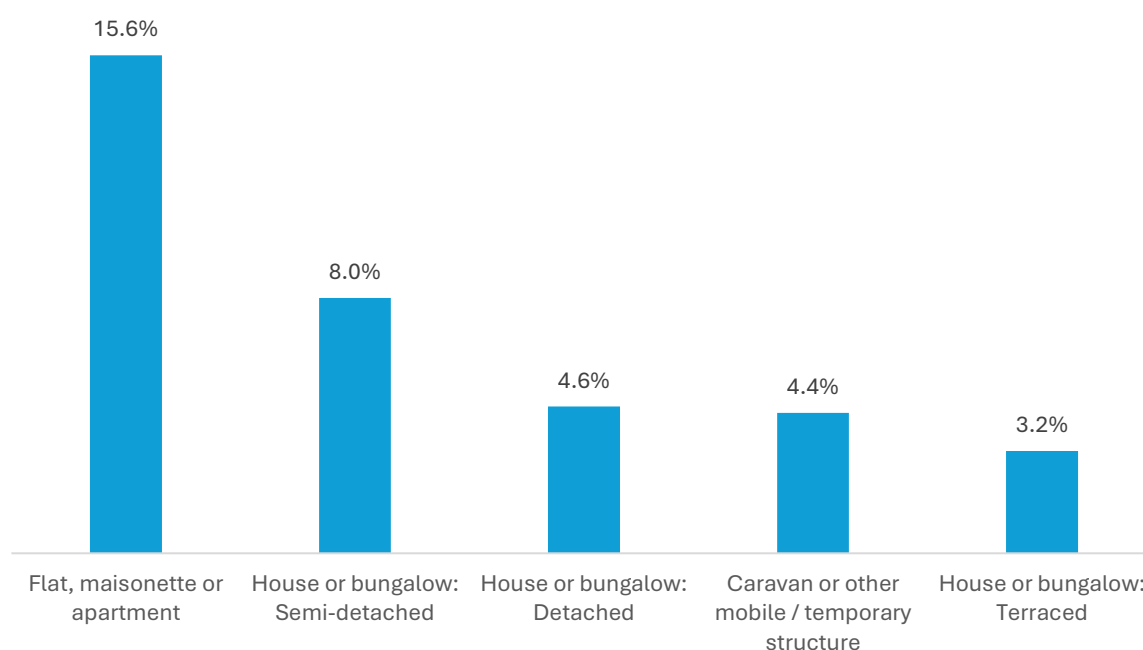


Figure 24 Percentage increase in overall stock of accommodation types in Dorset between 2011 and 2021

Caravans and other mobile or temporary structures, and flats, maisonettes and apartments, have the highest unoccupied proportions.

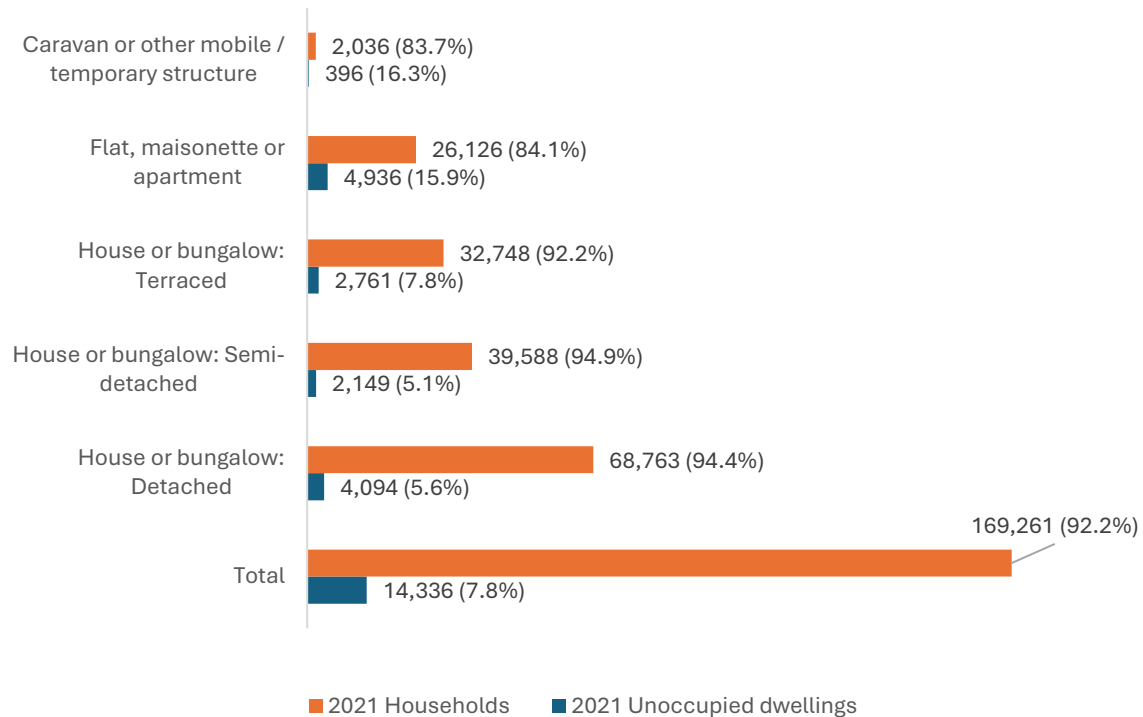


Figure 25 Households and unoccupied dwellings in Dorset by accommodation type

Second and vacant homes

The graph above shows that 14,336 dwellings are not occupied by a household. This is 7.8% of the total stock. Further analysis by ONS¹⁸ has separated this into second homes and what they call truly vacant dwellings. ONS estimate that on the Census day there were 2,900 second homes in Dorset, representing 1.6% of the dwelling stock. This is higher than average when compared to the South West and England.

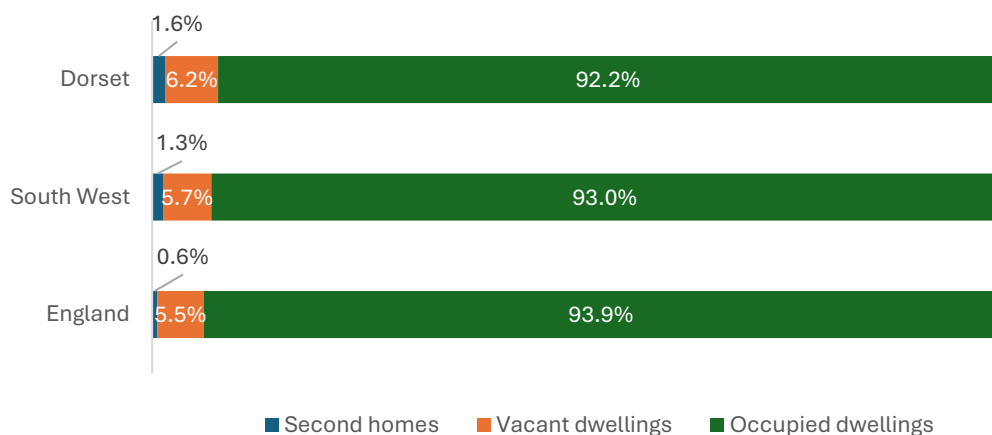


Figure 26 Second homes and vacant homes in Dorset, the South West and England

¹⁸ [Number of vacant and second homes, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

Tenure

The majority of Dorset households own their homes outright or with a mortgage or loan (70.4%). Between 2011 and 2021, the number of households who own their homes outright or privately rent/live rent free has increased, while the number who own with a mortgage or a loan has decreased by 10.1%. The number of households living in socially rented accommodation has also increased by 6.9%, but proportionally this has not kept up with the increase in the number of households living in rented accommodation (13.5%). The number of households living in shared ownership accommodation has proportionally increased substantially (by 58.2%) but still makes up a small proportion of Dorset's overall households (1%).

Table 7 Tenure in Dorset in 2021 and 2011, and change over period

	2021 Count	2021 %	2011 Count	2011 %	Change 2011-2021
Owens outright	77,561	45.8%	67,593	42.6%	+9,968 (+14.7%)
Owens with a mortgage or loan	41,593	24.6%	46,277	29.2%	-4,684 (-10.1%)
Shared ownership	1,620	1.0%	1,024	0.6%	+596 (+58.2%)
Social rented	20,836	12.3%	19,484	12.3%	+1,352 (+6.9%)
Private rented or lives rent free	27,651	16.3%	24,360	15.3%	+3,291 (+13.5%)
Total households	169,261	-	158,738	-	+10,523 (+6.6%)

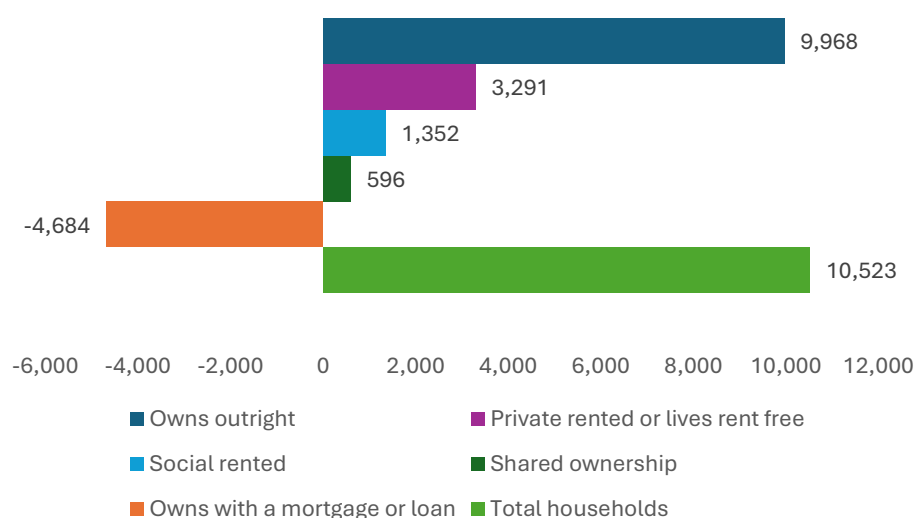


Figure 27 Change in number of households with each tenure type in Dorset between 2011 and 2021

Household size

Almost all households in Dorset are made up of one-person and single family households.

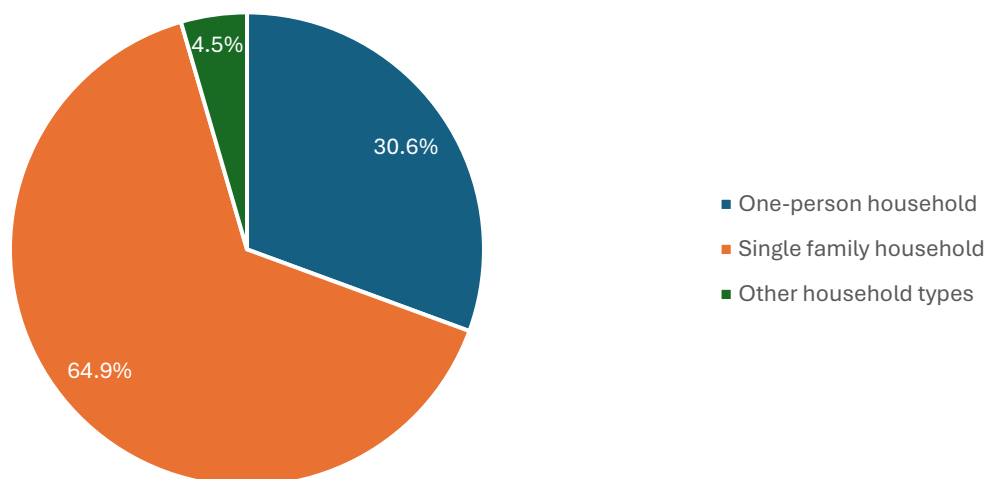


Figure 28 Household types in Dorset

The majority of households in Dorset are made up of 1 or 2 people (71.3%).

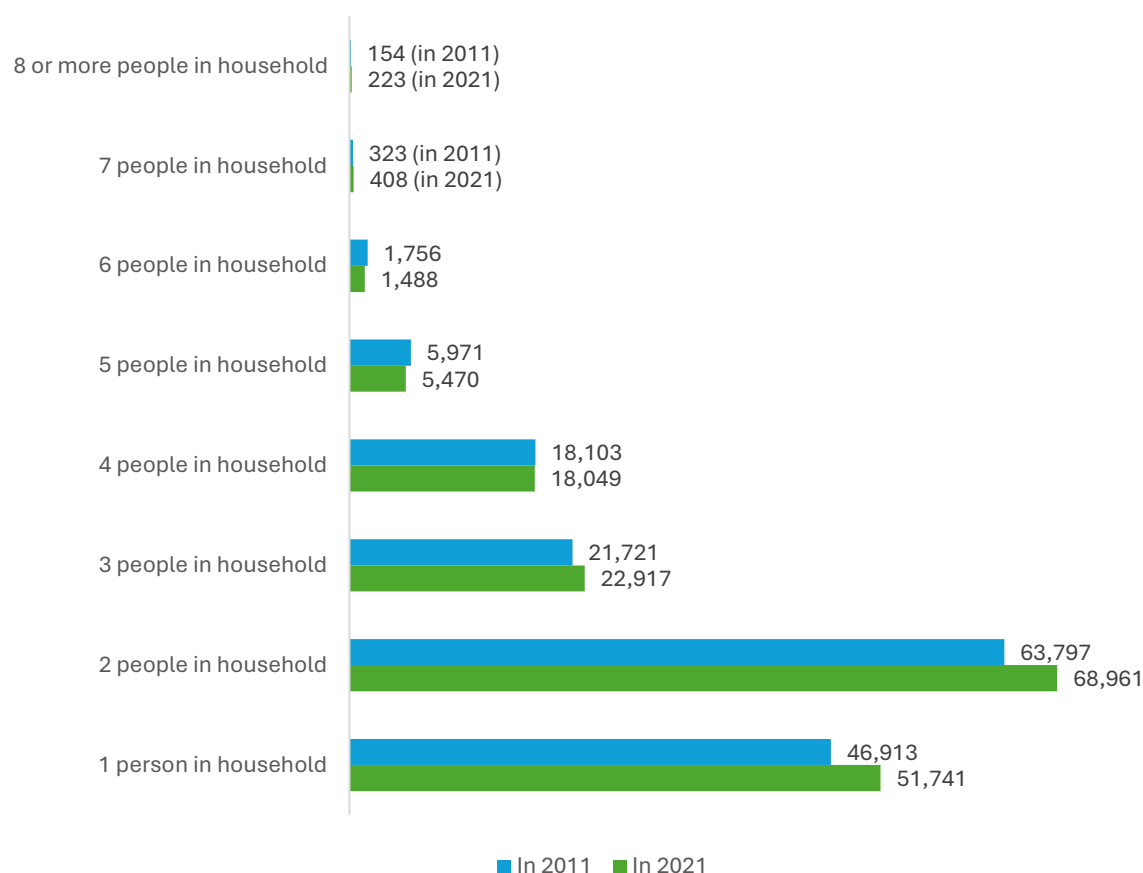


Figure 29 Household sizes in Dorset in 2021 and 2011

Furthermore, 1 and 2 person households have seen the largest increase between 2011 and 2021 (9,992). Conversely, households of 4, 5 and 6 people saw a decrease.

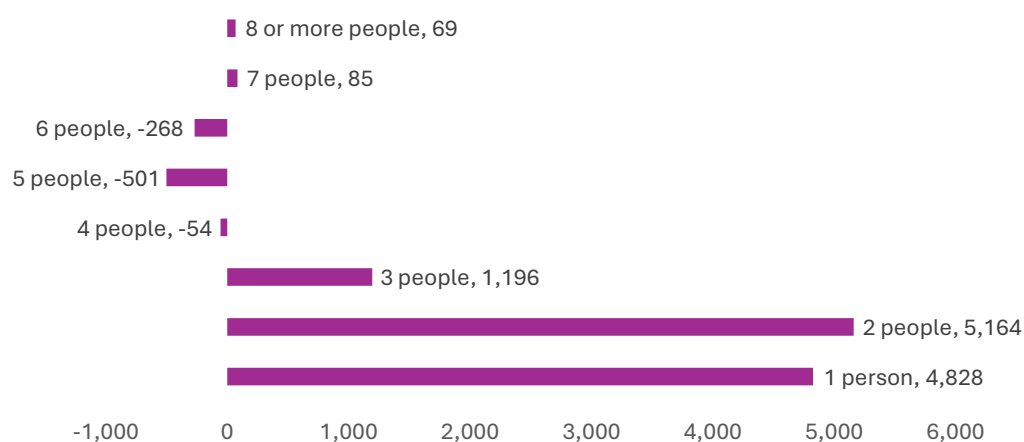


Figure 30 Change in household sizes in Dorset between 2011 and 2021

Living Arrangements

The pie chart below shows the proportion of households in Dorset by their living arrangements. Just over one third of households feature at least one person aged 66 years or over. Around 3 in 10 households are composed of a married couple or a couple in a same sex civil partnership (with or without dependents).

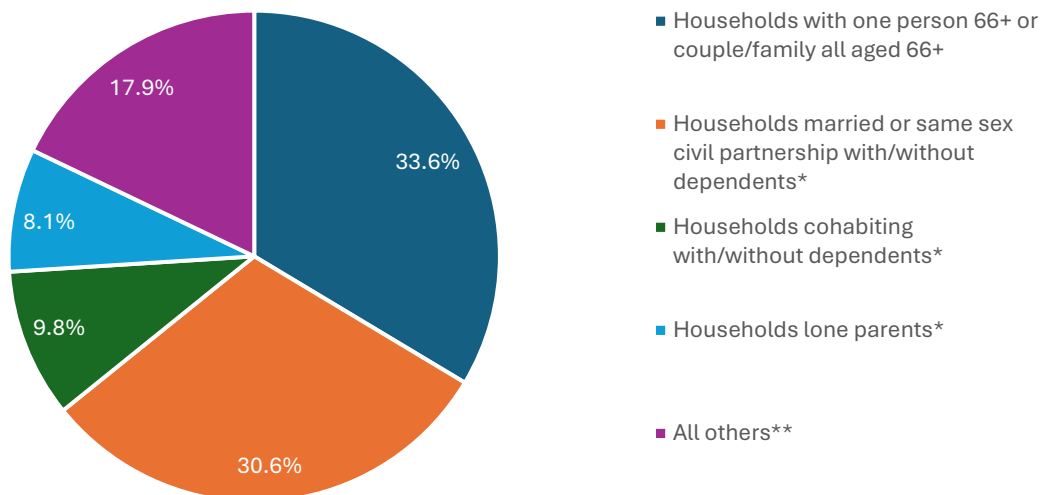


Figure 31 Living arrangements in Dorset

* may include members aged 66+, but not all

** may include households all aged 66+ but not a family

Affordability of housing

The affordability of housing is illustrated in the graphs below, which show the ratio of house prices against workplace-based income between 2003 and 2025. The ratios for Dorset closely mirror those for the South West and England but are substantially higher. This means that homes in Dorset are less affordable to people working in Dorset. The dotted line shows the linear trend over this period, and confirms that affordability has been getting worse in Dorset (along with England and the South West). However, after a peak in 2021, ratios have been falling.¹⁹

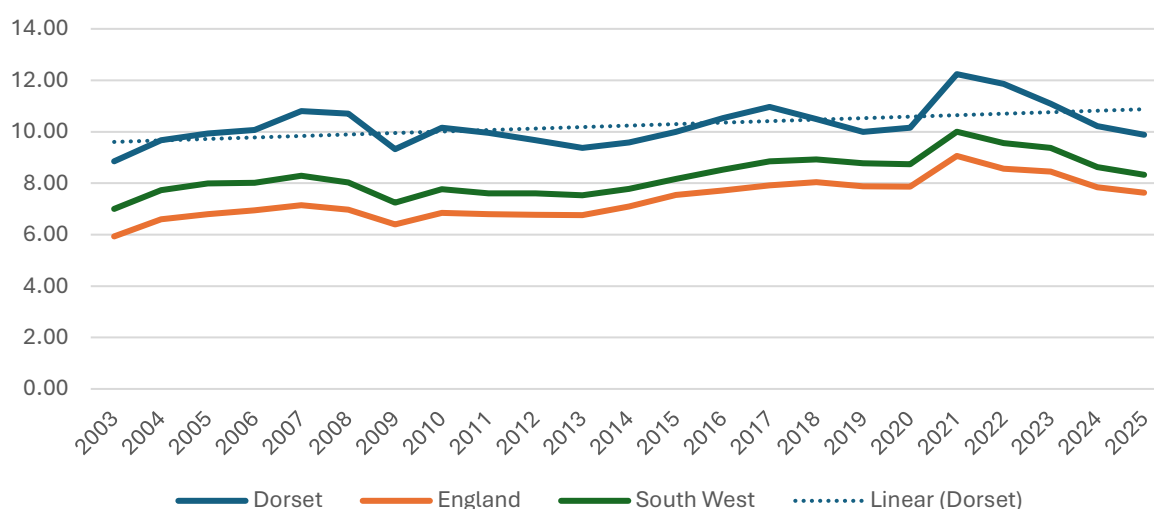


Figure 32 Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings

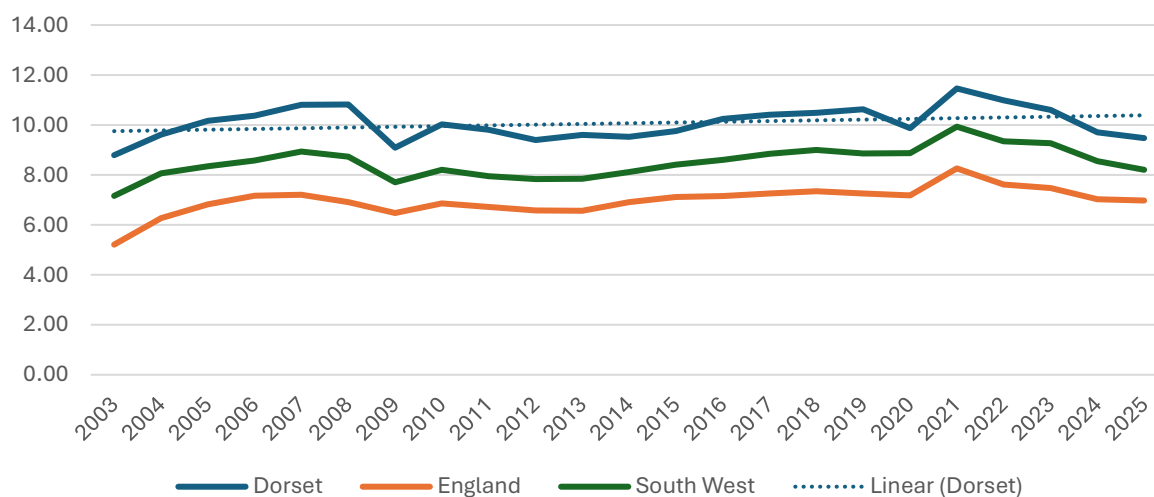


Figure 33 Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual workplace-based earnings

¹⁹ Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

Residential distribution

The map below shows the distribution of residential addresses in Dorset and the wider area as a heatmap. It therefore highlights more densely populated areas such as towns, but also helps to distinguish villages. It helps illustrate the existing distribution of residential properties.

