

Dorset Council Call for Sites – submission guidance document

March 2023

We are interested in receiving submissions of land that may have potential for:

- New homes (including for the settled and Traveller communities).
- Employment land.
- Mitigation for habitat sites.
- Renewable or low carbon energy.

The formal 'call for sites' 2023 has now closed. It is still possible to make submissions through the online 'call for sites' form but we will prioritise the assessment of submissions received before 1 July 2023. Submissions received after this date will be assessed in 2024.

The remaining text on this page provides guidance for people who are intending to submit sites for each of the broad purposes outlined above. When we are assessing the sites which are submitted, we will consider whether they are suitable for the intended use (having regard to relevant planning policies, site characteristics and any supporting information/evidence that you might provide), whether development would be viable and whether there any limitations on the way the land could be used which could restrict development.

Housing

Guide for submission

Sites should be over 0.3ha in size (or more), or capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings. This may be in the form of undeveloped greenfield land or previously developed brownfield land.

Those considering making a submission in response to the call for housing sites must consider how easily occupiers of the site could access education, health, welfare, and employment infrastructure. Sites which are closer to existing settlement allow occupiers to access facilities and services without needing to travel significant distances.

Employment

Guide for submission

We define employment uses as general industrial, storage and distribution uses (those in the B2 and B8 Use Classes), plus similar and compatible uses such as waste management infrastructure (sui generis uses). Our definition also includes other uses that provide direct and ongoing local employment opportunities which are appropriately located within an industrial estate/business park. Examples might include offices and research and development facilities (which now fall within Use Class E(g)).

Sites should be either over 0.25ha in size or provide scope to deliver gross 500m² of new floor space for employment uses or provide scope to deliver 5 or more new employment units.

We are interested in receiving submissions of sites that may be suitable for accommodating employment uses. This may be in the form of undeveloped greenfield land or previously developed brownfield land.

Sites proposed for retail or tourism should not be submitted for assessment for employment uses.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

Guide for submission

Submitted land may be of any size, to accommodate single or multiple pitches or plots. Sites of up to 15 pitches for Traveller accommodation may well be the optimum size for this type of development. This roughly equates to a site area of around 0.6 hectares. Travelling Showpeople plots will likely be larger than Traveller pitches due to the additional space needed to store equipment.

Those considering making a submission in response to the call for housing sites must consider how easily occupiers of the site could access education, health, welfare, and employment infrastructure. Sites which are closer to existing settlement allow occupiers to access facilities and services without needing to travel significant distances.

Habitats mitigation

Guide for submission

There are many designated habitat sites spread across the Dorset Council area. New development outlined in the strategies of local plans and in planning applications may have adverse impacts on these habitat sites. Examples include residential development positioned within 5km of the Dorset Heathlands habitat sites, or specific types of development that contribute to nutrient pollution of marine and freshwater protected habitats sites.

We are inviting submission of sites that may have potential to be used for providing Heathlands mitigation in the form of Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs), and sites that may be suitable for provision of nutrient mitigation. Further details regarding these types of mitigation and relevant considerations, can be found below.

Where they are available any existing ecological surveys of the land should be included as part of the submission.

The council has adopted a number of [Supplementary Planning Documents](#) which provide a framework for funding and delivering habitat site mitigation measures. If you'd like to

discuss a potential submission for a habitats mitigation site, please contact the Council's Natural Environment Team on naturalenvironmentteam@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs)

HIPs can include:

- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) which is either linked to a development or is strategic, which can provide mitigation for new residential development within 5km of Dorset Heathlands, or
- Alternative infrastructure projects such as a new Right of Way, dog training area, bike tracks.

If your land is positioned in the vicinity of a heathland habitat site and a proposed or potential development area, and you are submitting land for use as a HIP including SANG to mitigate the impacts of residential development on Dorset Heathlands you should consider the guidance provided in [Appendix D of the Dorset Heathland Planning Framework](#) (2020-2025) before submitting your proposals. As part of preparing your submission you should consider:

1. Location in relation to other greenspaces
2. Access.
3. Paths, tracks and site infrastructure.
4. The landscape character of the possible SANG.
5. Ecology
6. Existing agreements, their duration, and constraints
7. Archaeology

Please note that for SANGs there is a requirement that they remain and be maintained for public access for a period of at least 80 years (perpetuity of the development that they mitigate for) and submitted sites should be at least 3ha in size.

Nutrients mitigation

Land management change within a catchment area of one of the following marine or freshwater habitat sites below could provide nutrient mitigation measures:

- Poole Harbour
- Somerset Levels and Moors
- River Avon
- Chesil and the Fleet
- River Axe

Maps detailing the catchments of the above can be found on the Council's [Nutrient Neutrality](#) web page.

Land management changes suitable to deliver nutrient mitigation will depend on the catchment, nutrients involved, geology and land location. However, generally it will require

a permanent land-use change such as creation of a type of wetland, woodland or orchard planting or the establishment of riparian buffer strips. These land use changes need to be maintained in perpetuity to ensure a development's nutrient neutrality.

You may wish to contact us on the details above for an informal discussion if you are interested in working with the council and would like to discuss the potential for your land in more detail. Alternatively, you can submit details of the land for an initial review including any ecological surveys if available, and information regarding the existing land uses.

The Council is aware of potential benefits of combining environmental benefits on sites and is seeking further clarification on this issue from relevant organisations.

Biodiversity net gain

Guide for submission

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development and land management that aims to leave biodiversity in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. This may mean development of land will require off-site improvements to enhance biodiversity elsewhere in order to deliver net gains, and therefore we are interested in receiving submissions of sites that you think would be suitable for providing net gain for biodiversity for those instances where it is not possible to achieve net gains on a development site.

Our preference is for;

- Sites that have the potential to buffer or expand existing habitats mapped within the Dorset Existing / Higher Potential Ecological Network. For example, connecting woodland blocks, buffering ancient woodland and species rich grassland creation.
- Sites located within the same general area as existing larger settlements where development is expected to be focused.
- Sites located in strategic areas identified as important for wildlife e.g., the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

In addition, the following criteria and considerations should be taken into account with submissions.

- Commitment to the use of the land for a minimum of 30 years
- Current land use - All land uses will be considered except private gardens or sites already statutorily designated for wildlife value i.e., Site of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest cannot be included.

It should be noted that any habitat created needs to be consistent with the landscape character in order to achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity. Any management approach for a Biodiversity net gain site should also work with soil conditions and the underlying geology. When submitting a site you may want to consider the [Landscape](#)

[Character Assessment Map - Dorset Council area](#) for information on landscape designations and their management objectives and management guidance.

Renewable energy

Guide for submission

The Council has declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, and has adopted [a strategy for achieving zero carbon emissions](#) by 2040 (as a Council) and 2050 county-wide. Part of the strategy and action plan is to increase levels of renewable energy generation within the Council area. We are interested in receiving submissions of sites that may be considered appropriate for renewable energy development, such as for solar farms and wind energy.

If submitting a site for wind energy development you should consider the report and supporting documents which the council has prepared on 'Strategic Identification of Wind Farm Sites' (December 2020) ([Dorset Council Local Plan evidence and background papers - Dorset Council](#)). Where available we would encourage submitted sites to be accompanied by assessments of impacts such as in relation to landscape and heritage assets.