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## 8. Effective Policies



### Defining a Vision for 2030

As acknowledged in previous chapters, addressing climate and ecological breakdown is a challenge of such magnitude that significant government support will be at the core of any transformation. This chapter briefly considers whether current policies are sufficient and looks at what the alternatives might be, how they sit within the global context of climate law and how every organisation, not least our councils, need to ensure that their complete suite of policies is commensurate with addressing the climate and ecological emergency.

More than any other chapter this one acknowledges the necessity of top-down action. While many of these may not be specific to Dorset, we have included them here as they help to complete the picture of what we need to achieve to meet our overall 2030 Vision.

Given the different balance here we have not graded this aspect or added it to the score card.

#### ***By 2030...***

***Government policies set a clear framework, not only for achieving zero emissions and reversing ecological decline, but also for the wider legislative framework, ensuring a sustainable future for all is at the core of all new government action, supported by the appropriate funding and implemented urgently; where necessary with direct state intervention.***

***A Climate & Ecological Emergency bill has been enacted, the Green New Deal has become the framework for government spending and action.***

***Council policies follow a similar approach with activities across all departments developed in line with addressing the climate and ecological emergency. The majority of organisations have also recognised their responsibility to ensure their actions are compatible with a sustainable future; most having declared a climate emergency and are now working in line with their revised policies.***

### 2022 Observations

Most of the analysis in our original report remains valid at the end of 2022. However, we have noted the following developments during the year.

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## **International.**

Coming out of the pandemic gave the world an opportunity to re-set for a greener, fairer world. But it looks like this opportunity has not been taken and instead we see national policies failing to cut carbon emissions or protect nature. In 2022, a World Meteorological Organisation report<sup>i</sup> showed that carbon emissions continued to grow during 2020 and 2021. Also, in 2022, the IPCC's sixth assessment report<sup>ii</sup> stated that countries plans would see carbon emissions fall by 3.6% by 2030 compared with 2019 levels, well below the 43% needed to meet the 1.5° C target. Instead plans put the world on target for 2.5° C rise by the end of the century. We are already seeing and feeling the impacts on climate of the average 1.1°C rise in world's temperatures, with increased heatwaves, droughts and floods. At COP27<sup>iii</sup> there was no progress on country's commitments for further GHG cuts, although there was a historic decision to establish a loss and damage fund. However, the money needed to help poorer nations prepare and adapt to climate change was not forthcoming.

## **News from around the world.**

In August, President Biden successfully passed the landmark Inflation Reduction Act<sup>iv</sup>, which includes the most substantial investment in history to fight the climate crisis: \$375bn over the decade, including investments in renewable energy production and tax rebates for consumers to buy new or used electric vehicles. In September, Chilean voters overwhelmingly rejected a new progressive constitution<sup>v</sup>. It confronted the climate emergency, weaving sustainability throughout the document<sup>vi</sup>. In October, Lula, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, won the Brazilian presidential election and promised to protect the amazon rainforest<sup>vii</sup>.

## **Saving nature.**

The 2022 Living Planet<sup>viii</sup> report found earth's wildlife populations have plunged by an average of 69% in just under 50 years. At COP15<sup>ix</sup> there was an historic agreement for countries agreeing to protect 30% of land and water by 2030. But, this agreement needs to be put into the context that all previous targets to protect and restore wildlife have been missed.

## **International conflict.**

The world's hoped for return to 'normality' following the Covid pandemic was derailed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a result fuel, fertiliser and food prices soared leading to an energy and cost of living crisis. One possible positive outcome is for countries to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy<sup>x</sup>.

## **National.**

2022 has been a bumpy ride for the UK government, with three Prime Ministers in as many months. On the climate and ecological crises there have been mixed messages. Whilst the government reaffirmed its commitment to net zero by 2050 target, its net zero strategy was found by the High Court to be inadequate and breached the Climate Change Act and needed to be strengthened<sup>xi</sup>. The Climate Change Committee<sup>xii</sup> (CCC) found major failures in delivery programmes and concluded that the government's current plans will not deliver the net zero target. A leading author<sup>xiii</sup> of the IPCC report<sup>xiv</sup> on how prepared nations are for climate change concluded the UK is very much not adapted to climate change and is not prepared.

## **Energy (un)security.**

In response to the war in Ukraine the government published its energy security strategy<sup>xv</sup>. The Strategy aims to move the UK away from Russian oil and gas and boost renewable energy sources. On the positive side, there was a focus on energy efficiency (£6.6 billion invested in decarbonisation over the life of this parliament) and renewables (with an

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ambition to increase solar capacity from 14GW to 70GW by 2035 and with a new target to generate 50GW of offshore wind energy by 2030). The strategy contains a target to double UK hydrogen production to 10GW by 2030. The government also removed VAT<sup>xvi</sup> from energy saving measures, such as solar panels and heat pumps, for the next five years. As an interim step, building standards for new homes were tightened<sup>xvii</sup> so that CO2 emissions must be around 30% lower than current standards and emissions from other new buildings, including offices and shops, must be reduced by 27%.