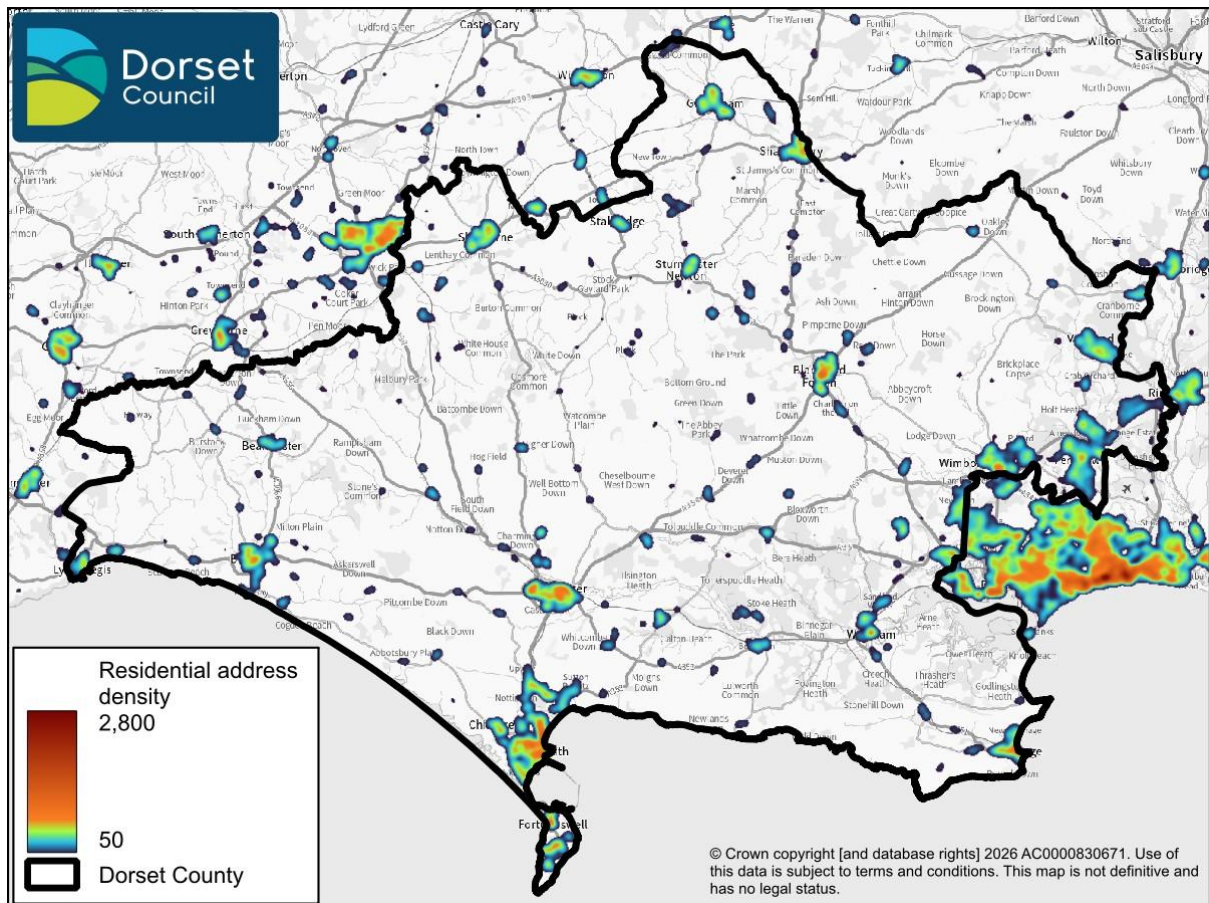


Figure 34 Distribution of residential addresses in and near Dorset

Access and Connectivity

Car or van availability

Most Dorset households have one or two cars or vans. The figures suggest an increase in overall car/van ownership between 2011 and 2021, with fewer households with no or one car/van, and more households with 2 or more cars/vans.

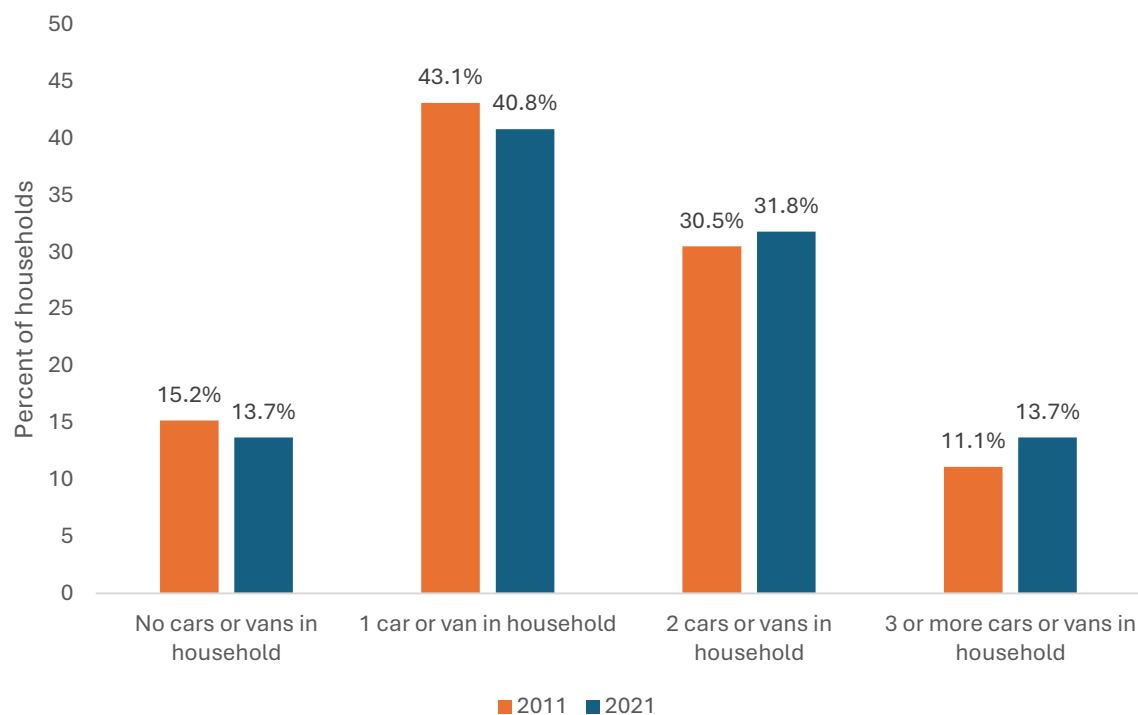


Figure 35 Car or van availability in Dorset in 2021 and 2011

Travel to work

The graph below shows the modes of transport people used to travel to work for 2011 and 2021. Note that the 2021 Census took place during the Covid pandemic, and therefore working practices were likely to be different from normal patterns. For example, people were advised to work from home if they could. This is likely to explain the large increase in the number of people working from home, and the reduction in almost every other mode of transport.

It can also be seen that even in 2011, relatively few people used public transport to travel to work. Only 2.5% travelled by bus in Dorset in 2011, compared to 7.5% in England, and 1.2% by train, compared to 5.3%. The largest percentage of people drove to work (65.3% in 2011 compared to 57% in England). This reflects the rural nature of the area, where there are few frequent public transport routes.

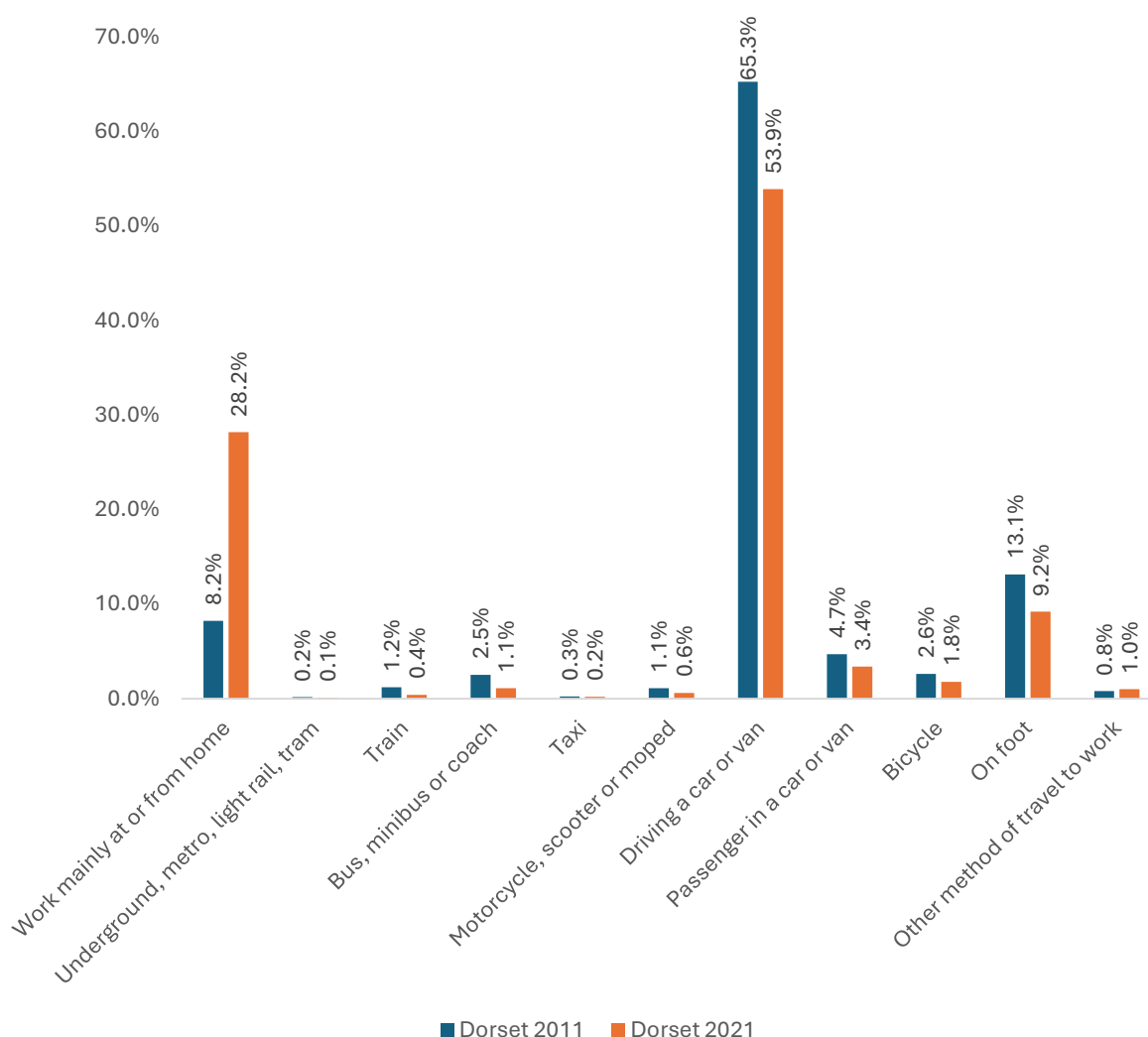


Figure 36 Modes of travel to work used by Dorset residents in 2011 and 2021

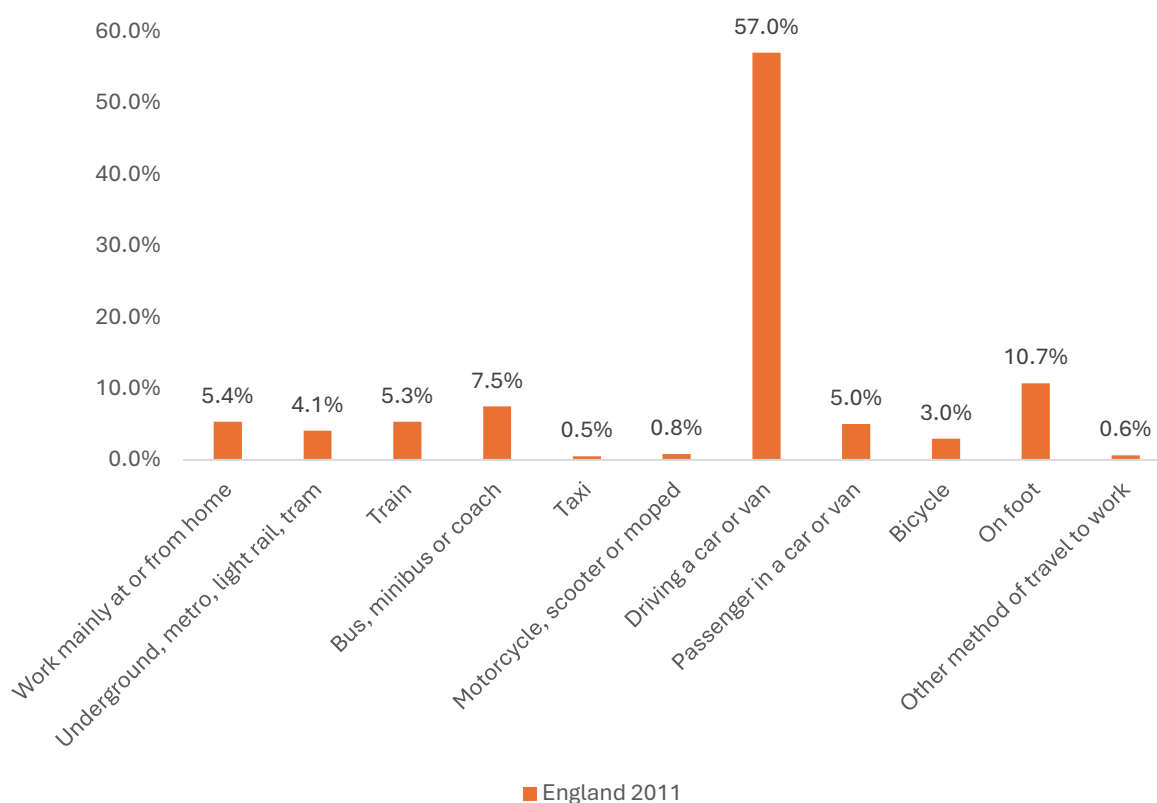


Figure 37 Modes of travel to work used across England in 2011

Travel to work areas

The ONS use data collected from the Census to produce 'Travel to Work areas' (TTWAs). These are areas that represent a level of self-containment in terms of where people both live and work. The main criteria for defining TTWAs are that at least 75% of the area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area. The purpose of these areas is to understand broad commuting patterns.

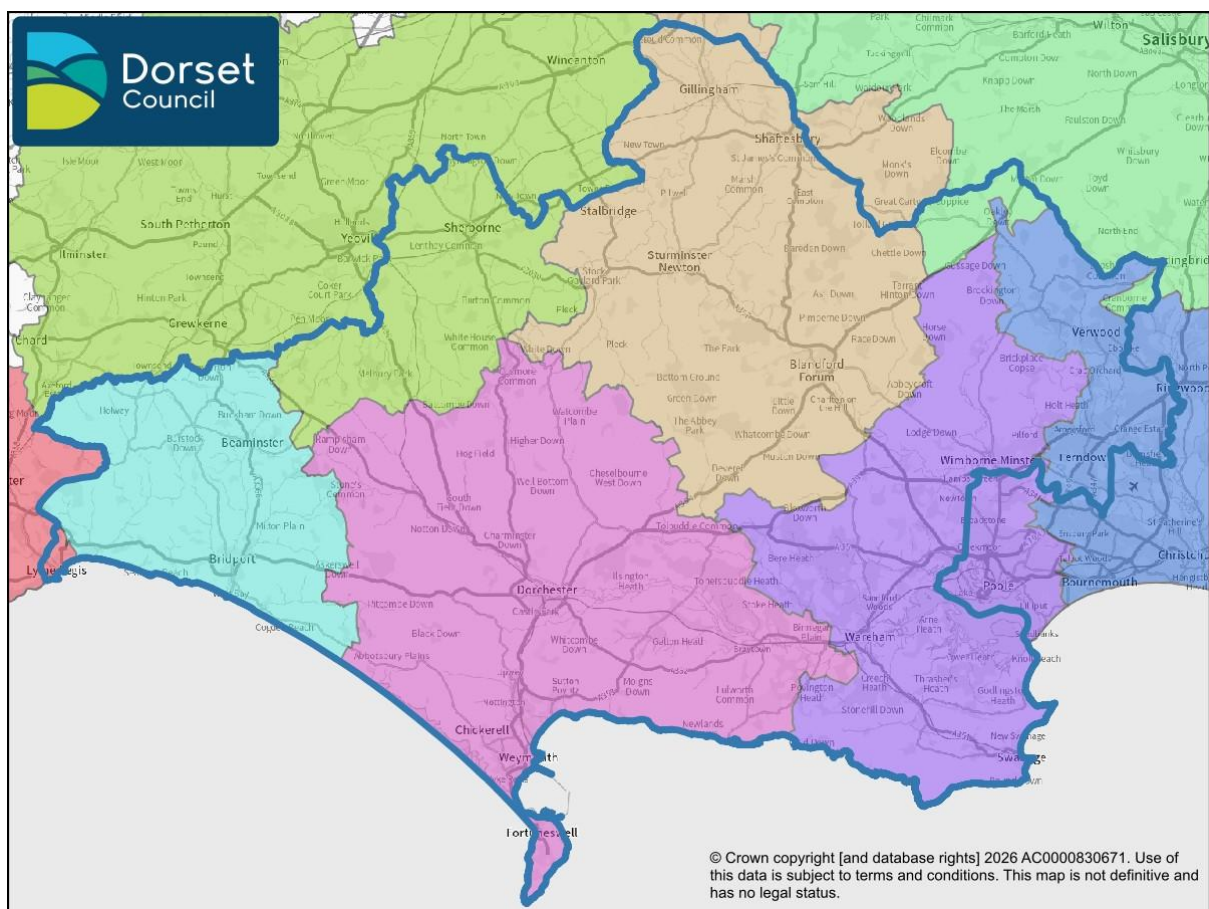
Because the 2021 Census was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic when many more people were working from home, ONS have decided to continue to rely on the TTWAs based on the 2011 Census data. There are 149 TTWAs in England.

There are three TTWAs that are based around settlements in Dorset. These are:

- Dorchester and Weymouth – this covers the central/southern part of Dorset
- Blandford Forum and Gillingham – this covers much of the northern part of Dorset. It extends into Wiltshire to include the villages of Mere and Donhead St Mary / St Andrew
- Bridport – this covers much of the western part of Dorset

There are another five TTWAs that are based around settlements outside of Dorset but cover parts of Dorset. These are:

- Poole – this covers Upton, Corfe Mullen, Wareham, Swanage and Wimborne Minster, and extends to the villages of Bere Regis and Sturminster Marshall
- Bournemouth – this covers Ferndown and Verwood and as far north as Cranborne
- Yeovil – this covers Sherborne and surrounding villages
- Salisbury – this covers Sixpenny Handley and Alderholt
- Sidmouth – this just crosses the boundary in the southwest corner to cover Lyme Regis



Travel to Work Areas 2011

- Blandford Forum and Gillingham
- Bournemouth
- Bridport
- Dorchester and Weymouth

- Poole
- Salisbury
- Sidmouth
- Yeovil

Dorset UA Area

Figure 38 Travel to Work Areas in Dorset

Connectivity

The Department for Transport has produced an online connectivity tool which combines transport and land use data to generate a national measure of connectivity for any location in England and Wales. This connectivity score measures people's ability to get where they want to go. It displays how any location is connected to everyday services by walking, driving, cycling and public transport.²⁰

Connectivity scores vary from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best connected. The settlements in Dorset with the highest overall connectivity scores are:

Table 8 Settlements with highest connectivity scores in Dorset

Settlement	Connectivity score (average)
Dorchester	66
Weymouth	58
Ferndown & West Parley	57
Wimborne & Colehill	57
Blandford	57
Sherborne	57

The map below shows an extract from the online connectivity tool, with Dorset settlements overlaid for context. The orange, yellow and green areas have a higher connectivity score, and the purple and blue areas have lower connectivity scores.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/connectivity-tool>

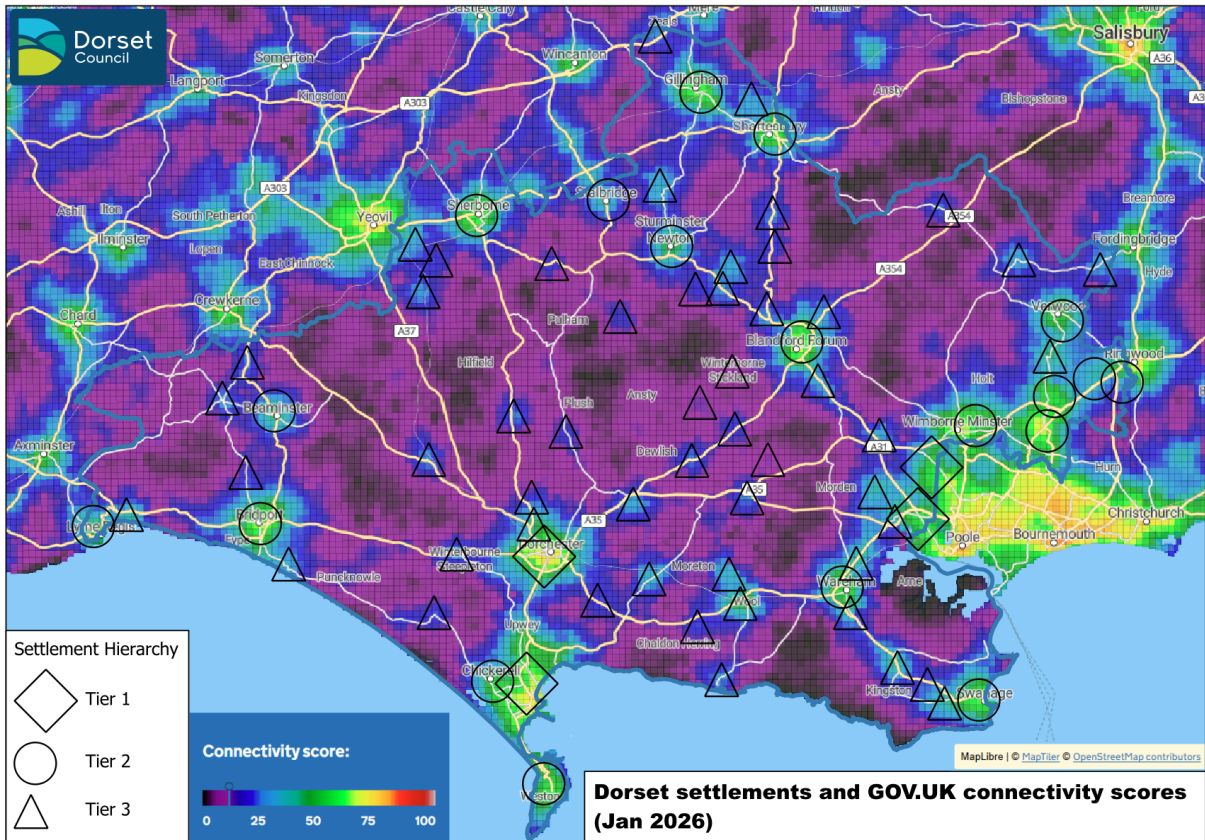


Figure 39 Connectivity Scores

Road

Dorset has no motorways and few dual carriageways. Dorchester, as the county town, sits fairly centrally in Dorset, with main A roads radiating from it in the following directions:

- west (A35 to Bridport, Devon and Cornwall),
- east (A35/A31 to Wimborne, BCP, Hampshire and London via M27),
- south (A354 to Weymouth and Portland),
- northwest (A37 to Yeovil, Taunton and the M5), and
- northeast (A354 to Blandford and Salisbury).

The A350 runs north from BCP to Blandford and Shaftesbury and into Wiltshire and the M4. A small part of the A303 (a trunk road from London to the South West) passes through the northern edge of Dorset near to Gillingham. Other A and B roads (classed as regionally significant in the map below) connect smaller towns and many of the larger villages.

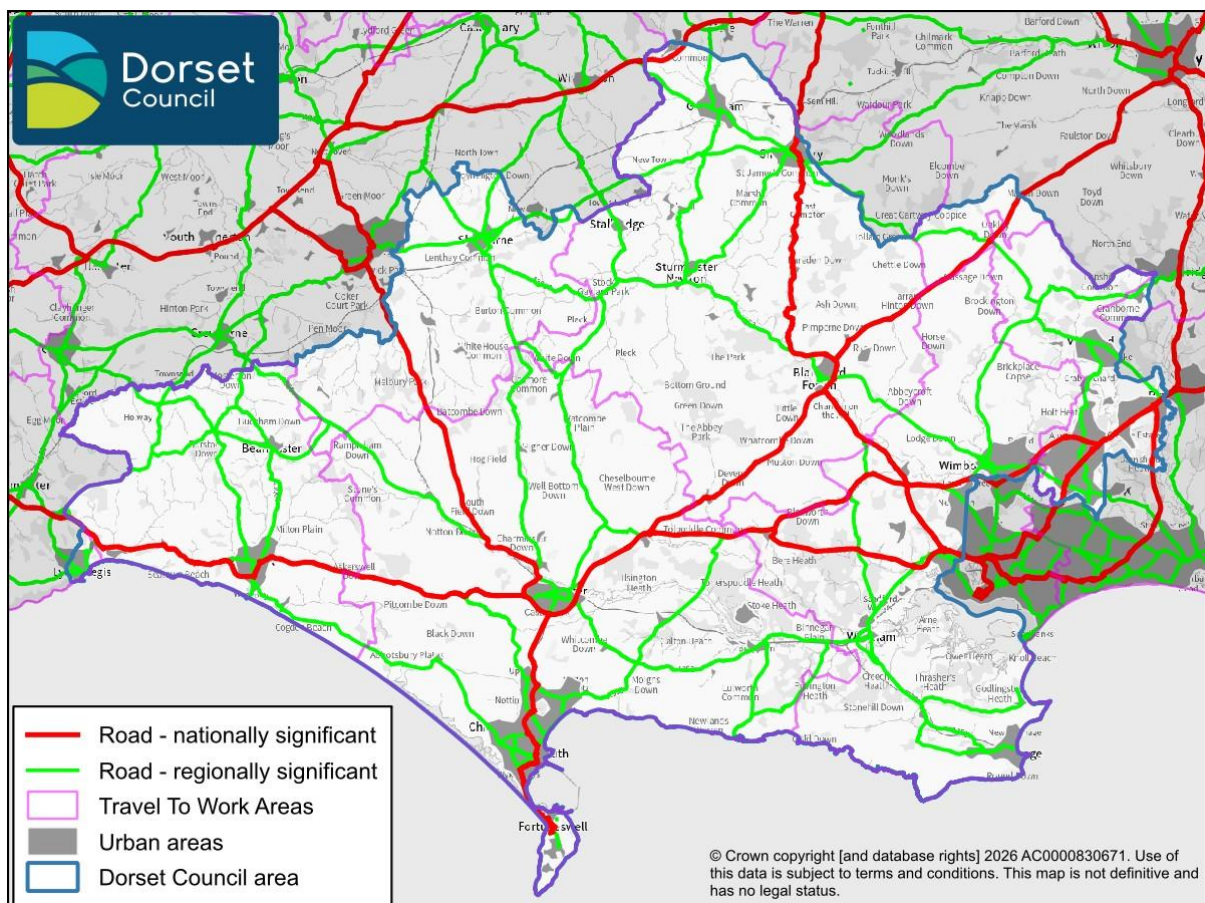


Figure 40 Nationally and regionally significant roads in Dorset

Public electric vehicle chargers

In July 2026, Dorset had 196.4 public electric vehicle chargers per 100,000 people. This is higher than the South West (156.7) and England (172.7).



Figure 41 Public electric vehicle chargers per 100,000 people in Dorset, the South West and England

Rail

There are several main railway lines that pass through Dorset. Weymouth is a terminus. Services from there travel north to Dorchester, where they either continue north to Yeovil, Bath and Bristol, or they head east towards Wool, Wareham, BCP, and ultimately London Waterloo. The London to Exeter line passes through the northern parts of Dorset, with stations at Gillingham and Sherborne. There is not currently a national rail service between Wareham and Swanage in operation, with part of this line being used by a heritage railway.

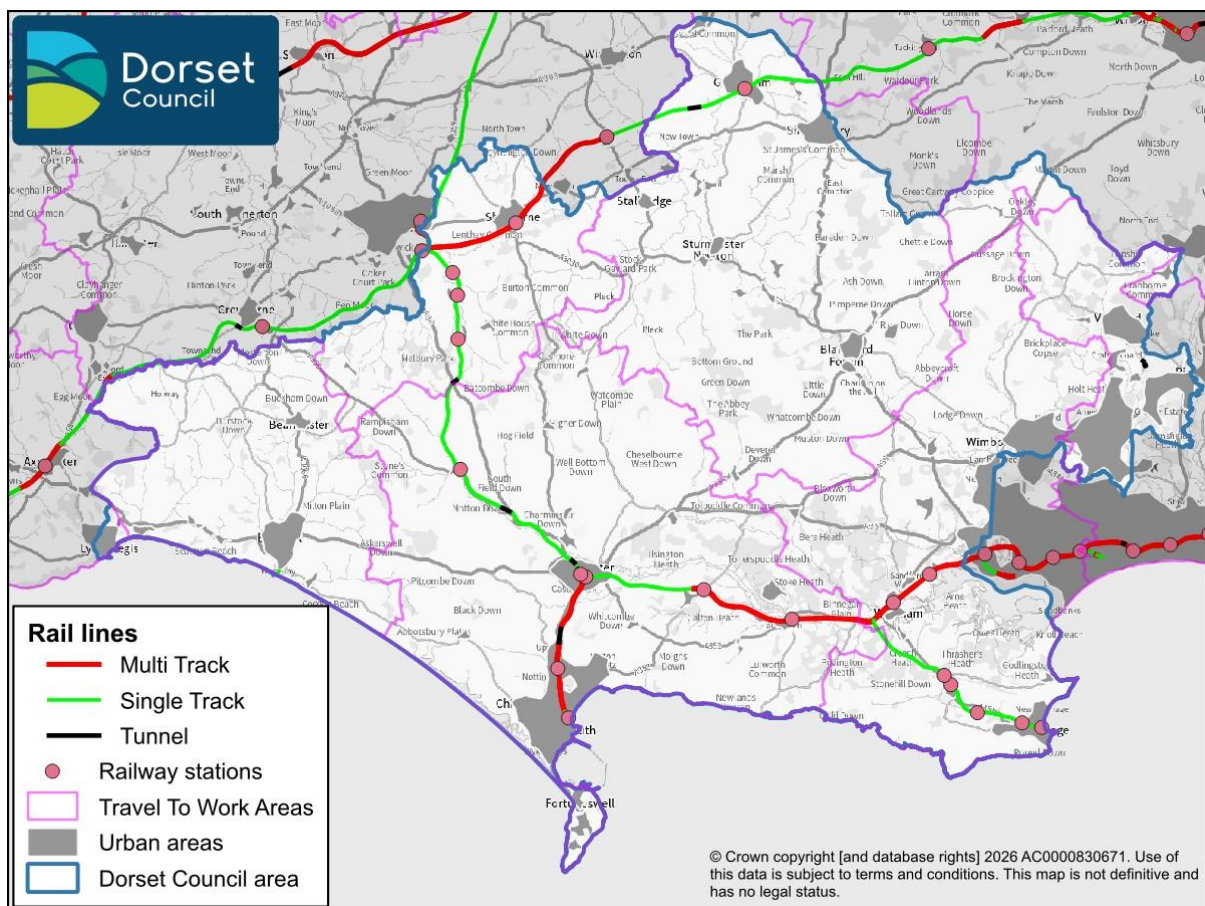


Figure 42 Railways in Dorset

Only 27% of Dorset residents are within a 30 minute walk of their nearest railway station. This is lower than the South West (38%) and England (58%).

Bus network

The bus network in Dorset is run by several operators, including Morebus and First Bus. The Core Route (CR) network forms the backbone of rural bus connectivity across the large and sparsely populated county. These routes connect towns, villages and rail stations, helping people access work, education, healthcare and essential services. The Core Route services are:

- CR2: Gillingham - Shaftesbury
- CR3: Sturminster Newton - Gillingham
- CR4: Blandford - Yeovil
- CR5: Dorchester - Yeovil
- CR6: Bridport - Yeovil
- CR7: Blandford - Shaftesbury
- CR8: Blandford - Weymouth
- CR9: Blandford - Dorchester
- 20: Blandford – Salisbury

The map below shows the main bus routes across Dorset.

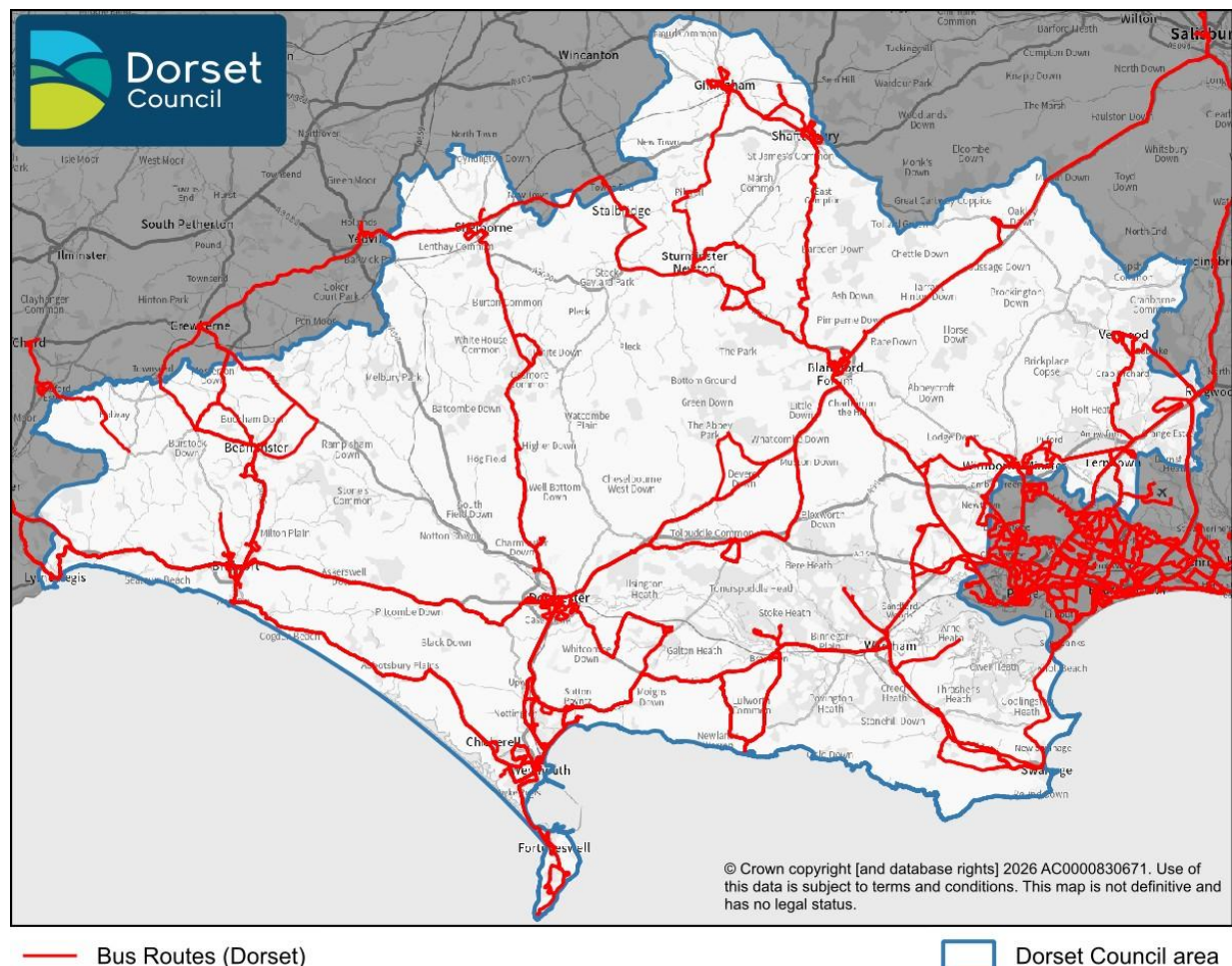


Figure 43 Bus routes

Cycleway Network

While cyclists can use public roads, many roads are too busy to be considered safe by most cyclists. The cycleway network, as shown in the map below, is intended to give a good indication to members of the public of where they can cycle safely. In particular, it suggests longer routes that join together towns, such as routes between Dorchester and Bridport, Wareham and Weymouth, and Blandford and Sturminster Newton.

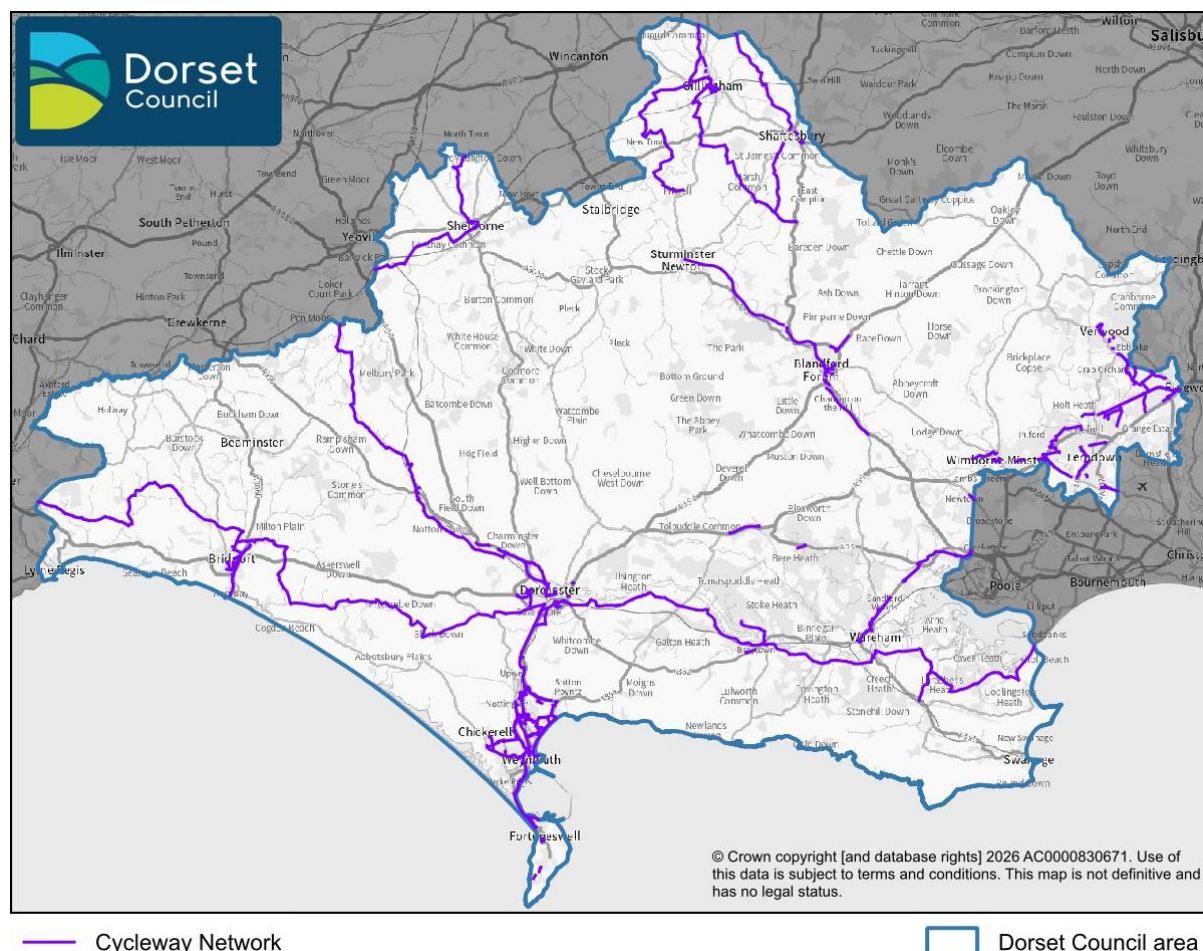


Figure 44 Cycleway network

Broadband and mobile coverage

Over three quarters of premises (76.7%) have access to gigabit-capable broadband. This is lower than the South West (80.6%) and England (88.4%)²¹.

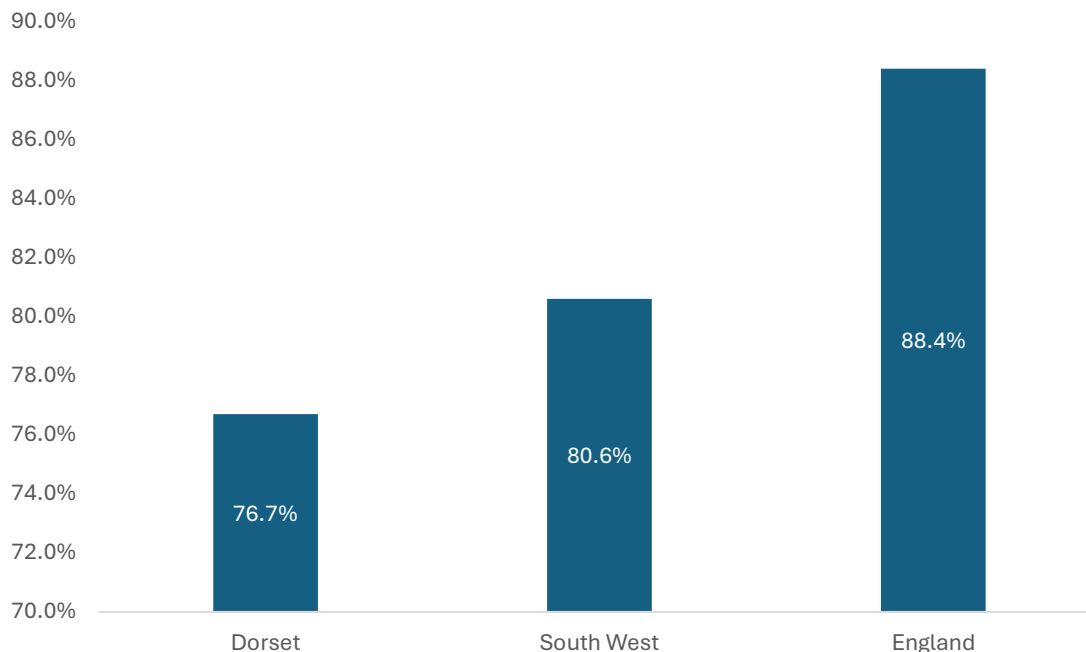


Figure 45 Premises with gigabit-capable broadband in Dorset, the South West and England

In January 2026, ONS identified that 99.9% of the geographic area of Dorset has a 4G signal outdoors from at least 1 operator²¹. This measure uses a signal-strength threshold of -105 dBm and therefore includes locations at the margins of coverage, where the service experienced may be less reliable.

²¹ Data from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/areas/E06000059-dorset/indicators#connectivity>

In January 2026, ONS identified 84.0% of the geographic area of Dorset has a 5G signal outdoors from at least 1 operator, using the – 105 dBm threshold. This is more than the South West (78.1%) but lower than England (87.6%)²¹.

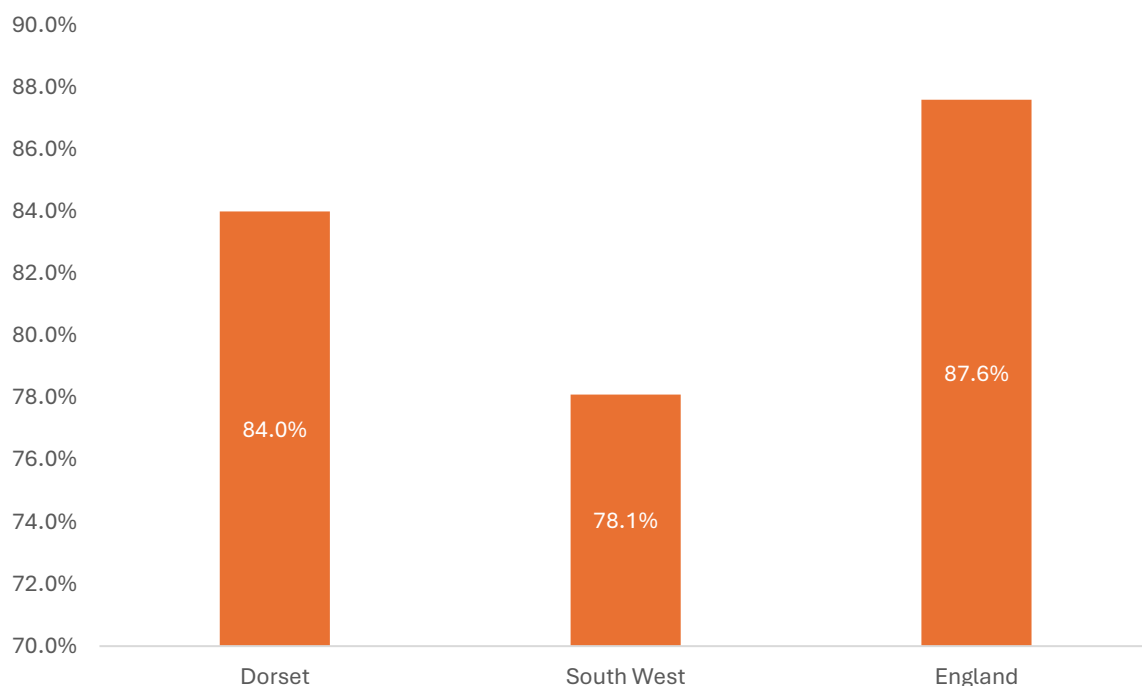


Figure 46 Geographic area with 5G signal outdoors from at least 1 operator in Dorset, the South West and England

A separate Ofcom measure identified only 57% of the area was expected to have coverage from all four of the main providers indoors in 2025, using the -95 dBm threshold which indicates stronger or more dependable outdoor coverage. This is slightly lower than the coverage across England as a whole (59%)²².

Dorset Council is working with Streetwave to better understand coverage, street-by-street.²³

²² Data from <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/coverage-and-speeds/connected-nations-interactive-report-2025>.

²³ <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/mobile-connectivity-and-coverage>

Economy and Skills

Local business units

Dorset has around 20,500 local business units. The largest sectors are wholesale, retail and repair with 3,200 businesses (15.60%), construction with 2,900 (14.14%), and professional, scientific and technical activities with 2,390 (11.65%). Together, these three sectors account for just over two-fifths of all businesses. Agriculture, forestry and fishing is also significant, with 2,030 businesses (9.90%), followed by accommodation and food services with 1,615 (7.87%).

Table 9 Local business units in Dorset by sector

	Total	Percentage
Total businesses	20,515	-
Wholesale, retail and repair	3,200	15.60%
Construction	2,900	14.14%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2,390	11.65%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,030	9.90%
Accommodation and food services	1,615	7.87%
Administrative and support service activities	1,430	6.97%
Manufacturing	1,260	6.14%
Information and communications	985	4.80%
Human health and social work activities	945	4.61%
Real estate activities	805	3.92%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	635	3.10%
Transportation and storage	490	2.39%
Education	430	2.10%
Financial and insurance activities	330	1.61%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	230	1.12%
Water, sewerage and waste management	95	0.46%
Electricity, gas, steam and air	30	0.15%
Mining and quarrying	20	0.10%

Source: UK Business: Activity, Size and Location (2025), ONS

Business size bands

Small firms form the vast majority of Dorset's businesses. Of 20,515 local business units, 17,560 (85.6%) are micro-businesses with fewer than 10 employees. A further 2,535 (12.4%) are small businesses (10 to 49 employees), 380 (1.9%) are medium-sized (50 to 249 employees), and only 40 (0.2%) are large businesses with 250 or more employees.²⁴

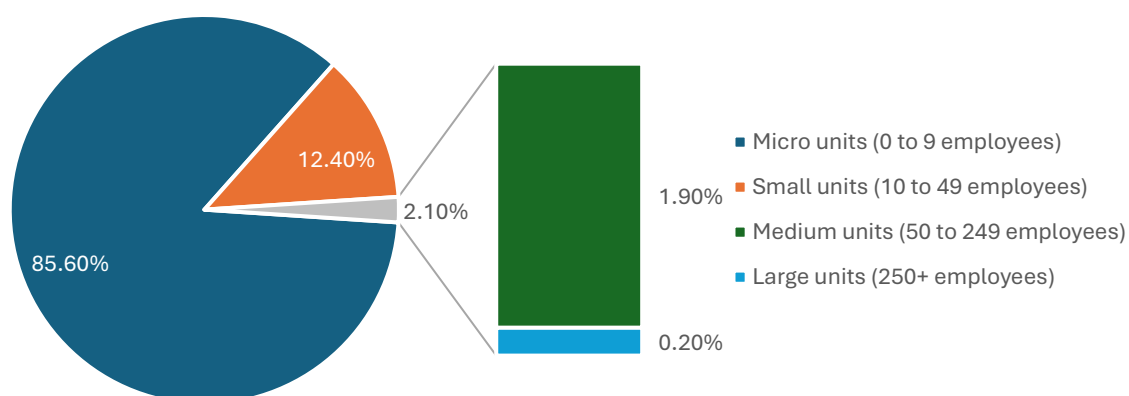


Figure 47 Local business units in Dorset by size band

Source: UK Business: Activity, Size and Location (2025), ONS

²⁴ Data from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lad/1778384952/report.aspx>

Employment of workers by sector in area

Dorset has 151,000 workers across all industries. The largest sectors are wholesale, retail and repair, employing 22,000 workers (14.6%); human health and social work, 20,000 (13.2%); and accommodation and food services, 19,000 (12.6%).

Manufacturing accounts for 16,000 workers (10.6%) and education for 14,000 (9.3%). Together, these five sectors provide around 60% of employment.

Table 10 Employment of workers in Dorset by sector

	Total	Percentage
All industries	151,000	-
Wholesale, retail and repair	22,000	14.6%
Human health and social work activities	20,000	13.2%
Accommodation and food services	19,000	12.6%
Manufacturing	16,000	10.6%
Education	14,000	9.3%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	13,000	8.6%
Construction	9,000	6.0%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	8,000	5.3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7,500	5.0%
Administrative and support service activities	6,000	4.0%
Information and communications	4,500	3.0%
Transportation and storage	3,500	2.3%
Real estate activities	3,000	2.0%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,500	1.7%
Financial and insurance activities	1,500	1.0%
Water, sewerage and waste management	1,250	0.8%
Mining and quarrying	225	0.1%
Electricity, gas, steam and air	35	0.0%

Source: BRES (2024), ONS

Jobs density

In 2024 there were 187,000 jobs in Dorset. This includes employees, self-employed, government-supported trainees and HM Forces.

Jobs density is the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64. The jobs density in Dorset is the same as the wider South West. It is higher than the national average.²⁵

Table 11 Jobs density in 2024

Jobs Density	
Dorset	0.88
South West	0.88
Great Britain	0.85

Unemployment

In August 2026, 2.3% of people in Dorset aged 16 to 64 were claiming unemployment benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit). The rate is lower than the South West (2.7%) and nationally (3.9%). The number of claimants peaked between 2020 and 2021 which coincides with the Covid-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions. While the rate of claimants has fallen since then, it is still higher than the period immediately before the pandemic.

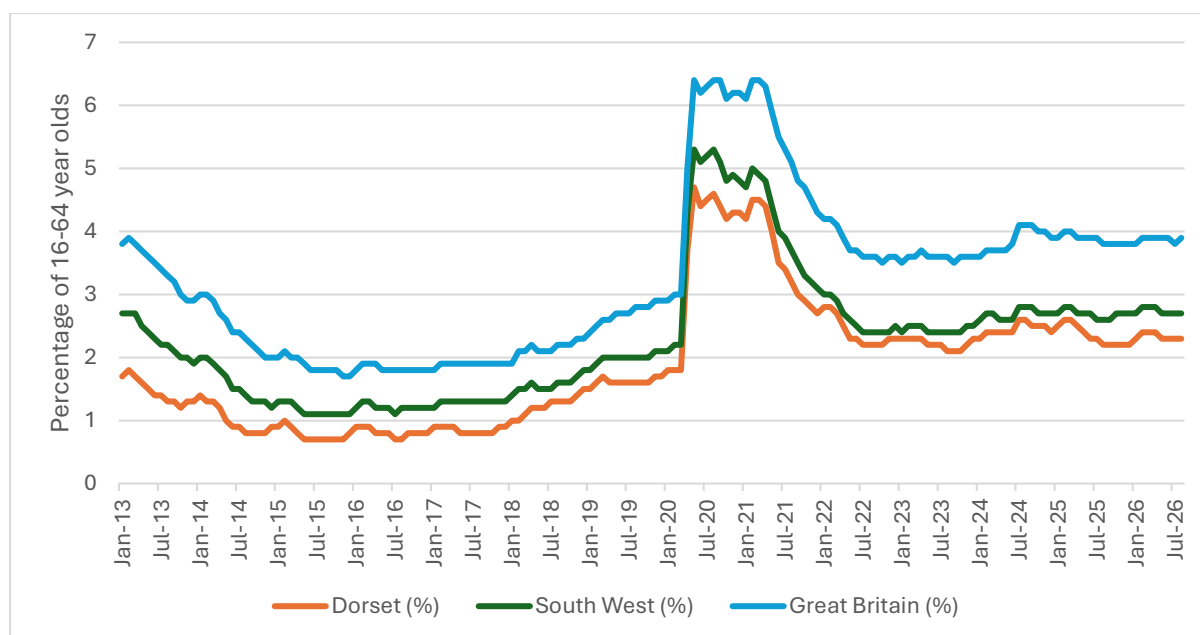


Figure 48 Rate of claimants for unemployment benefits

²⁵ Data from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lad/1778384952/report.aspx>

Workless households

A workless household is one that has at least one person aged 16 to 64, and with no adults in employment. These members may be unemployed or economically inactive. Economically inactive members may be unavailable to work because of family commitments, retirement or study, or unable to work through sickness or disability.

Dorset has fewer workless households as a proportion than the South West or nationally.

Table 12 Workless households in Dorset, the South West and England in 2025²⁶

	Dorset	South West	Great Britain
Number of Workless Households	11,100	212,700	3,009,200
% Households that are Workless	10.7%	12.1%	14.4%

Skills

Dorset's workforce is weighted towards higher-skilled employment, with 44.3% of occupations classed as high skill, 40.5% as intermediate skill and 15.1% as low skill.

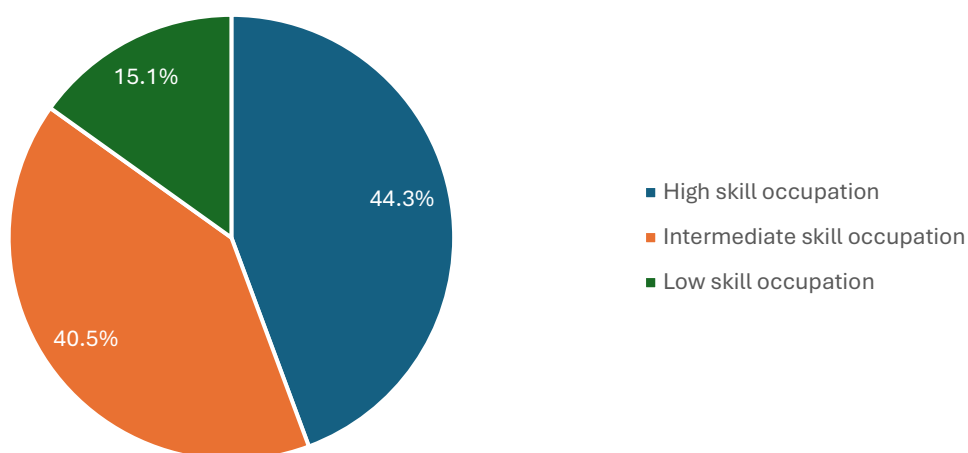


Figure 49 Skill level of occupations in Dorset

²⁶ Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lad/1778384952/report.aspx#workless>

Gross weekly full-time earnings

Gross weekly full-time earnings are below the Great Britain figure of £767: Dorset residents earn £737, compared with £734 in the South West. At the same time, people working in Dorset earn £709, compared with £729 in the South West. The difference in what residents in Dorset earn and what workers in Dorset earn suggests that many of Dorset’s residents must travel out of Dorset in order to access higher paid jobs.

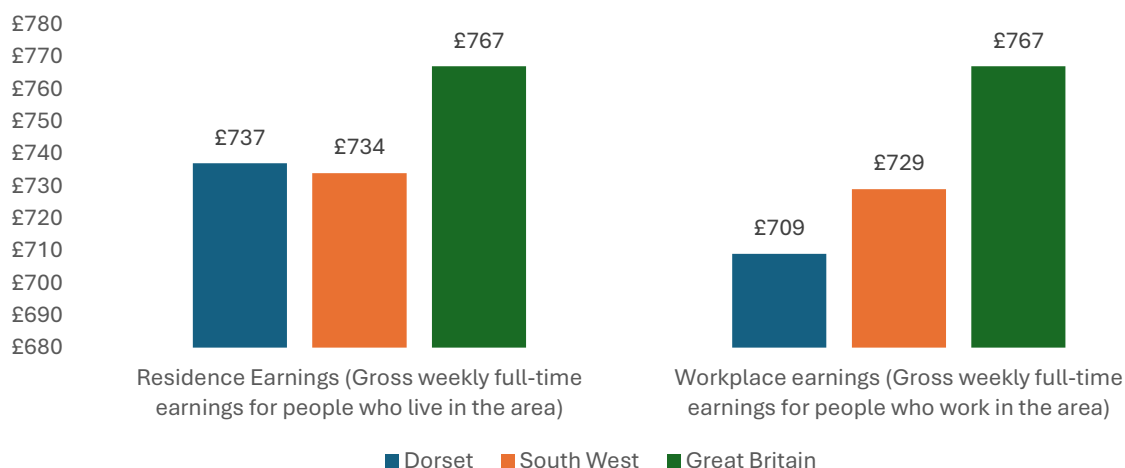


Figure 50 Gross weekly full-time earnings of people that live or work in Dorset, the South West and Great Britain

Source: *Employee earnings in the UK (2025), ONS*

Enterprise Zones

Enterprise Zones are designated areas aimed at stimulating economic growth by offering incentives to businesses to establish or expand their operations within them. There are currently 48 Enterprise Zones in England. Dorset Innovation Park, near to Wool, is Dorset’s only Enterprise Zone. It also has a Local Development Order (LDO) which grants permitted development rights for certain types of development.

Retail

Comparison shopping

Comparison goods are durable goods that are bought less frequently, and include items such as clothing, furniture and electrical products.

43.5% of Dorset's spending on comparison goods is online. In contrast, the average across the UK is only 32.1%.

Dorchester only captures 3.1% of Dorset's total spending on comparison goods, despite being Dorset's most popular town centre for comparison shopping.

This suggests that Dorset's town centres compete with online retailers and larger centres outside the Council area.

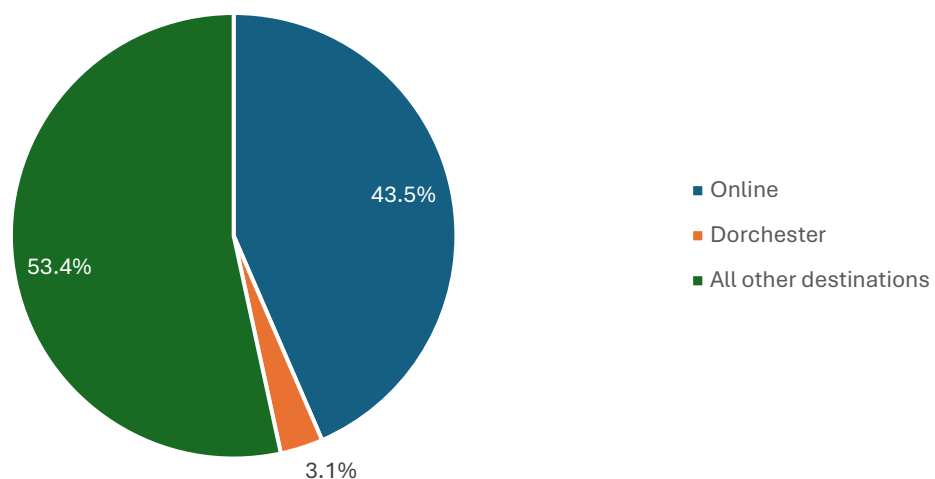


Figure 51 Comparison shopping spending by Dorset

Source: Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update (2026)

Food and grocery shopping

Grocery shopping tends to remain relatively local, but a substantial amount takes place outside town centres. The Dorset Functional Areas, shown on the map below, are used to understand convenience spending in four parts of Dorset.

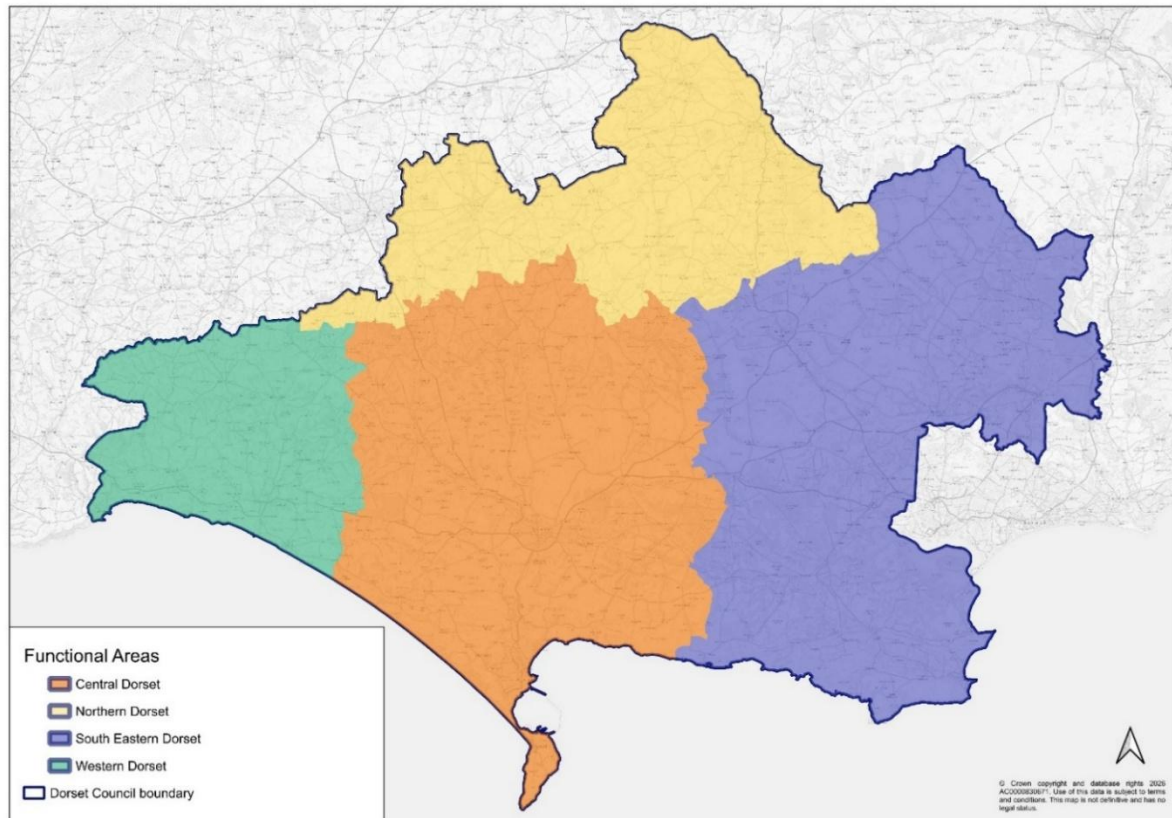


Figure 52 Functional areas in Dorset

As an example, out-of-centre stores in Dorchester attract 17.1% of available convenience spending in the central functional area (which is focused on Dorchester and Weymouth), while the out-of-centre Mercery Road in Weymouth attracts 13.2% of the spending in this area.

By comparison, Waitrose in Dorchester town centre attracts 5.5% of the convenience spending in the central area.

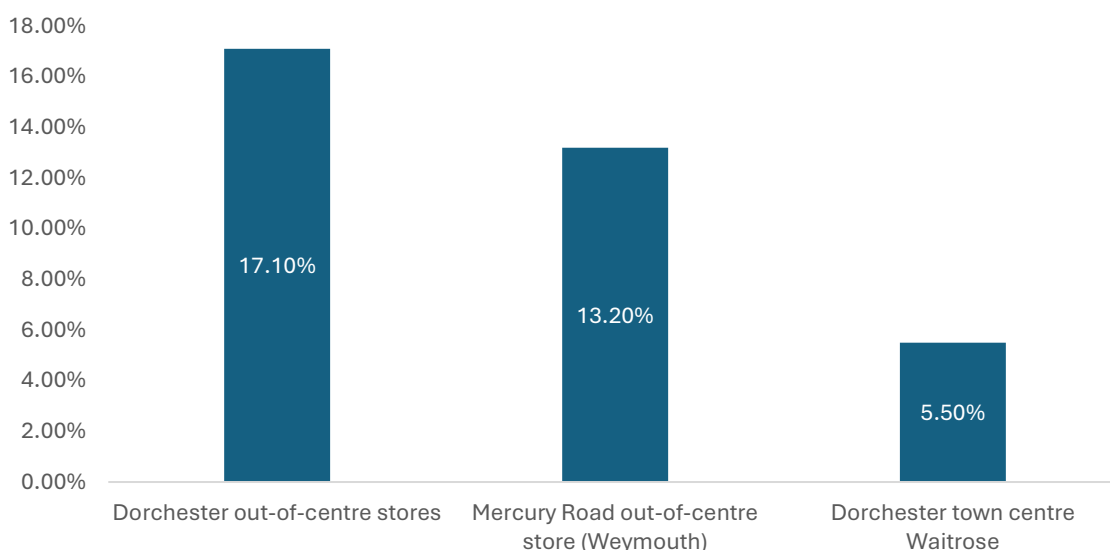


Figure 53 Example shares of convenience spending in Central Dorset Functional Area

There are some parts of Dorset where a larger proportion of convenience spending is spent in town centres. In the northern functional area, 26.2% of available convenience spend was spent in Shaftesbury and Gillingham.

Source: *Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update (2026)*

Visitor spending

Some centres are particularly reliant on visitor spending. In Lyme Regis, West Bay and Swanage, more than half of comparison-goods spending comes from people who live outside Dorset.

Source: *Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update (2026)*

Seasonal footfall

Footfall is highly seasonal in some centres. Between February and August 2024, sampled footfall increased by approximately:

- 145.0% on Weymouth Esplanade, from 39,695 to 97,242 movements.
- 129.0% in Lyme Regis, from 48,050 to 110,038.
- 100.7% in Swanage, from 84,897 to 170,378.

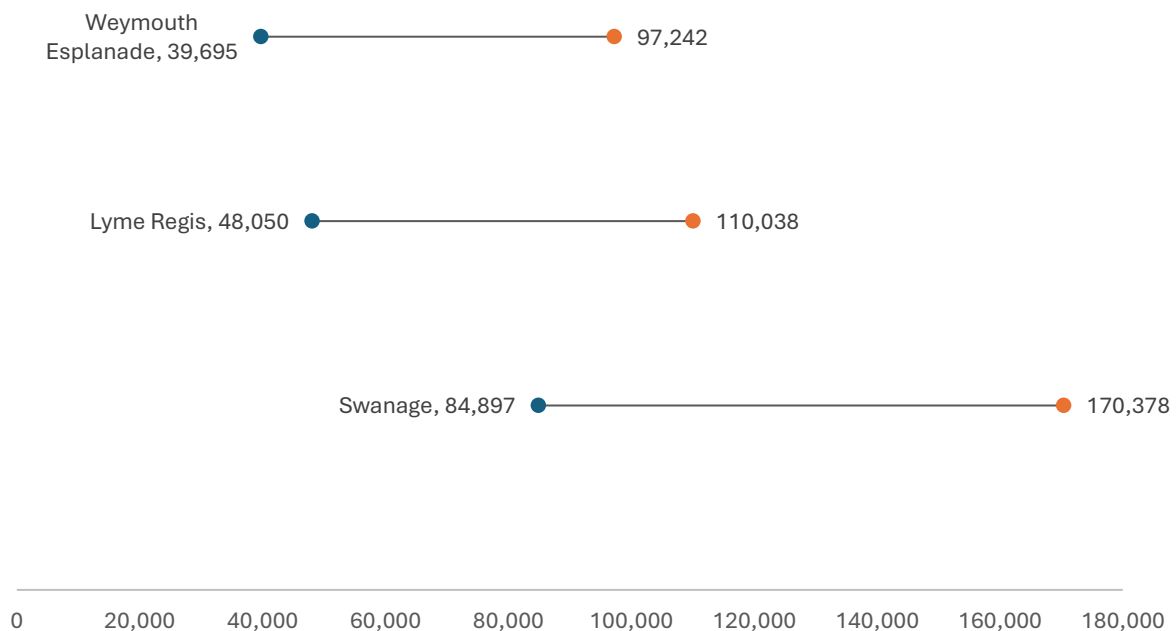


Figure 54 Increase in footfall in select Dorset centres between February and August 2024

Source: *Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update (2026)*

Vacancy rates

Dorchester's vacancy rate is higher than average and higher than in many other parts of Dorset. More than 10,000 square metres of floorspace is vacant, including some large and prominent units.

Source: *Dorset Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study Update (2026)*

Deprivation

Index of Multiple Deprivation: Background

The government publishes the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The most recent IMD was published in November 2025.²⁷ It measures relative levels of deprivation in lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs) in England. LSOAs have an average population of 1,500. There are 223 LSOAs in Dorset.

There are 7 domains of deprivation, which combine to create the IMD 2025:

- Income (22.5%): Measures the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income.
- Employment (22.5%): Measures the proportion of working age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market.
- Education (13.5%): Measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- Health (13.5%): Measures the risk of premature death and impairment of life quality through poor physical/mental health.
- Crime (9.3%): Measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- Barriers to housing and services (9.3%): Measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services.
- Living environment (9.3%): Measures the quality of both the 'indoor' and 'outdoor' local environment.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation can be used to:

- compare small areas across England
- identify the most deprived small areas
- explore the domains (or types) of deprivation
- compare larger administrative areas e.g. local authorities
- look at changes in relative deprivation between iterations (changes in ranks)

It cannot be used to:

- quantify how deprived a small area is
- identify deprived people
- say how affluent a place is
- compare with small areas in other UK countries
- measure absolute change in deprivation over time

²⁷ [English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release - GOV.UK](#)

Overall measure of deprivation

Dorset is one of the lesser deprived local authority areas. Out of 296 local authorities, Dorset comes 180th based on rank of average score (with 1st being the most deprived local authority area). However, within that overall picture, there are pockets of deprivation. The map below shows lower layer super output areas (LSOAs) in Dorset, along with how deprived they are based on a national ranking. The areas that are most deprived nationally are shown in red or dark orange. The areas that are least deprived are shown in green or blue.

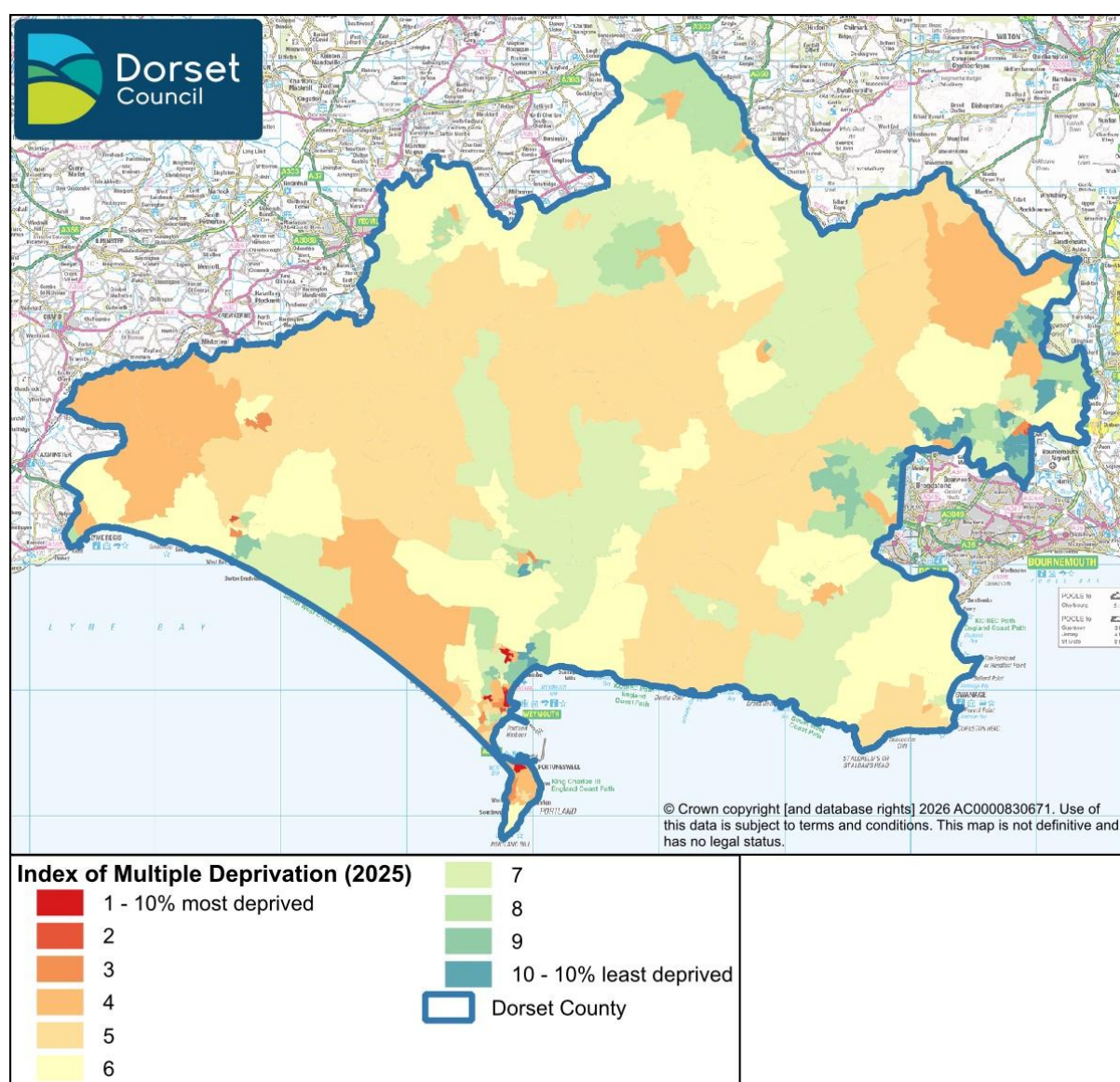


Figure 55 Overall deprivation in Dorset LSOAs

Because it is difficult to make out the small areas of deprivation in the map, the 20 most deprived areas in Dorset are listed in the table below. The first nine of these fall within the 20% most deprived areas in England. Seven of these areas are within Weymouth and Portland, one is in Bridport and the other in Ferndown.

Table 13 The 20 most deprived areas in Dorset

Lower layer Super Output Area	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Rank (where 1 is most deprived)
Littlemoor West	1056*
Fortuneswell North	1985*
Melcombe Regis Park District	2172*
Melcombe Regis Town Centre	2720*
Westham North Westhaven	2967*
Rodwell and Chapelhay	3739†
Melcombe Regis Carlton Road	4805†
Bridport Court Orchard	5560†
Ferndown Tricketts Cross East	6662†
Westham East Knightsdale Road	6829
Weston West	7453
Bridport Skilling	7706
Fordington East	9388
Beaminster South	9492
Ferndown Tricketts Cross	9592
Wyke Square	9958
Sherborne East Gryphon	10283
Three Legged Cross	10339
Littlemoor East	10462
Weymouth West Doncaster Rd	10630

* within the 10% most deprived areas in England

† within the 20% most deprived areas in England

Dorset Council

Deprivation - Barriers to Housing and Services

1 - 10% most deprived
2
3
4
5
6

7
8
9
10 - 10% least deprived

Dorset County

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65

Natural Environment

National Landscapes

A **National Landscape**, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is an area of land that has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value. There are 38 national landscapes in England and Wales.

More than half (56%) of the Dorset Council area is designated as National Landscape. The council area includes the **Dorset National Landscape** and part of the **Cranborne Chase National Landscape**. The latter extends further north into Wiltshire and parts of Somerset and Hampshire.

Immediately adjacent to the west side of Dorset is the East Devon National Landscape. The Blackdown Hills National Landscape (in Devon and Somerset) also is less than 2km from the west side of Dorset. Near to Dorset's eastern boundary is the New Forest National Park, which at its closest is about 130 metres from Dorset.

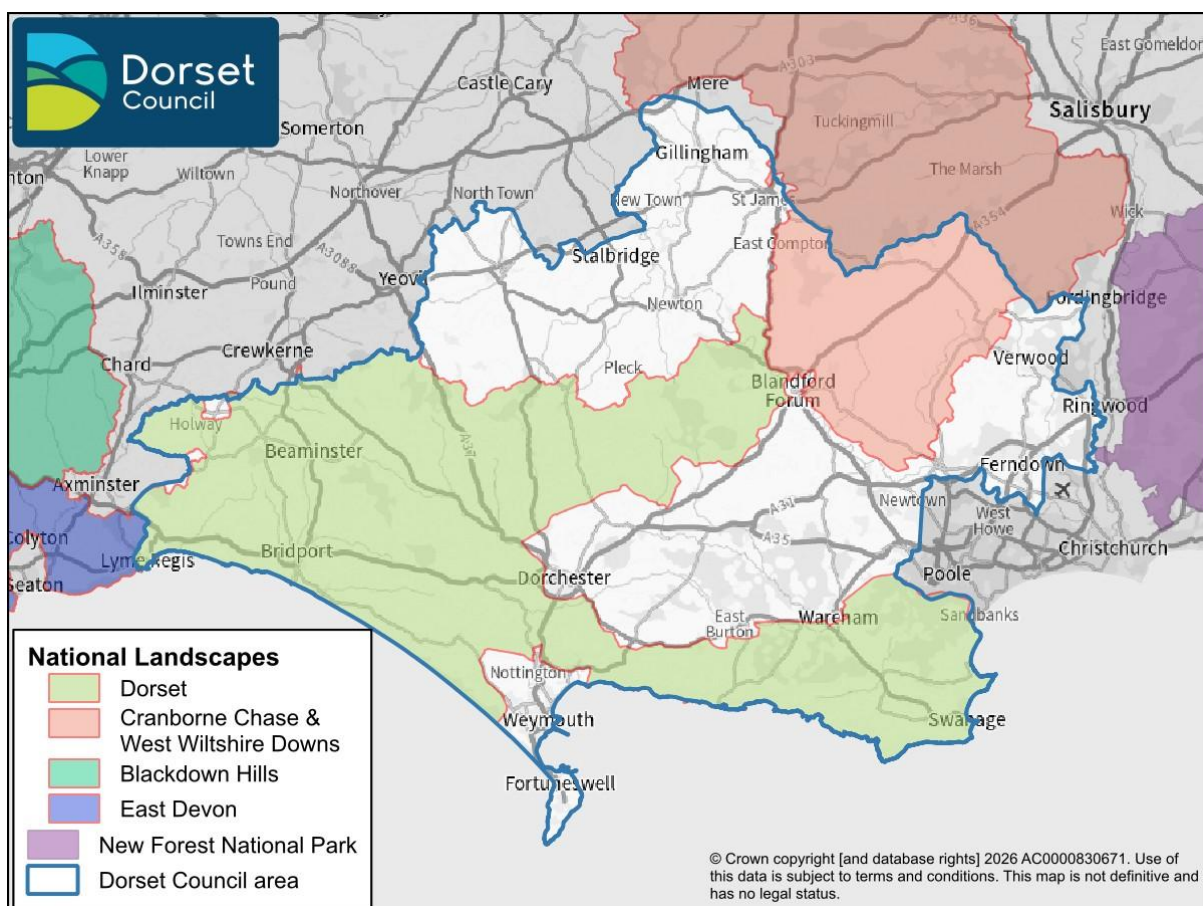


Figure 57 National Landscapes in and near Dorset and the New Forest National Park

Green Belt

Green Belt is a nationally recognised planning designation with the objective of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

In Dorset, Green Belt is defined in and around the southeast conurbation and extends out to settlements such as Wareham in the west and Verwood in the north. It covers approximately 249 sq km within the Dorset Council area, which is just under 10% of the total area.

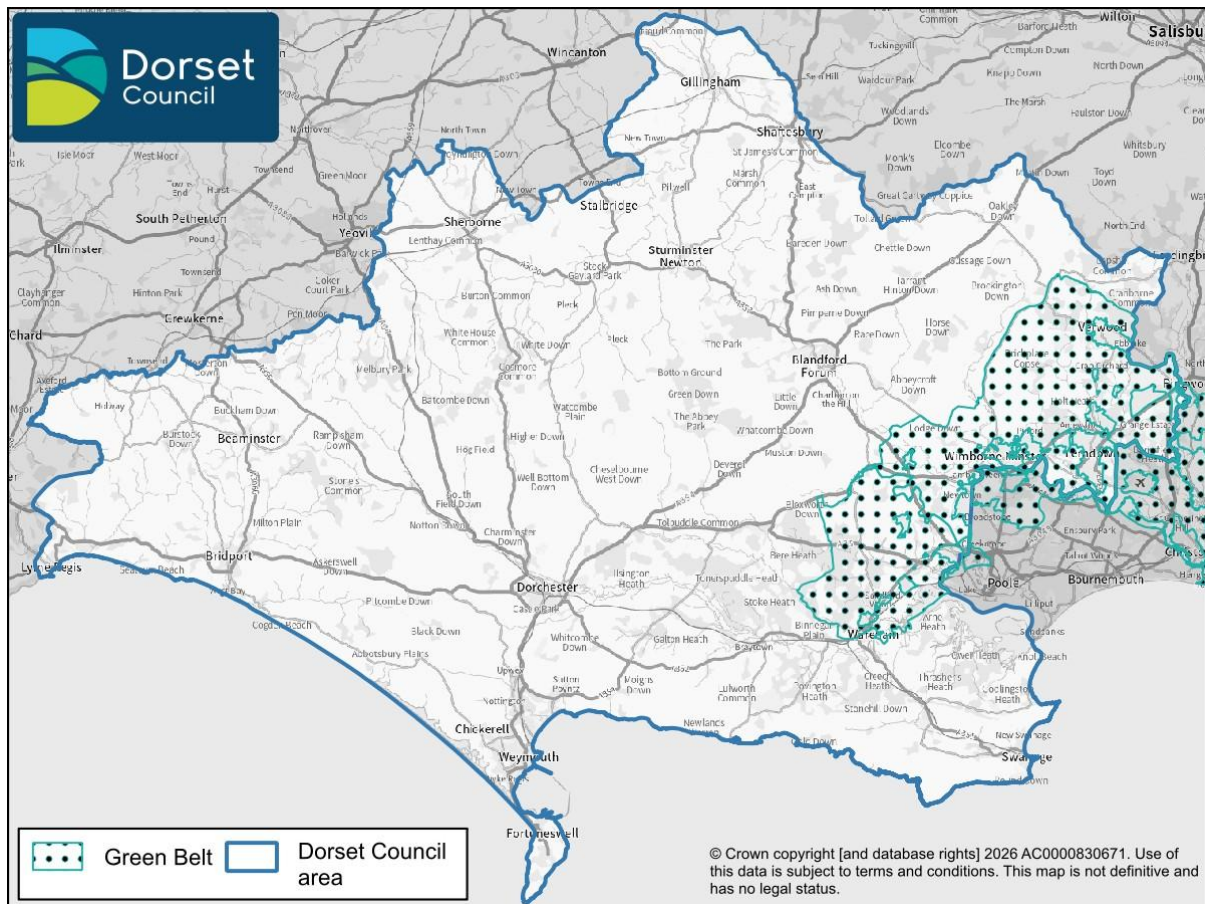


Figure 58 Green Belt in Dorset

World Heritage Site

World Heritage Sites are landmarks and areas with legal protection under an international treaty administered by UNESCO for having cultural, historical, or scientific significance. The sites are judged to contain “cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity”.

The Dorset and East Devon Coast, known as the Jurassic Coast, is a *natural* UNESCO World Heritage Site. It extends for 155 km and includes almost the entire Dorset coastline from Lyme Regis in the west to Studland in the east. The cliff exposures along the Dorset and East Devon coast provide an almost continuous sequence of rock formations spanning the Mesozoic Era, or some 185 million years of the earth's history.²⁸

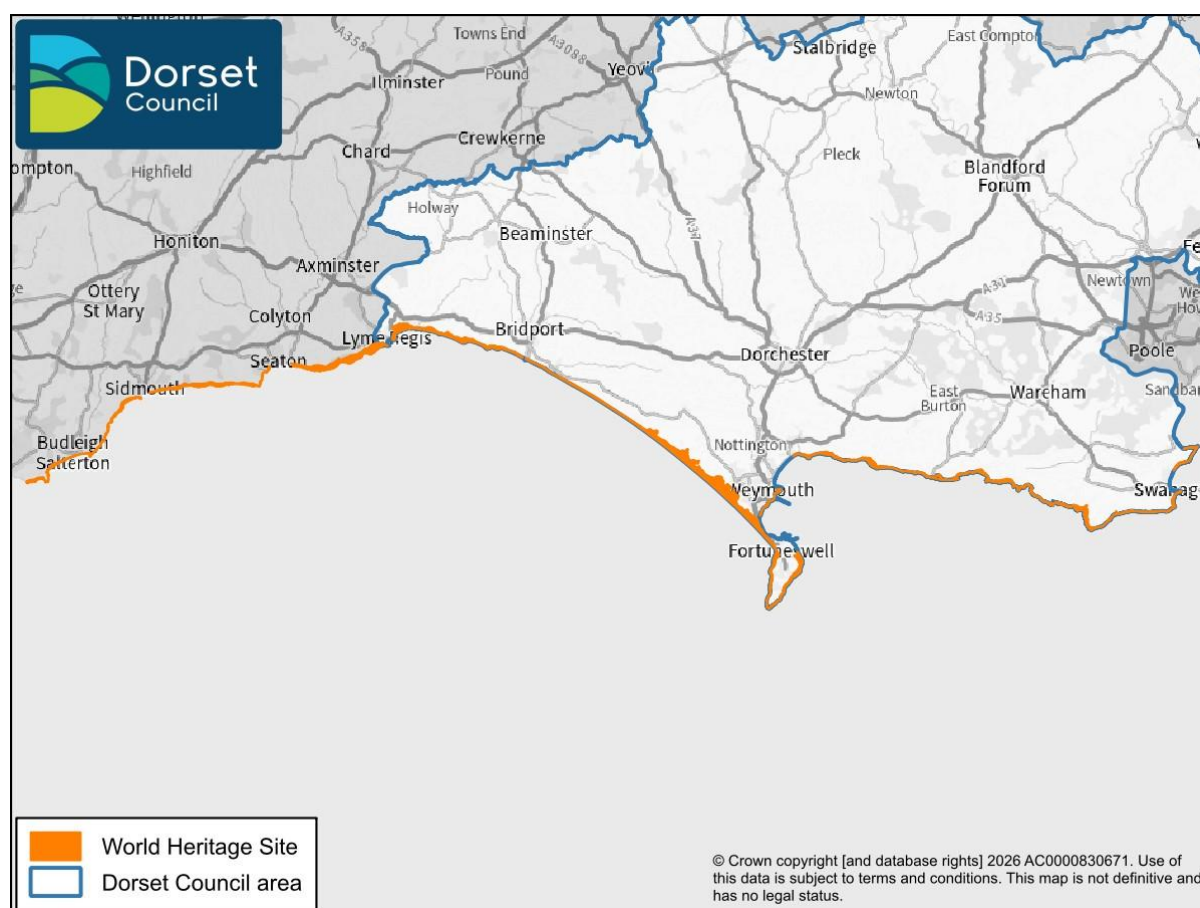


Figure 59 Jurassic Coast

²⁸ Details of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site are available at <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1029/>

Heritage Coast

Heritage Coasts are described as areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility to visitors.²⁹

Much of Dorset's coastline is also defined as Heritage Coast. The Purbeck Heritage Coast was first designated in 1981, and the West Dorset Heritage Coast was designated in 1984. Further to the west is the East Devon Heritage Coast, which was also designated in 1984.

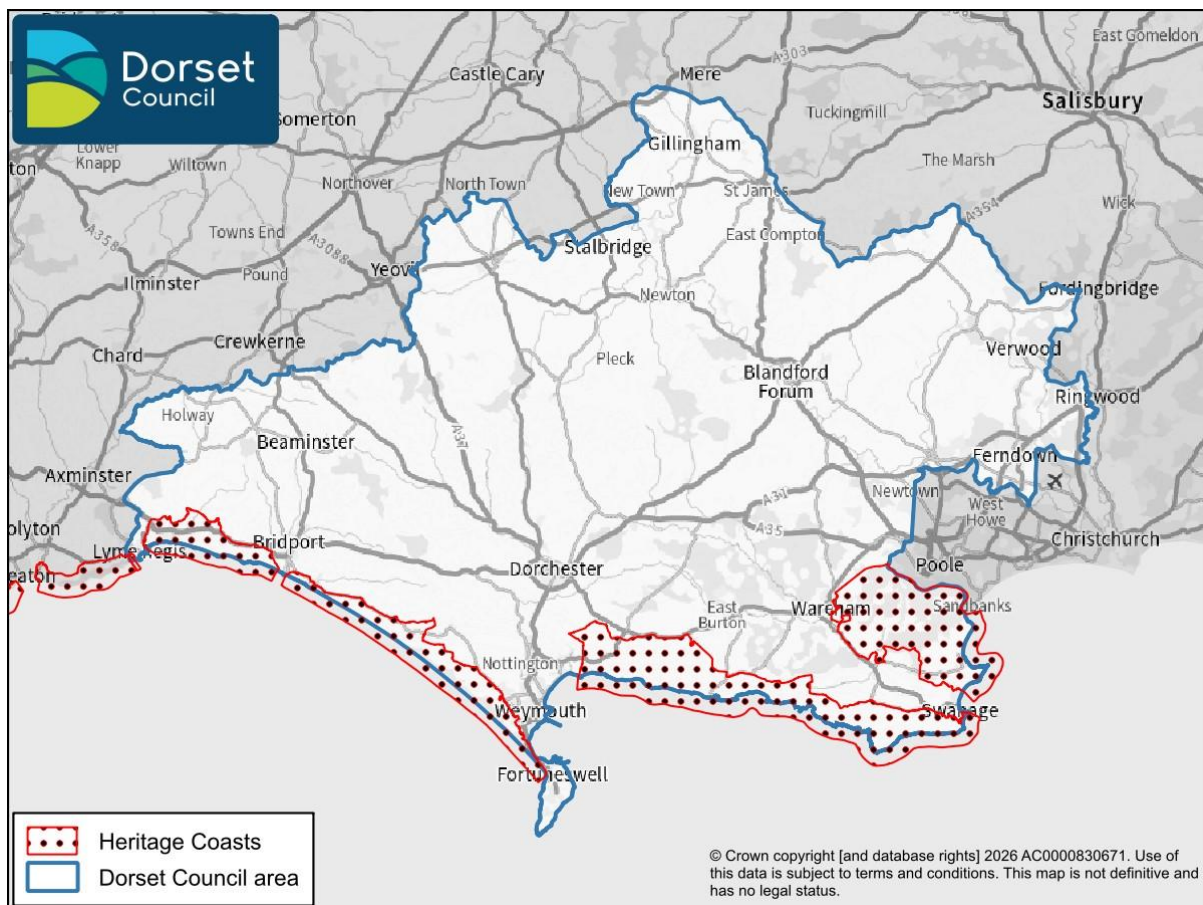


Figure 60 Heritage coasts

²⁹ More details on Heritage Coasts are available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>

Internationally important habitat sites

There are three internationally recognised habitat designations in England, namely Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar sites. Dorset has all three, and in many cases these overlap.

Special Areas of Conservation

A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is the land designated under Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.³⁰

Dorset has 17 SACs, covering 10,950 hectares (4.3% of the administrative area). These are, in order to size inside Dorset:

Table 14 SACs in Dorset

SAC name	Hectares (in Dorset)
Dorset Heaths	4,615.1
Dorset Heaths (Purbeck & Wareham) & Studland Dunes	2,228.5
Isle of Portland to Studland Cliffs	1,427.4
Chesil & The Fleet	936.9
Cerne & Sydling Downs	371.0
West Dorset Alder Woods	329.4
Sidmouth to West Bay	306.0
St Albans Head to Durlston Head	281.8
Fontmell & Melbury Downs	263.4
Rooksmoor	62.2
Holnest	54.9
Bracket's Coppice	53.6
Lyme Bay and Torbay	6.2
River Avon	5.9
Crookhill Brick Pit	4.7
Studland to Portland	2.6
River Axe	0.2

Note that some of these SACs extend outside of the Dorset administrative area. These include the River Axe (into East Devon) and Dorset Heaths (into BCP). Also note that there are other SACs outside of Dorset that may need to be taken into account when considering the impact of development. The New Forest SAC is an example.

³⁰ <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::special-areas-of-conservation-england/about>

Dorset has one of the largest areas of protected lowland heath in Europe. The JNCC reports that approximately 86% of Dorset’s historic heathland has been lost since the mid-18th century, underlining the importance of protecting the remaining fragmented resource.³¹ Because heath is an especially rare and fragile habitat, no new residential development is allowed within 400m of it. New residential development between 400m and 5km is only allowed if it provides heathland mitigation, usually in the form of a SANG (Site of Alternative Natural Greenspace), in order to minimise recreational pressure on heaths.³²

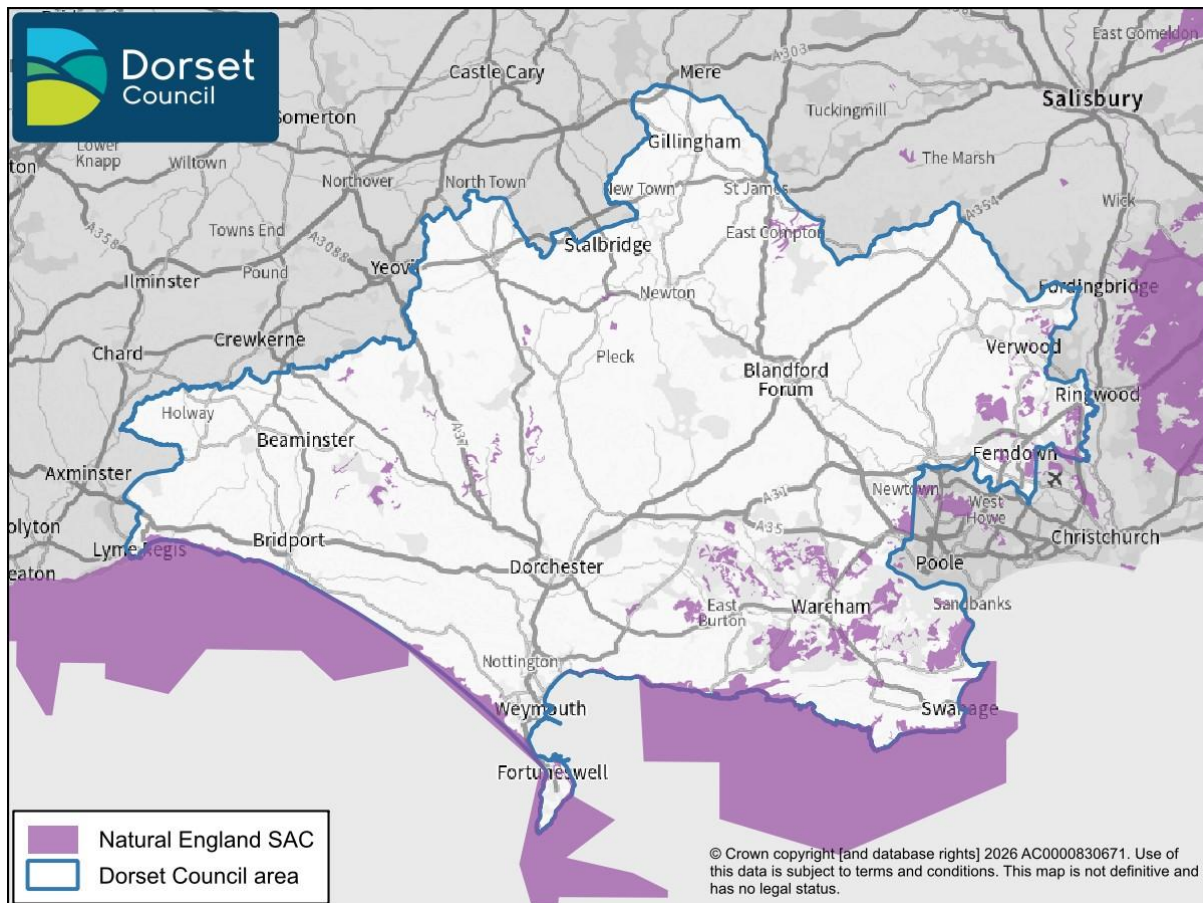


Figure 61 Special Areas of Conservation

³¹ <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0019857>

³² For details of the planning framework regarding Dorset’s heaths, see <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-heathlands-planning-framework>

Special Protection Areas

A Special Protection Area (SPA) is the land classified under Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds. SPAs are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979.³³

Dorset has 5 SPAs, covering 11,110 hectares (4.4% of the administrative area), as listed in the table below.

Table 15 SPAs in Dorset

SPA name	Hectares (in Dorset)
Dorset Heathlands	7,111.6
Poole Harbour	3,142.0
Chesil Beach & the Fleet	747.4
Solent and Dorset Coast	60.8
Avon Valley	47.7

As with SACs, some of these SPAs extend outside of the Dorset administrative area. These include the Dorset Heathlands, Avon Valley, and Solent and Dorset Coast. Also note that there are other SPAs outside of Dorset that may need to be taken into account when considering the impact of development. The New Forest SPA and Somerset Levels & Moors SPA are examples.

³³ <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::special-protection-areas-england/about>

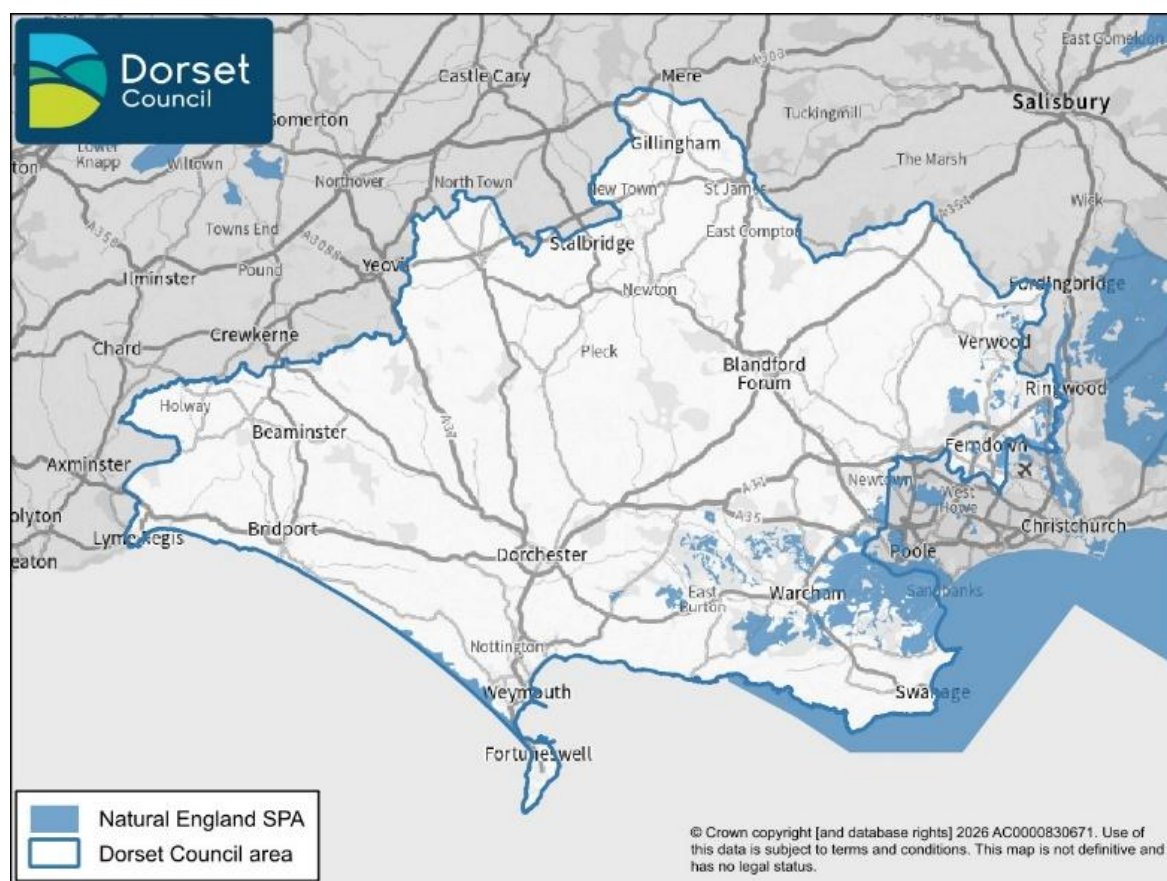


Figure 62 Special Protection Areas

Ramsar sites

A Ramsar site is land listed as a Wetland of International Importance under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention) 1973.

Dorset has 4 Ramsar sites, covering 9,123 hectares (3.6% of the administrative area). These are, in order to size inside Dorset:

Table 16 Ramsar sites in Dorset

Ramsar name	Hectares (in Dorset)
Dorset Heathlands	6,187.5
Poole Harbour	2,139.7
Chesil Beach & the Fleet	747.4
Avon Valley	47.7

As with SACs and SPAs, some of these Ramsar sites extend outside of the Dorset administrative area. These include Poole Harbour, Dorset Heathlands, and Avon Valley. Also note that there are other Ramsar sites outside of Dorset that may need to be taken into account when considering the impact of development. The New Forest Ramsar and Somerset Levels & Moors Ramsar are examples.

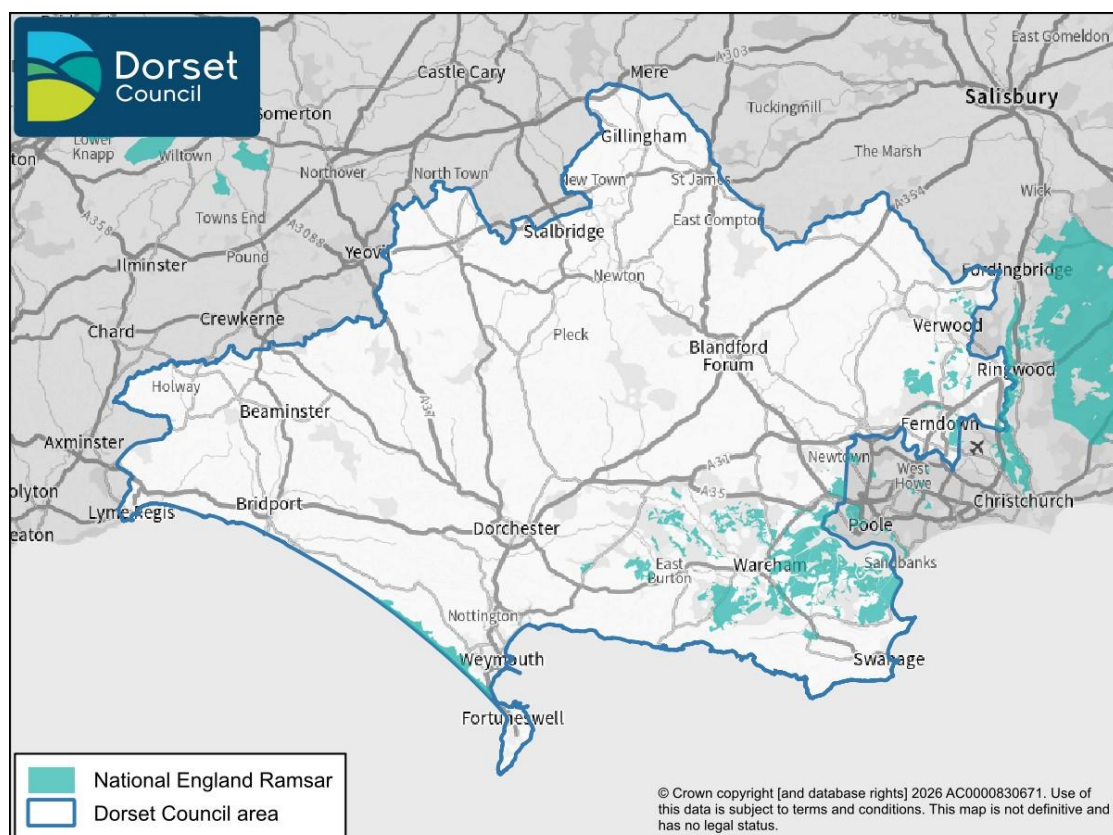


Figure 63 Ramsar sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are nationally recognised rather than internationally recognised. They are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). They are described as the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.

Dorset has 134 SSSIs, covering 19,015 hectares (7.5% of the administrative area). These are, in order of their respective sizes inside Dorset:

Table 17 SSSIs in Dorset

SSSI name	Hectares
Poole Harbour	3,094.5
South Dorset Coast	1,574.5
Povington and Grange Heaths	1,217.1
Chesil & The Fleet	982.4
Holt and West Moors Heaths	767.2
Studland & Godlingston Heaths	755.6
Morden Bog and Hyde Heath	659.9
West Dorset Coast	576.7
Arne	557.3
St Leonards and St Ives Heaths	451.1
Turners Puddle Heath	392.8
Isle of Portland	351.8
Stoborough & Creech Heaths	338.0
Hartland Moor	301.7
Blackmore Vale Commons And Moors	296.3
Cranborne Chase	290.2
Winfrith Heath	288.9
Holton and Sandford Heaths	277.1
Fontmell and Melbury Downs	263.4
Melbury Park	259.4
Upton Heath	218.9
Wareham Meadows	210.3
Toller Porcorum	179.1
Stokeford Heaths	177.3
Moors River System	176.1
Rempstone Heaths	170.0
Powerstock Common and Wytherston Farm	161.8
The Moors	157.7
Parley Common	156.6
River Frome	151.7
Higher Houghton	145.0
Purbeck Ridge (West)	144.7
Eggardon Hill & Luccas Farm	144.4
Purbeck Ridge (East)	142.7
Cranborne Common	133.9
Blue Pool and Norden Heaths	112.2

SSSI name	Hectares
Haydon and Askerswell Downs	107.4
Hod and Hambledon Hills	101.7
Radipole Lake	96.0
Corfe Common	91.0
Hog Cliff	86.2
Mapperton and Poorton Vales	84.5
Giant Hill	84.1
Court Farm, Sydling	83.0
Lyscombe and Highdon	82.9
Valley of Stones	80.4
Lodmoor	74.9
Sydling Valley Downs	74.7
Piddles Wood	73.1
Rampisham Down	72.0
Lambert's Castle	70.7
Black Hill Heath	70.5
Ferndown Common	64.4
Pentridge Down	62.3
White Horse Hill	60.0
Black Hill Down	57.3
Warmwell Heath	55.6
Holnest	54.9
Handcocks Bottom	54.4
Bracket's Coppice and Ryewater Farm	53.6
Avon Valley (Bickton to Christchurch)	47.7
Oakers Wood	47.2
Lulworth Park & Lake	46.9
Slop Bog and Uddens Heath	44.6
Lions Hill	43.1
Boulsbury Wood	42.8
Abbotsbury Castle	35.1
Brenscombe Heath	34.7
Frome St. Quintin	32.6
Oakers Bog	29.8
Blandford Camp	28.7
Portland Harbour Shore	27.9
Verwood Heaths	27.5
Drakenorth	26.2
Morcombelake	22.9
Blackdown (Hardy Monument)	21.8
Lorton	21.3
Horton Common	20.5
Batcombe Down	18.5
Woolcombe	18.1
Corfe Meadows	18.0
Wareham Common	17.1
Studland Cliffs	16.7
Sutton Combe	16.7
Thrasher's Heath	15.1
Oakhills Coppice	14.4
Townsend	14.0

SSSI name	Hectares
Pitcombe Down	13.1
Chalbury Hill and Quarry	12.0
Corfe Mullen Pastures	11.9
Breach Fields	11.4
Blashenwell Farm Pit	11.4
Bere Stream	10.9
Wootton Fitzpaine	9.6
Aunt Mary's Bottom	8.5
Worgret Heath	8.5
Whetley Meadows	8.1
Down Farm	8.1
Shillingstone Quarry	8.1
Langford Meadow	7.9
Nicodemus Heights	7.8
Bugden's Copse and Meadows	7.5
Upwey Quarries and Bincombe Down	6.5
River Avon System	5.7
Sutton Meadows	5.0
East Coppice	4.7
Crookhill Brick Pit	4.7
Horn Park Quarry	2.7
Belle Vue Quarry	2.6
Babylon Hill	1.8
Trill Quarry	1.4
Bradford Abbas Railway Cutting	1.4
Ebblake Bog	1.3
Corfe & Barrow Hills	1.3
Low's Hill Quarry	0.9
Halfway House Quarry	0.9
Cull-Peppers Dish	0.8
Sandford Lane Quarry	0.8
Martin and Tidpit Downs	0.7
Peashill Quarry	0.4
Poxwell	0.4
Broom Gravel Pits	0.3
Bryanston	0.3
Goathill Quarry	0.3
Corton Cutting	0.2
Abbotsbury Blind Lane	0.2
Frogden Quarry	0.2
River Axe	0.2
Conegar Road Cutting	0.2
Holway Hill Quarry	0.1
Burton Bradstock	0.1
Creech Grange	0.1
Axmouth to Lyme Regis Under Cliffs	0.0
Whitevine Meadows	0.0

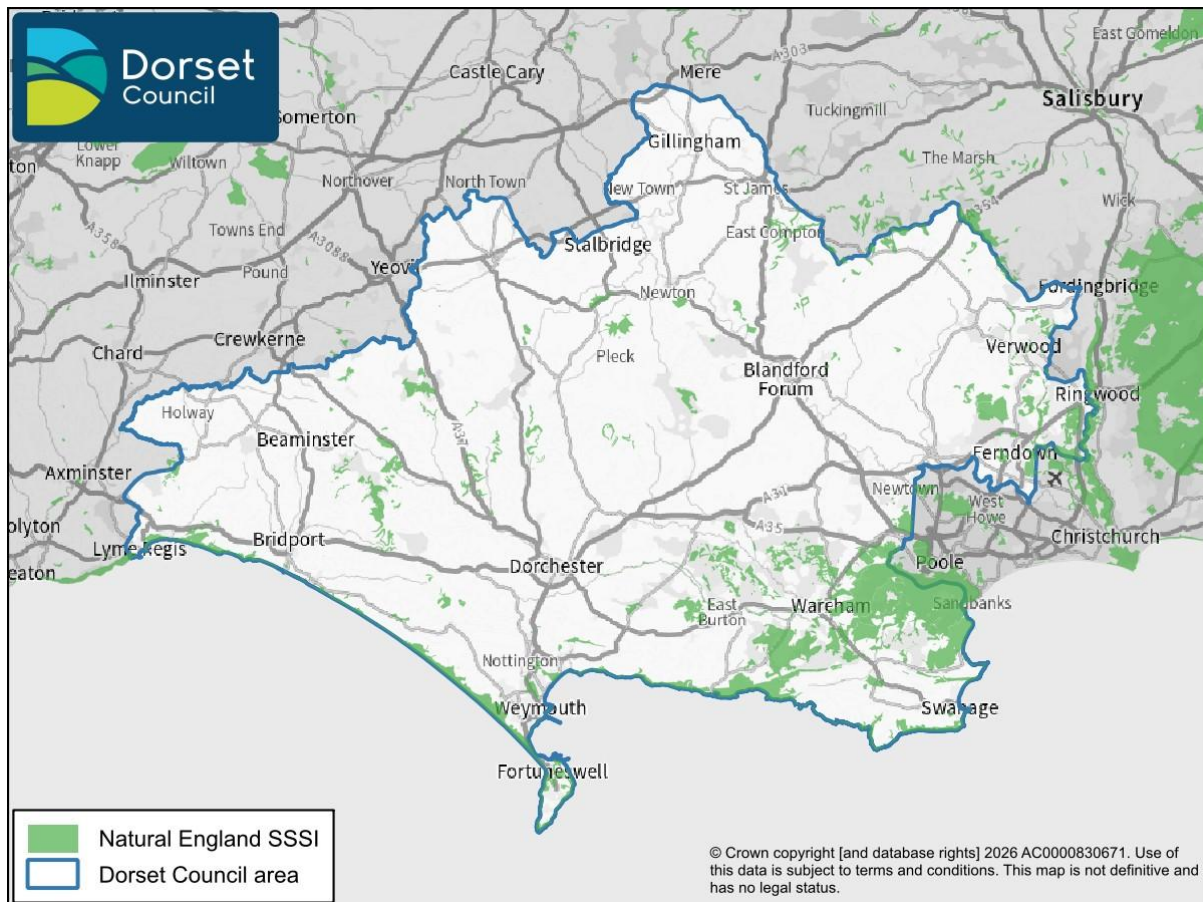


Figure 64 SSSIs

Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites are a non-statutory designation. In Dorset they are known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The list is maintained by Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset Environmental Record Centre. There are currently 1,262 SNCIs in Dorset, covering 12,035 hectares (4.8% of the administrative area).³⁴

Because the majority of SNCIs are on private land, to protect the privacy of landowners, information about SNCIs is not openly available to the public.

³⁴ <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/conservation-work-land/SNCI>

Local Geological Sites

Local Geological Sites are sites identified for their significant geological value. There are 59 of these within the Dorset Council area. The largest is the Isle of Portland at 1,059 ha. The second two largest are Melbury Down and Melbury Hill (97ha and 81 ha), which lie between Compton Abbas and Melbury Abbas, near to Shaftesbury.

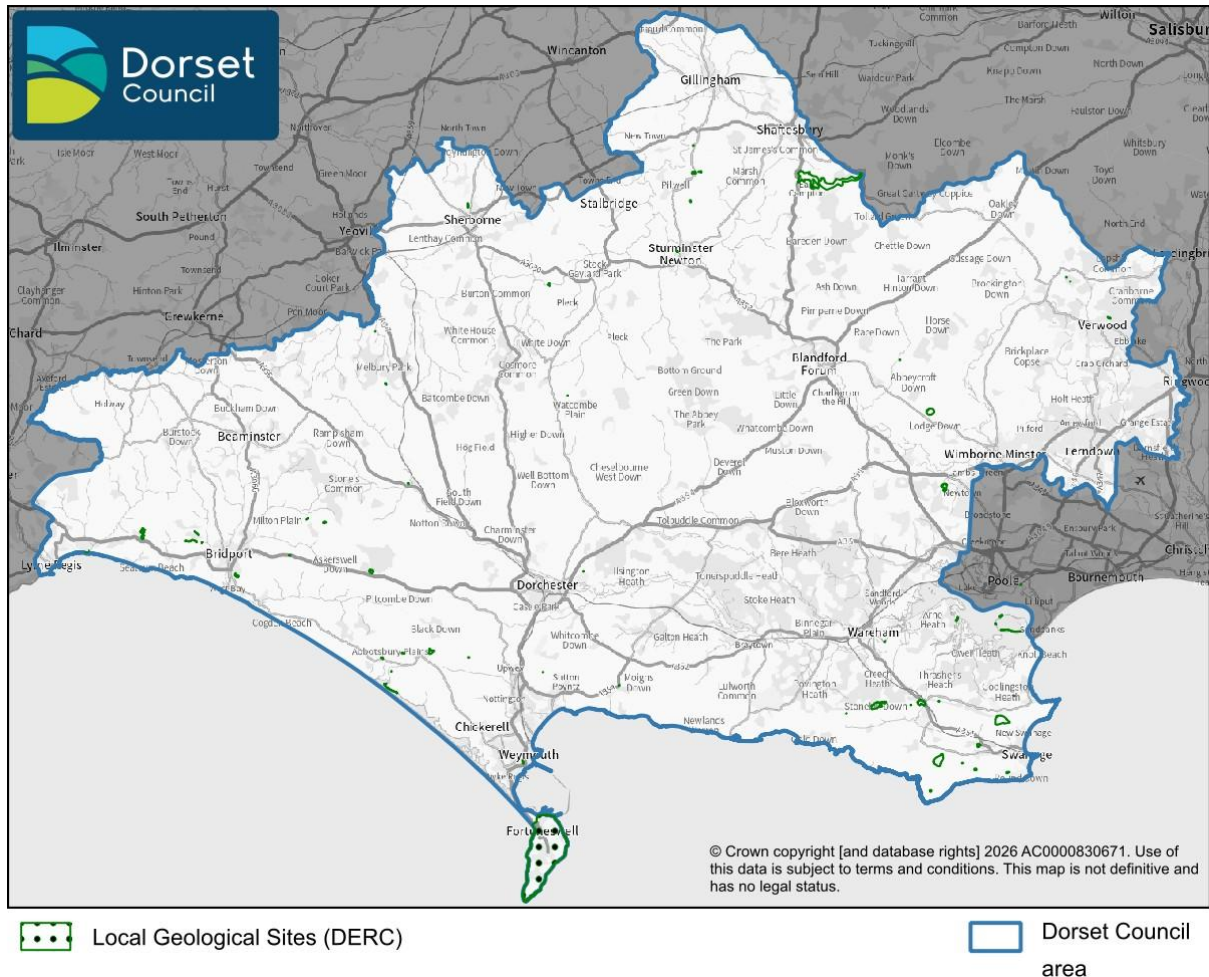


Figure 65 Local Geological Sites

Nature Reserves

Nature reserves are managed areas of land that protect wildlife, habitats and natural features. They support scientific research and can provide educational and recreational opportunities.

National Nature Reserves (NNR) are declared under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981).³⁵

There are currently 224 NNRs in England with a total area of over 116,000 hectares. The smallest NNR is Dorset's Horn Park Quarry at 0.32 hectares.

Nature reserves declared by local authorities are called local nature reserves.³⁶

There are 13 National Nature Reserves and 29 Local Nature Reserves in the Dorset Council area.

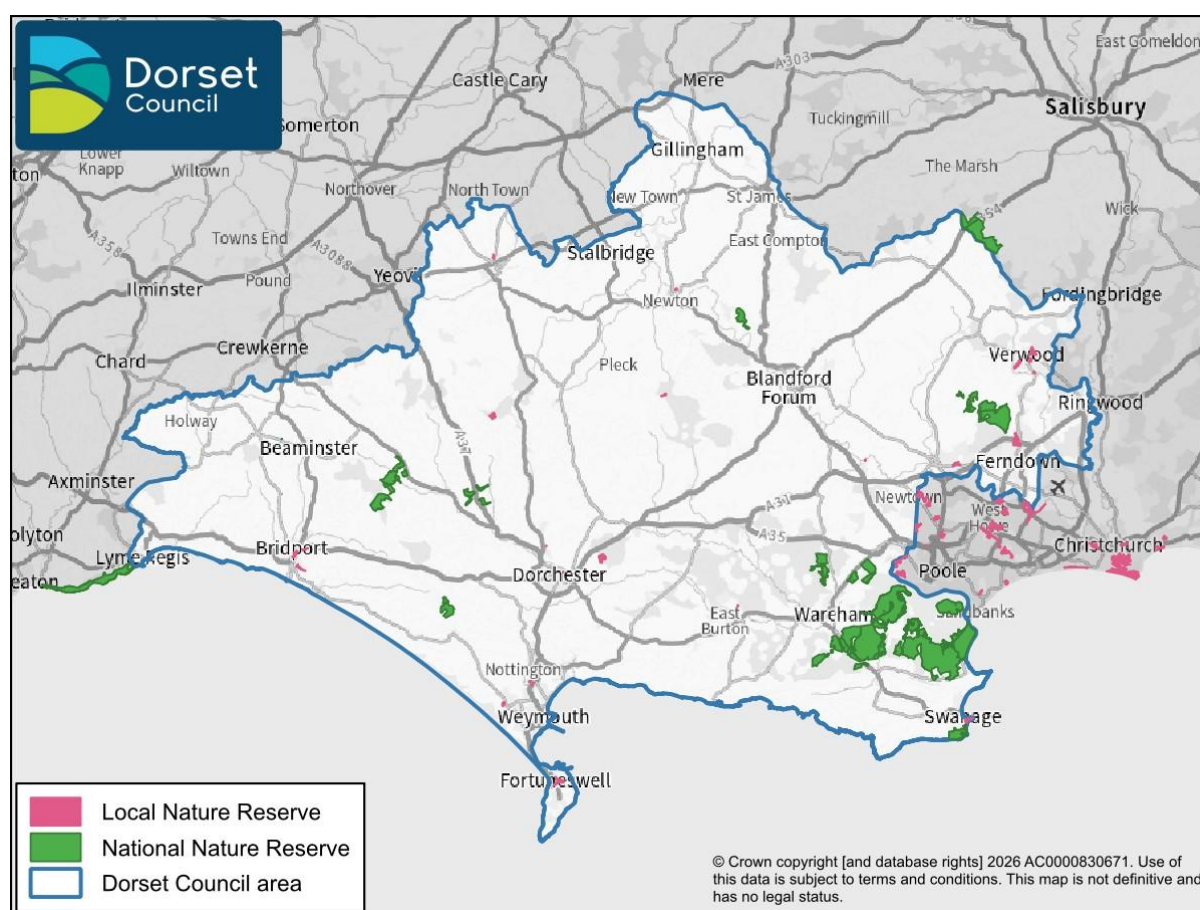


Figure 66 National and local nature reserves in Dorset

³⁵ <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::national-nature-reserves-england/about>

³⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves>

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Dorset adopted a Local Nature Recovery Strategy in December 2025. It provides a 10-year framework to help everyone work together towards a shared vision for nature recovery in Dorset. At its core is a commitment to the national and international [30by30 target](#) to protect and manage 30% of land and rivers for nature by 2030. It sets 13 nature recovery priorities along with the activities needed to support them. These are:

1. Grasslands
2. Woodlands
3. Heathlands
4. Rivers, lakes and wetlands
5. Coastal
6. Hedgerows
7. Urban
8. Farming
9. Natural processes
10. Nature-based solutions
11. Nature connection
12. Species abundance and diversity
13. Priority species

It also has a local habitat map to help target efforts to achieve the biggest benefits for nature.

The Dorset LNRS is available to view at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-s-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of: landscape; biodiversity; geodiversity; history; and cultural and economic activity. NCA boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape, not administrative boundaries. Nine National Character Areas fall within Dorset (either wholly or partially), as shown on the map below. Profiles regarding each National Character Area can be found online at <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/>

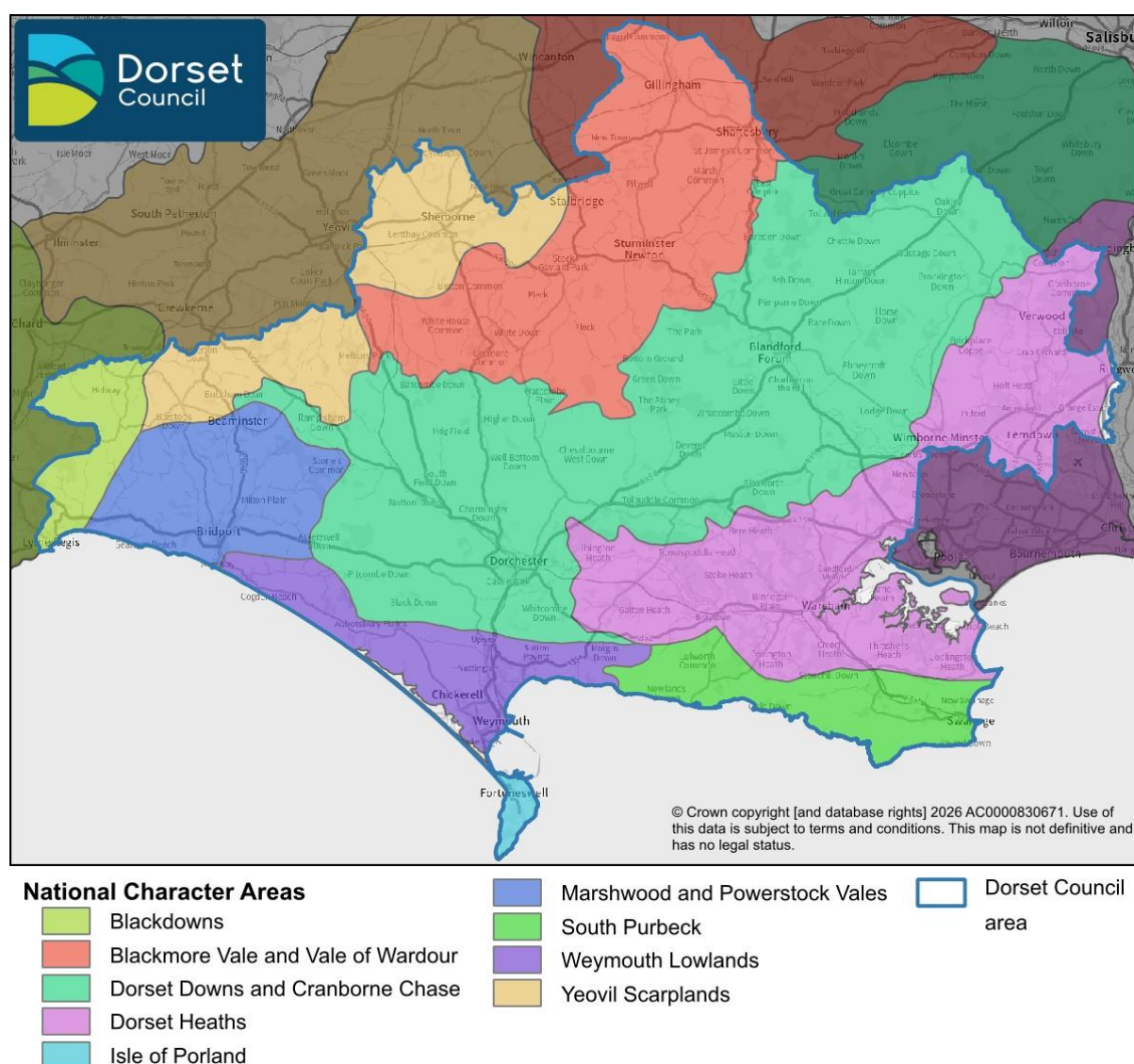


Figure 67 National Character Areas

Agricultural Land Classification

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is a system used in England and Wales to assess and grade the quality of farmland based on its physical and chemical limitations. Land is categorised into five main grades, with Grade 3 split into two subgrades:

- **Grade 1 (Excellent):** Land with little or no limitations supporting a very wide range of agricultural and horticultural crops with consistently high yields.
- **Grade 2 (Very Good):** Land with minor limitations affecting crop yield or cultivations.
- **Subgrade 3a (Good):** Land capable of consistently producing moderate to high yields of a narrower range of crops.
- **Subgrade 3b (Moderate):** Land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops or high yields of grass.
- **Grade 4 (Poor):** Land with severe restrictions suited mainly to grass and occasional variable arable crops.
- **Grade 5 (Very Poor):** Land with severe limitations restricted mostly to permanent pasture or rough grazing

Grades 1, 2, and 3a together are known as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.

Dorset has relatively small areas of land classed as Grades 1 or 2. The majority of Dorset is classed as Grade 3, with only small areas (typically around towns) surveyed to see whether it falls within Grade 3a or 3b.

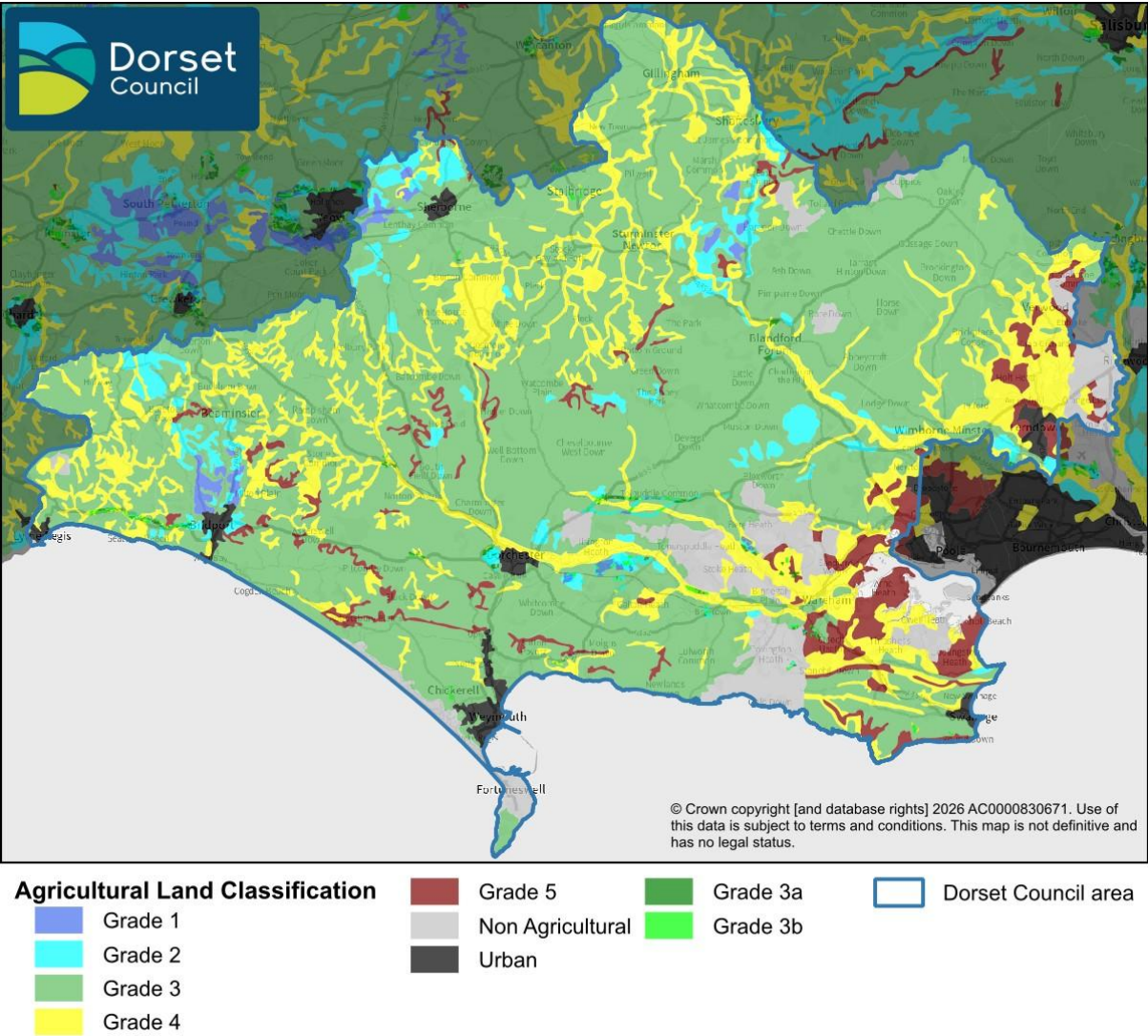


Figure 68 Agricultural Land Classification map

Land uses

Dorset is approximately 250,000 hectares in size (approximately 970 square miles).

The government has published land use statistics for England and local authority areas for 2022.³⁷ In summary, this finds that 5.6% of the area of Dorset is classed as developed (i.e. consists of buildings or manmade surfaces such as roads). The remainder is classed as undeveloped, and can be sub-classified as shown in the graph below:

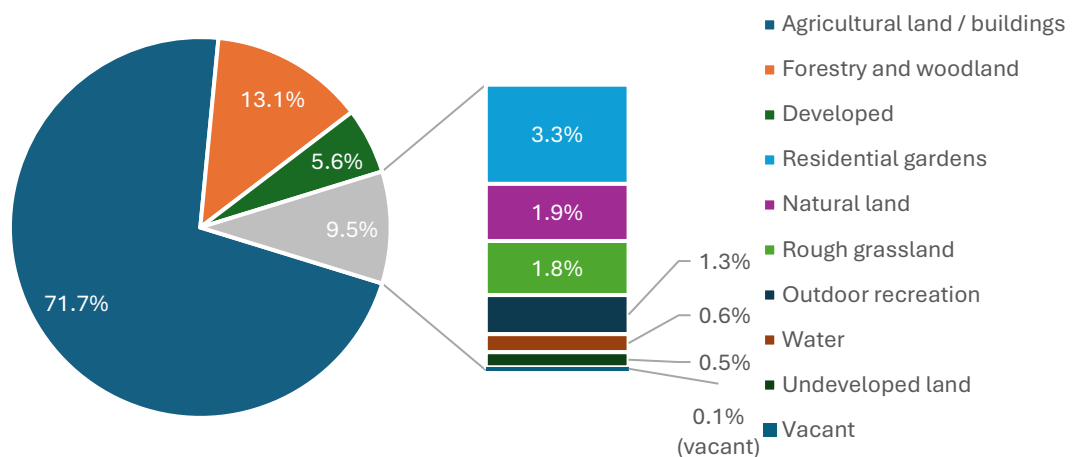


Figure 69 Land uses in Dorset in 2022

³⁷ [Land use statistics: England 2022 - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/statistics-and-research/articles/articles/land-use-statistics-england-2022)

Pollution and climate change

Groundwater source protection zones

Groundwater supplies a large proportion of the drinking water in Dorset. It also keeps many of the rivers flowing.

It is therefore important to protect groundwater sources from pollution. Sources include wells, boreholes and springs. Source Protection Zones (SPZs) show the level of risk to the source from contamination. This could be from any activity that might cause pollution in the area. Examples include the underground storage of pollutants such as petrol and discharges to the ground from septic-tank soakaways. The closer the activity, the greater the risk. The map below shows the SPZs as they are defined in and around Dorset

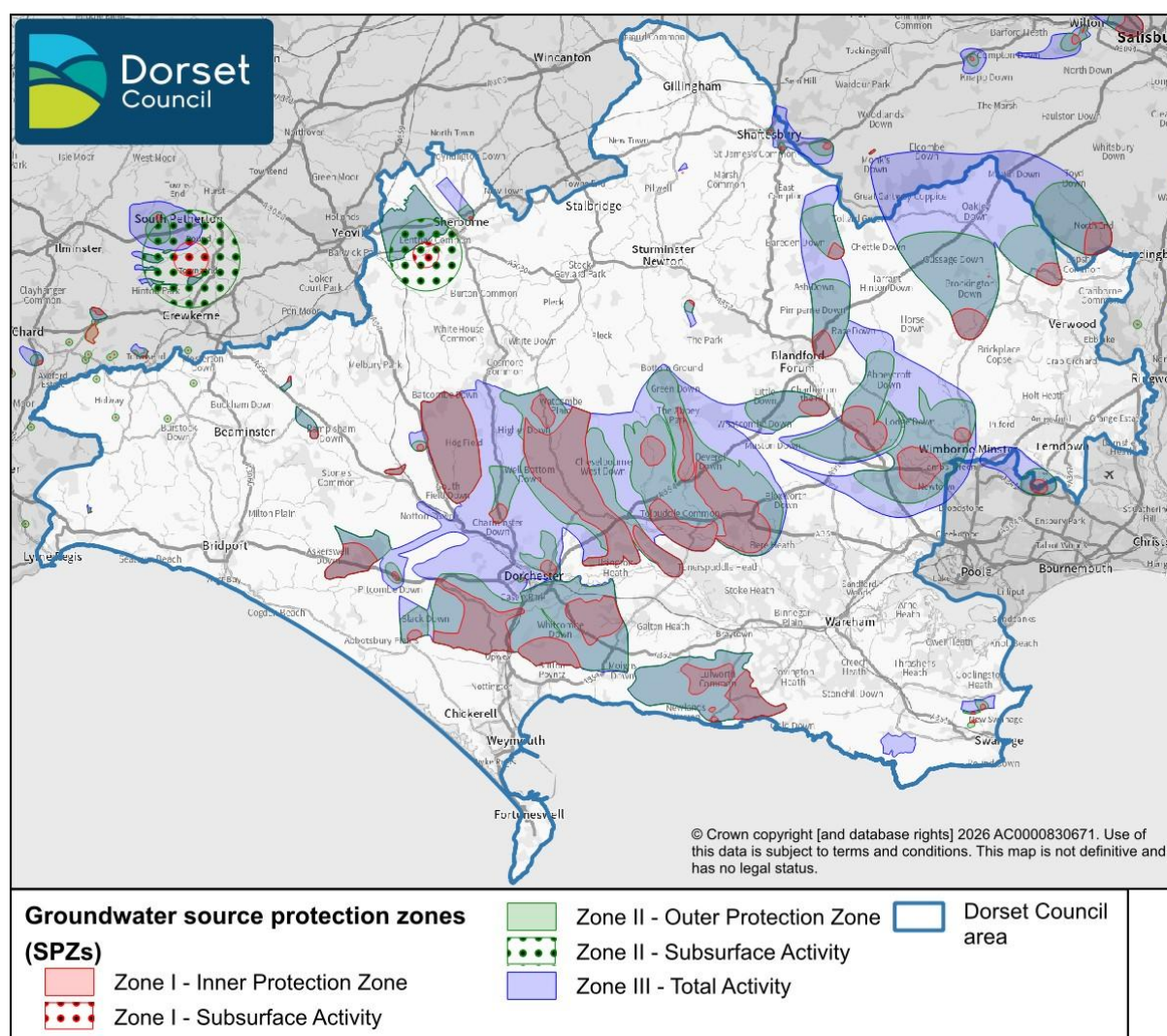


Figure 70 Source Protection Zones

Greenhouse gas emissions

The graph below shows the greenhouse gas emissions per person for the Dorset Council area, as well as the South West and England between 2005 and 2024. It illustrates that overall, greenhouse gas emission levels are reducing across the Dorset Council area, with 5.3 tonnes per person in 2024 compared to 10.0 tonnes in 2005. The figures for Dorset are however higher than for the South West and England.

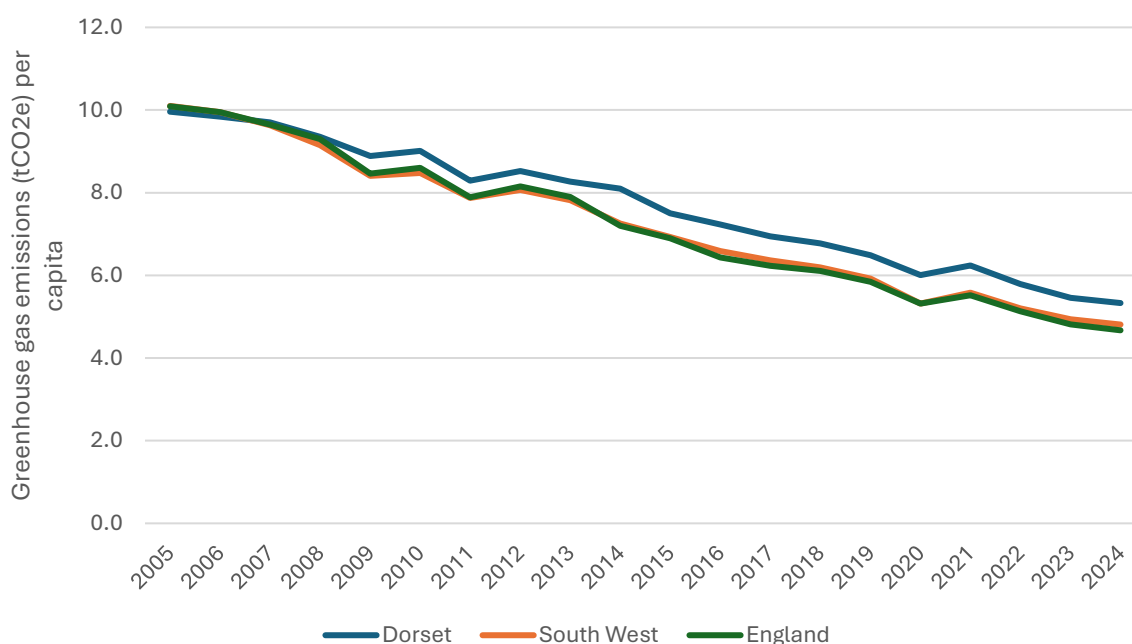


Figure 71 Greenhouse gas emissions per capita in Dorset, the South West and England

The table below provides a summary of the sources of Dorset's greenhouse gas emissions in 2024.³⁸

Table 18 Greenhouse gas emissions by source in Dorset Council area 2024

Source	kt CO2e
Industry	128.7
Commercial	124.1
Public sector	29.3
Domestic	466.1
Transport	695.5
Agriculture	736.4
Waste	80.1
Land use change and forestry	-183.5
Total	2,076.8

³⁸ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2024>

Renewable electricity generation

Government publishes renewable electricity data at local authority level.³⁹ The most recent figures are for 2024. The figures for Dorset are in the table below.

Table 19 Renewable electricity generation in Dorset in 2024

Type	Number of installations	Installed Capacity (MW)	Generation (MWh)
Photovoltaics	15,744	381.2	302,134
Onshore Wind	26	0.9	6,496
Hydro	11	0.1	475
Anaerobic Digestion	14	5.1	28,845
Offshore Wind	0	0.0	0
Wave/Tidal	0	0.0	0
Sewage Gas	0	0.0	0
Landfill Gas	3	7.2	8,280
Municipal Solid Waste	0	0.0	0
Animal Biomass	0	0.0	0
Plant Biomass	0	0.0	0
Cofiring	0	0.0	0
Total	15,798	394.5	346,231

Air quality

Air quality in Dorset is generally good although there are certain ‘hotspots’ where standards fail to meet national air quality objectives. Annual air quality reports are published on Dorset Council’s website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/air-quality>

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have to be declared in areas where these government standards are not being met. An AQMA has been declared at Chideock (along the A35) due to high levels of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide. Historically there was an AQMA in High East Street Dorchester but this was revoked in February 2025 as the objective for NO₂ (40µg/m³ Annual Mean) had been more than 10% below this level for a number of years.

The majority of Dorset is at low risk from radon, however there are some areas in the south of the county which the Health Protection Agency have identified as being at higher risk. An online map showing radon probability is available at <https://www.ukradon.org/>

³⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>

Central Heating

The map below shows the main form of central heating across Dorset, according to the 2021 Census. The data is shown at the Census output area level of which there are 1,284 in Dorset. Each output area has between 40 and 250 households. For 82% of the output areas the main form of central heating is mains gas. The map appears to show that oil is the main fuel for central heating across most of Dorset, however, it is actually only 15% of output areas. This is because oil is used in the more rural output areas where mains gas is unavailable. These rural output areas are larger because they are more sparsely populated.

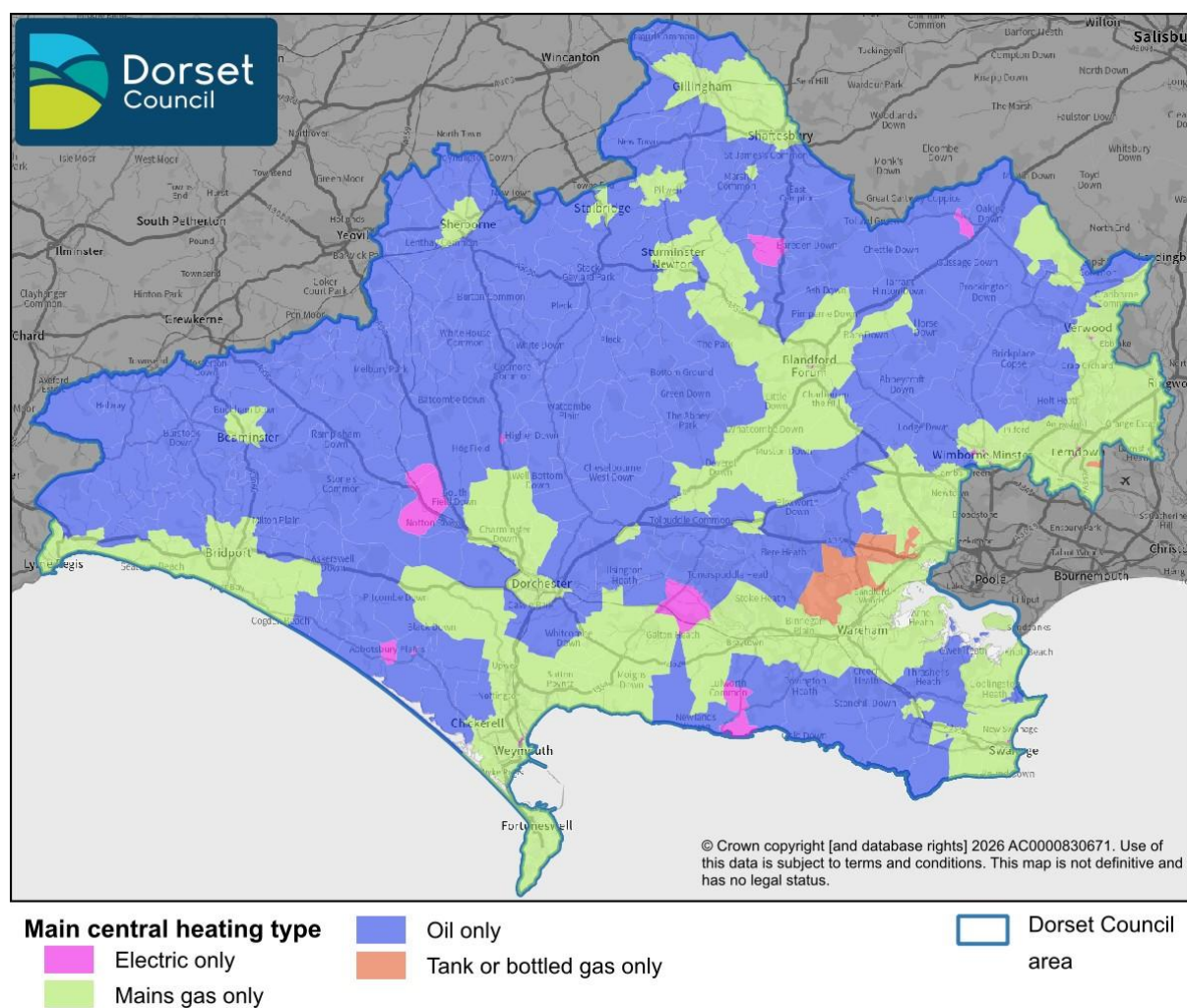


Figure 72 Main central heating type

Flood Risk areas

Flood risk affects large parts of Dorset. Flood risk may arise from different sources, including rivers, the sea, groundwater and surface water. Many of Dorset's towns and villages contain areas that are susceptible to the flood risks connected with rivers and surface water flooding. Many of the coastal towns and communities also contain areas that are vulnerable to the flood risks associated with the sea, including tidal flood risk and wave overtopping.

The map below shows fluvial (river) and surface water flood risk (in blue) and also includes areas that make an allowance for climate change (in orange).

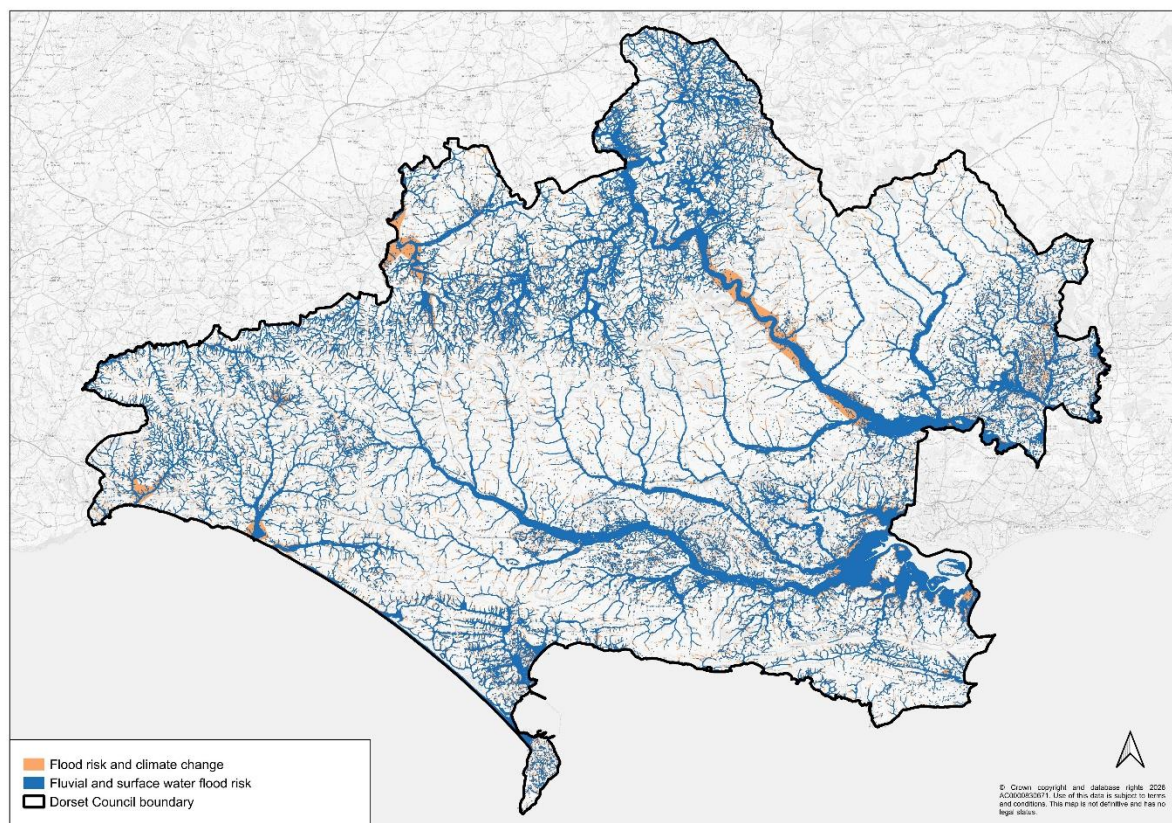


Figure 73 Areas at flood risk in Dorset

Historic Environment

Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments (formerly known as Scheduled Ancient Monuments) covers nationally important archaeological sites. These sites can include standing stones, burial mounds, the remains of monastic buildings and more. They can be above or below ground and can consist of remains as well as structures that are still in use.⁴⁰

There are 985 scheduled monuments in the Dorset Council area.

Bere Regis has the largest number of scheduled monuments (33), followed by Long Bredy and Kingston Russell (32), Winterborne St Martin (25), Sixpenny Handley and Pentridge (25), and Winterborne Abbas (24).

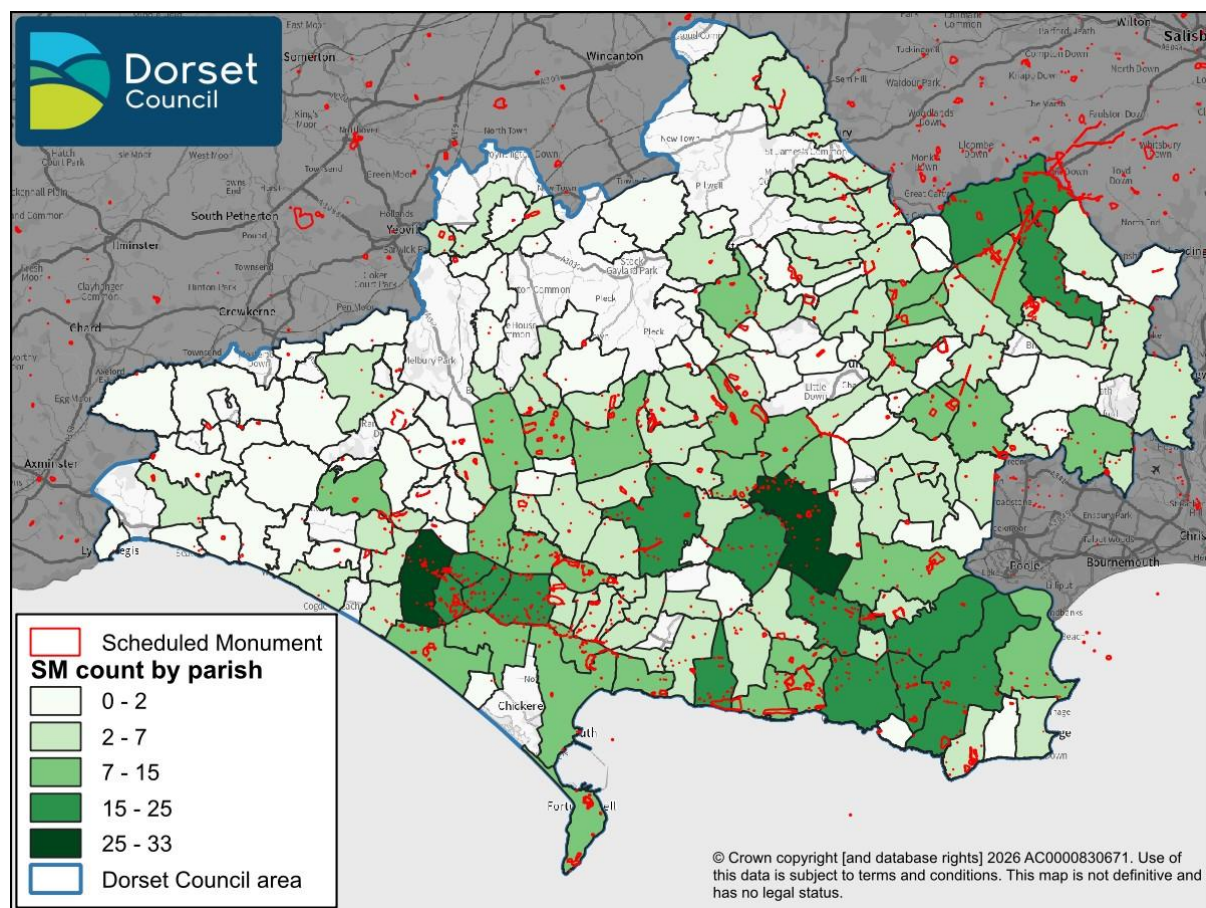


Figure 74 Scheduled monuments in Dorset

⁴⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/scheduled-monuments/>

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They are a consideration for a number of different planning decisions.⁴¹

There are 187 conservation areas in Dorset. Most of these cover built areas within settlements, although some include the wider setting which is considered important.

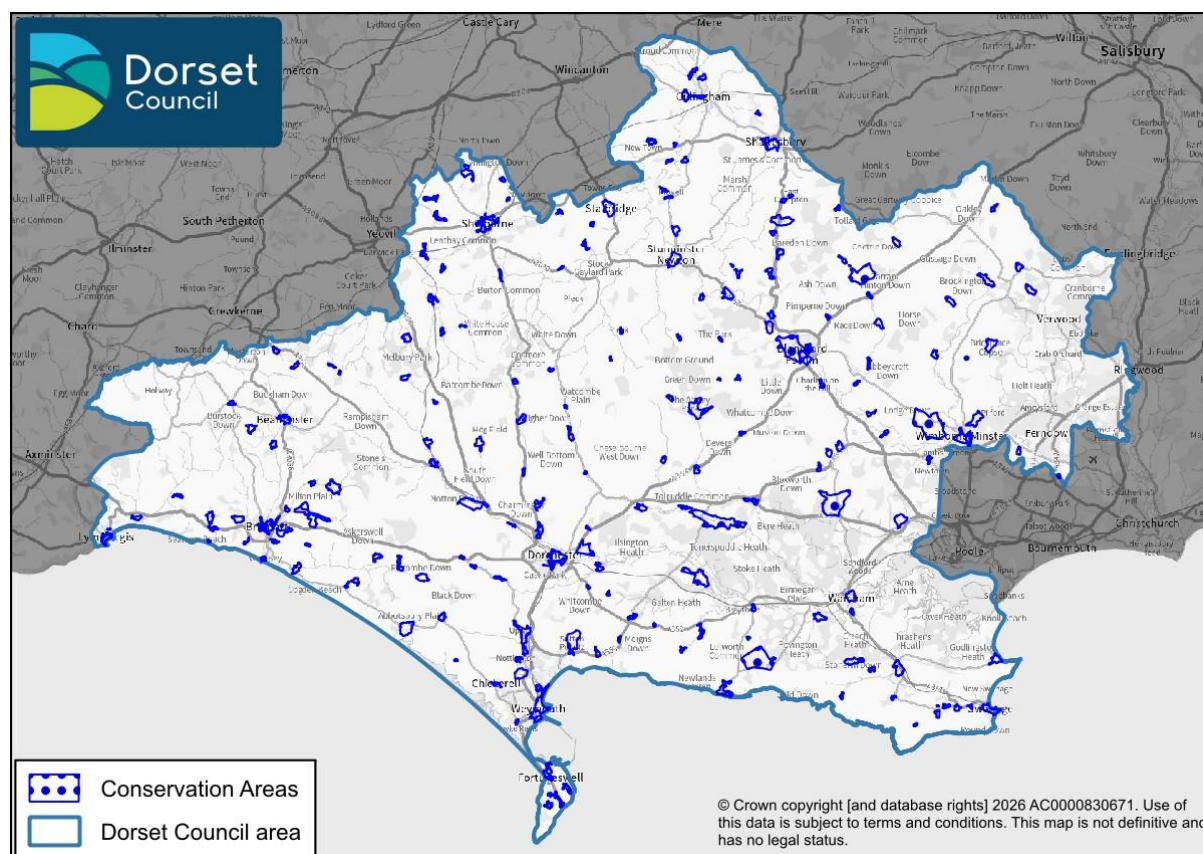


Figure 75 Conservation Areas in Dorset

⁴¹ <https://www.planning.data.gov.uk/dataset/conservation-area>

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest with legal protection. There are three grades of listed building:

- Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest.
- Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest.
- Grade II buildings are of special interest.⁴²

There are 9,216 listed buildings in Dorset. These comprise 245 Grade I, 479 Grade II*, and 8,492 Grade II listed buildings.

Weymouth has the largest number of listed buildings (610), followed by Bridport (507), Sherborne (379), Dorchester (283), and Shaftesbury (274).

In terms of density of listed buildings, Shaftesbury has the highest (0.6 per hectare), followed by Sherborne, Blandford Forum, Bridport, and Lyme Regis. This is calculated using the area of the parish.

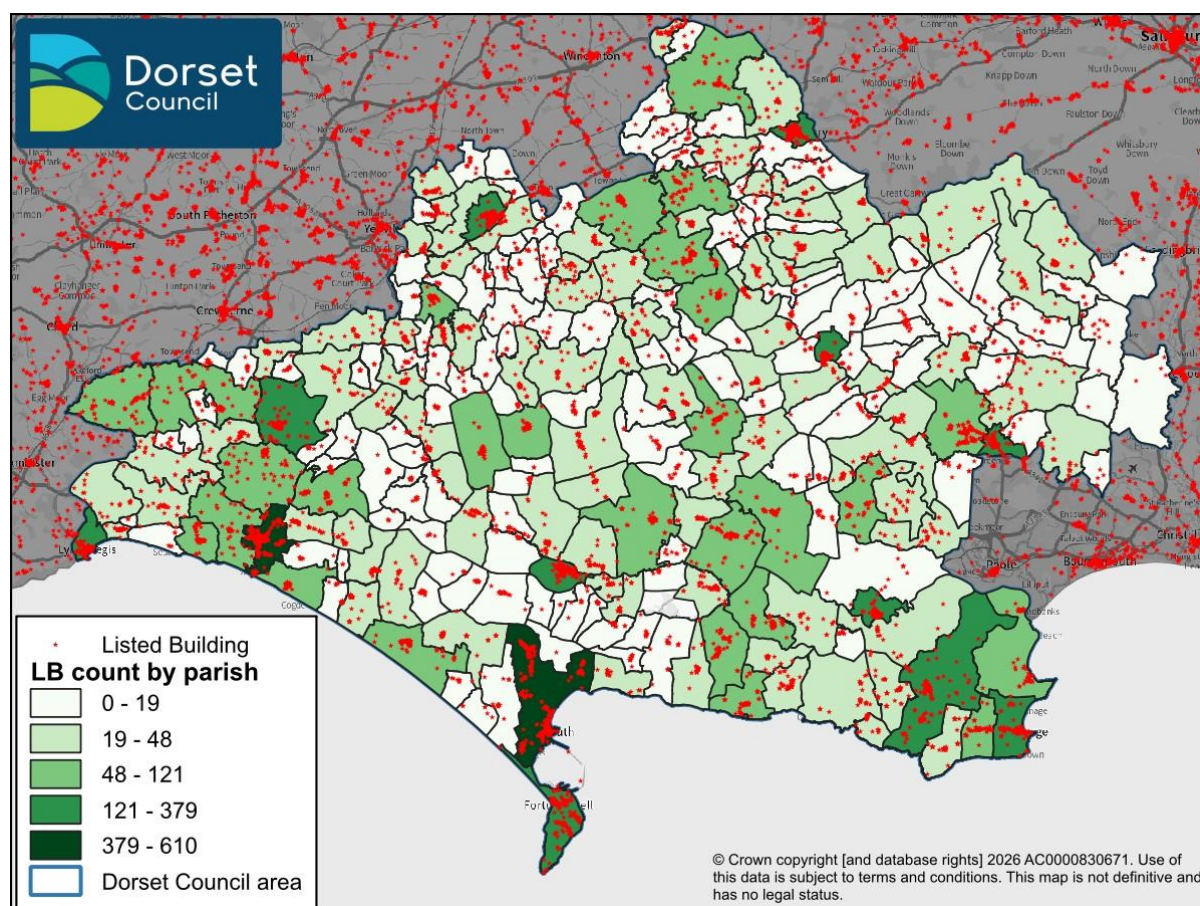


Figure 76 Listed Buildings in Dorset

⁴² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>

Registered Parks and Gardens

The 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England' includes over 1,700 designed landscapes (such as parks and gardens) assessed to be of particular significance.⁴³

There are 37 Registered Parks and Gardens in the Dorset Council area. The largest of these are Melbury Park (611 ha), Milton Abbey (547 ha), Sherborne Castle (456 ha), Charborough Park (368 ha), and St Giles' House (363 ha). Rushmore Park is 536 ha, but only a small proportion of it is located in Dorset.

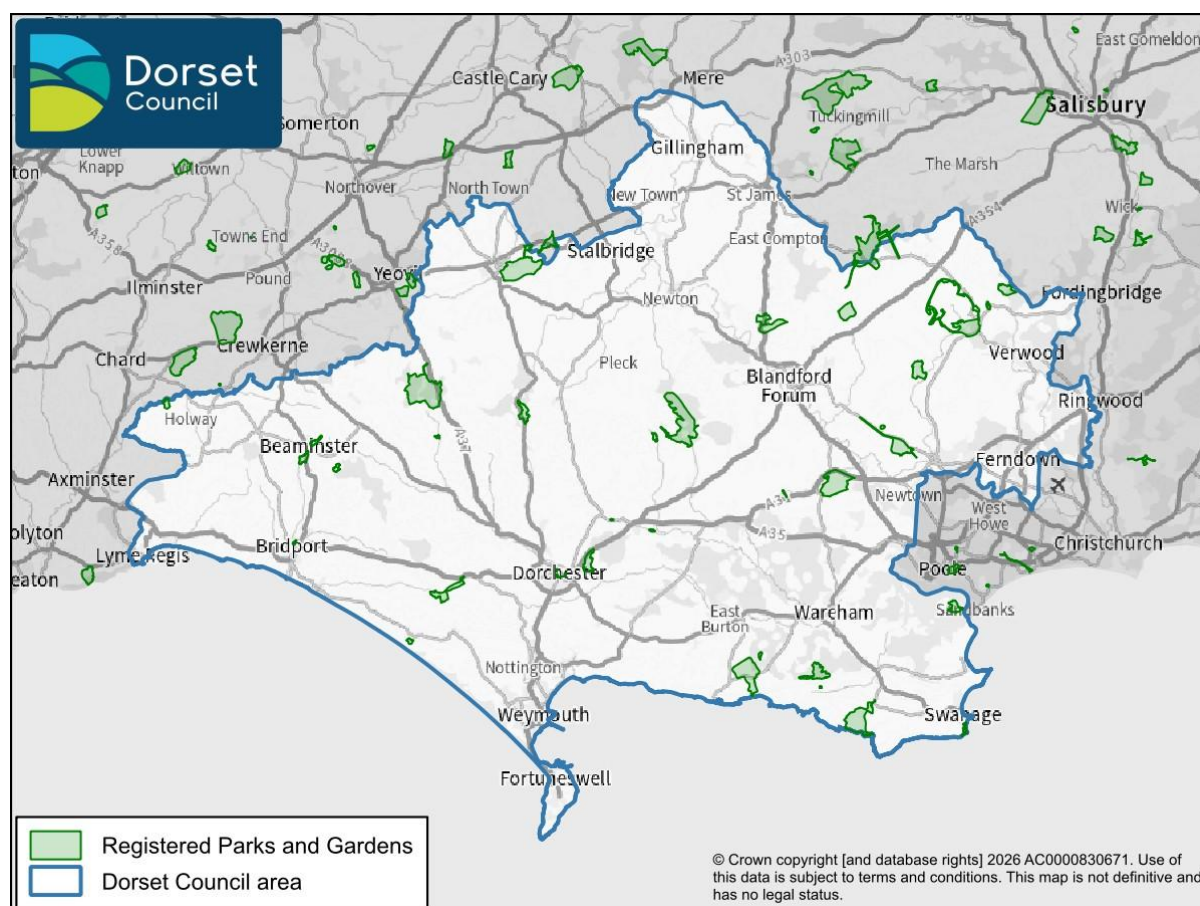


Figure 77 Registered Parks and Gardens in Dorset

⁴³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

Existing Plans

Local Plans

Local Plans are development plans produced by the local planning authority (Dorset Council).

The following development plan documents have been adopted and will continue to be used for decision making purposes in the areas they cover until they are replaced. They are (year of adoption in brackets):

- Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 (2024)
- Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2014) and saved policies in the East Dorset Local Plan (2003)
- North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and saved policies in the North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003)
- Swanage Local Plan (2017)
- West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015)
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy (2014)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan (2019)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019)

The existing Local Plans can be viewed on our [Adopted Local Plans - Dorset Council](#) page.

Dorset Council's 5-year housing land supply position statement (October 2025) records that on 1st April 2025 remaining Local Plan allocations had capacity for 3,001 dwellings. The remaining allocations are:

Table 20 Remaining local plan allocations

Parish	Site location	Estimated capacity
Bridport	BRID3: Land east of Bredy Vets Centre	70
Chickerell	CHIC2: Chickerell Urban Extension East	393
Chickerell	CHIC3: Land off Rashley Rd	50
Chickerell	School Hill, Chickerell	16
Corfe Mullen	Lockyer's School and Land North of Corfe Mullen (South of Wimborne Road)	138
Crossways	Land South of Warmwell Road Warmwell Road Crossways	500
Dorchester	Four Paddocks Land South Of St Georges Road Dorchester	107
Ferndown	Land at Green Worlds	15
Ferndown	Land west of New Road, West Parley, Ferndown	125
Lytchett Matravers	Blaney's Corner, Lytchett Matravers	25
Lytchett Matravers	East of Wareham Road, Lytchett Matravers	95
Lytchett Matravers	East of Flowers Drove, Lytchett Matravers	28
Moreton	Redbridge Pit, Moreton Station	490
Shaftesbury	Land SE of Wincombe Lane	60
Sherborne	SHER4: Former Gasworks	45
Upton	Land at Policemans Lane, Upton	92
Weymouth	Littlemoor east	100
Weymouth	Council offices, North Quay	75
Wimborne	St Margarets Hill, Wimborne	12
Wimborne	Stone Lane, Wimborne (WMC6)	90
Wool	North of railway line, Wool	35
Wool	West of Chalk Pit Lane / Oakdene Road, Wool	320
Wool	North West of Burton Cross Rdbt	30
Wool	North East of Burton Cross Rdbt	90
Total		3,001

Please note that these sites are Local Plan allocations that did not have planning permission on 1st April 2025. There will be other undeveloped allocations that did have planning permission.

More details regarding these sites and others that have planning permission can be found in the 5-year housing land supply position statement (October 2025) and subsequent updates.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Available from <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-planning-policy-monitoring-1>

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are produced by local communities. When they are ‘made’ or receive a positive result at referendum, they form part of the development plan for their area. The policies within them must therefore be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications.

As of September 2026 there are 41 neighbourhood plans that have been ‘made’ in Dorset. These are shown in the map below.

There are more neighbourhood plans in progress, and so total number of neighbourhood plans is likely to increase with time. For more details of neighbourhood plans in Dorset, and to keep up to date with changes, see our web page <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/neighbourhood-plans-in-dorset>

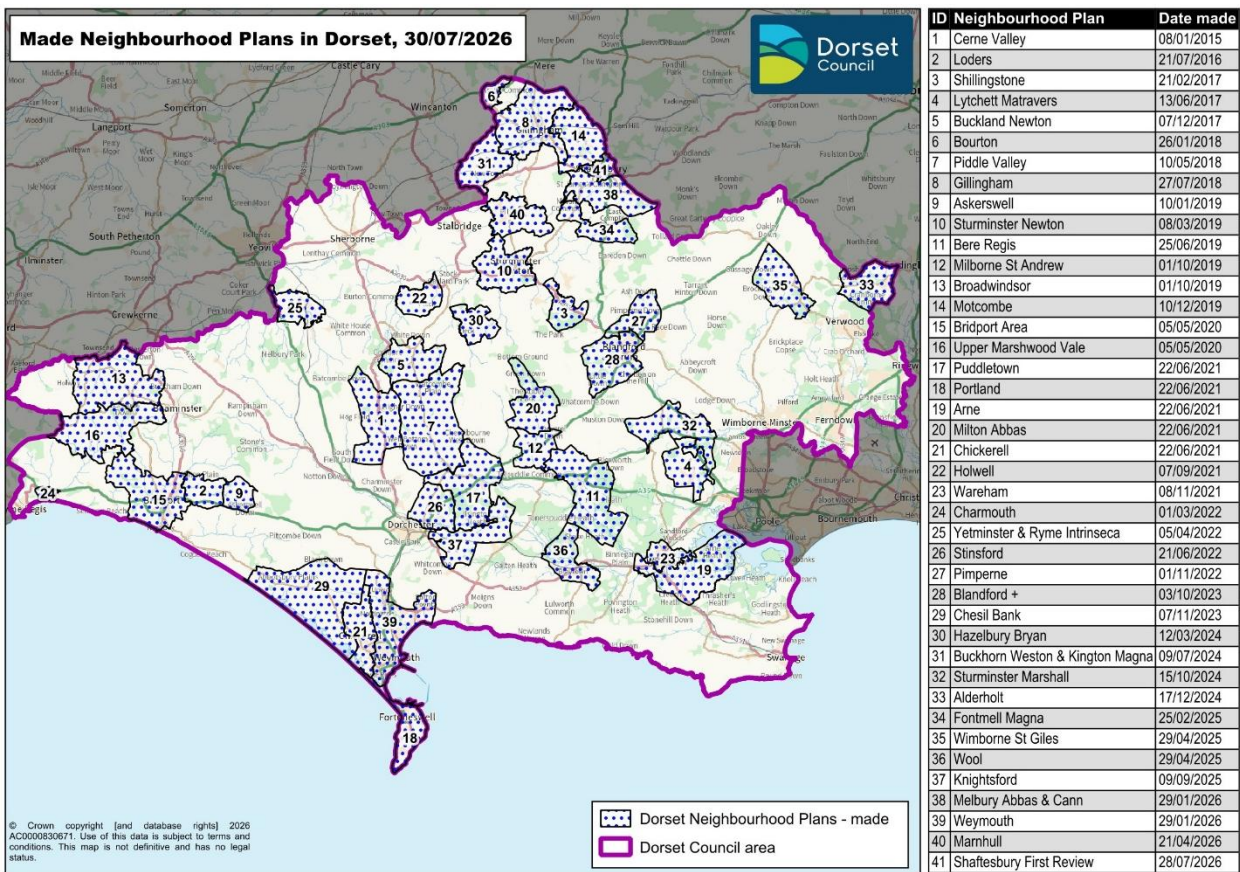


Figure 78 Neighbourhood Plans in Dorset

Dorset Council's 5-year housing land supply position statement (October 2025) records that on 1st April 2025 remaining Neighbourhood Plan allocations had capacity for 731 dwellings. The remaining allocations are:

Table 21 Remaining neighbourhood plan allocations

Parish	Site location	Estimated capacity
Alderholt	Paddock South of Daggons Road	15
Alderholt	Land South of Blackwater Grove	20
Alderholt	Alderholt Nursery, East of Ringwood Road	20
Alton Pancras	Austral Farm	9
Bere Regis	White Lovington, Bere Regis	17
Bere Regis	Back Lane, Bere Regis	52
Bere Regis	North Street, Bere Regis	15
Bere Regis	Former School Site, Bere Regis	21
Bere Regis	Tower Hill	4
Broadwindsor	South of Fullers, Bridport Road, Broadwindsor	22
Broadwindsor	Site 12 East of Manor Farm, Bridport Road, Dimpleton	10
Broadwindsor	Site 6 Land North of Hillside, Drimpton Road	5
Broadwindsor	Site 3 Land at Manor Farm, Common Water Lane	5
Buckland Newton	East of Landscombe Vale	2
Buckland Newton	1-6 Majors Common	4
Buckland Newton	South of Higher Still	4
Buckland Newton	North of Lydden Meadow	6
Buckland Newton	North of Brooklands	4
Chickerell	Land to the rear of Montevideo House	12
Hazelbury Bryan	Site 7: Former Frank Martin's Agri Depot	11
Holwell	Rear of 7 and 8 The Plot	7
Langton Herring	Land at Higher Farmhouse	1
Langton Herring	Land adjoining 4 Court Close	1
Marshwood	Three Counties Nurseries	5
Milton Abbas	Land at Catherines Well (west of the Community Gardens)	15
Milton Abbas	Land at Langham Farm (north of the Community Gardens)	6
Milton Abbas	Land at Catherines Well (east of Hill House Bungalows)	1
Motcombe	Site 25: The Nursery, The Street	3
Motcombe	Site 18 Rural AH Exception Site - South of Knapp Hill	6
Piddletrenthide	Kingrove Farm	10
Pimperne	Land east of Franwill Industrial Estate	15
Pimperne	Land west of Old Bakery Close	15
Portesham	Land east of North Mead Farm	6

Parish	Site location	Estimated capacity
Puddletown	Land adj Athelhampton Road	28
Puddletown	Northbrook Farm	10
Ryme Intrinseca	Land at Downfield	1
Ryme Intrinseca	Land at the Old Forge	4
Shillingstone	Whitepit Farm Buildings	19
Shillingstone	Land off Candy's Lane	1
Shillingstone	Hine Town Lane north of Ox	12
Shillingstone	Antells Haulage Yard	6
Sturminster Newton	Site 6: Clarkes Yard, Bath Road	30
Sturminster Newton	Site 11: Land North of Manston Road	30
Sturminster Newton	Site 9: William Barnes School	20
Sturminster Newton	Site 2: Station Road regen area	40
Sturminster Newton	Site 10: Land at Yewstock, Bath Road	8
Wareham	Former Gas Works Site (H7) and autopoint	20
Wareham	Westminster Road Industrial Estate (H5)	30
Wareham	Johns Road (H6)	15
Wareham	Former Middle School Site (GS2)	60
Wareham	Anglebury Court and Day Centre sites	42
Yetminster	Land fronting Melbury Road	6
Total		731

Please note that these sites are Neighbourhood Plan allocations that did not have planning permission on 1st April 2025. There will be other undeveloped allocations that did have planning permission.

More details regarding these sites and others that have planning permission can be found in the 5-year housing land supply position statement (October 2025) and subsequent updates.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Available from <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/dorset-council-planning-policy-monitoring-1>

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