### **Not blowing in the wind.**

The Government then made a U-turn on onshore wind farms by announcing a consultation to be completed by the end of April 2023<sup>xviii</sup>, on letting local communities decide whether they want new wind farms built in their area. Also, after some confusion, the government came out in support of continued use of farmland for solar farms<sup>xix</sup>. But, the bad news was the support in the Strategy for nuclear, a licensing round this summer for new North Sea oil and gas projects and a revisiting of fracking. These decisions, taken together with the government granting the building of a first coal mine in decades<sup>xx</sup>, undermine any claim of UK climate leadership.

### **Ecological crisis.**

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with more than one in seven native species facing extinction and more than 40% are in decline due to a combination of increased habitat loss, pollution and the intensification of agriculture<sup>xxi</sup>. 30% of UK birds are threatened with extinction, mainly due to intensive agriculture. It is hoped the UK will make good on the COP15 pledge to restore 30% of land and sea habitats by 2030. But after the emergency budget statement, environmental charities claimed the UK government was attacking nature in their push for growth<sup>xxii</sup>. There is also confusion about the future of the government's agricultural subsidy scheme, 'Environmental Land Management schemes' (ELMS) which focus on supporting biodiversity, improving the local environment and more sustainable farming practice. The Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee urged the government to publish much more information about the new farm subsidy scheme and to increase payments to be made to farmers under the scheme<sup>xxiii</sup>.

### **Green Economy.**

The UK green economy has failed to grow since 2014<sup>xxiv</sup>. Turnover in the UK low carbon and renewable energy economy (LCREE) was estimated to be £41.2 billion in 2020, with no significant change since 2014 when the survey began<sup>xxv</sup>. Employment in the UK LCREE was estimated to be 207,800 full-time equivalent (FTE) in 2020, with no significant change since 2014. Ministers are seeking to encourage the growth of green jobs in sectors such as offshore wind, including through the creation of freeports in an attempt to boost investment and jobs in the low-carbon economy. However, experts and campaigners have warned the government's net zero plans lack the required ambition and are not backed up with adequate funding from the Treasury, instead relying on the private sector.

### **Skills for a green economy.**

Dorset LEP skills report<sup>xxvi</sup> highlighted the skills that were in short supply before the pandemic, have become increasingly sought after, including those for the Race to Net Zero. Funding has allowed Poole and Bournemouth and Weymouth Colleges to create a Green Skills Hub<sup>xxvii</sup> to provide practical skills to support the green economy. Bournemouth University launched The Centre for Sustainable Business Transformations (CSBT)<sup>xxviii</sup> to assist businesses improve their positive societal and environmental impacts.

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## BCP & Dorset Councils progress on cutting carbon.

Both Councils<sup>xxix xxx</sup> claim there has been good progress on reducing carbon emissions. But these reductions appear to be due to the pandemic reducing transport and business emissions and the continued decarbonisation of the electricity grid, rather than anything the Councils are doing. But in Dorset not everyone thinks the Council is doing enough. Two women protesters ‘grannies for the future’ glued their hands to a desk during a Dorset Council debate calling for the UK to secure energy self-sufficiency<sup>xxxi</sup> while reading a statement berating the council for its lack of action on climate change.

## Funding for change.

BCP Council has established a £20M Green Futures Fund as part of its 2022/23 budget to support community led projects over the next 5 years. Dorset Council has established a £10 million climate and ecological capital programme<sup>xxxii</sup> to enable a further 5-6% reduction in Dorset Council’s emissions over 5 years. They have also allocated £100k to support the delivery of the Healthy Homes Dorset project which will be critical to support residents with energy advice and grants.

## Community led change.

The Dorset Deserves Better campaign<sup>xxxiii</sup>, supported by 64 organisations including 23 Town and Parish Councils representing over 109,000 residents of Dorset, scored a major success by persuading Dorset Council to delay and re-set the Local Plan to cut the number of new homes to be built by 2038 and align with their CEE. But, the delay leaves Dorset very exposed to years of unwanted, speculative development.

## Council Policy frameworks & CEE.

Both Councils are developing and implementing a decision impact assessment tool that allows all projects, decisions and policies to be assessed against sustainability criteria such as climate change. Other policy areas are reflecting their CEE commitments. BCP Council launched its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan<sup>xxxiv</sup> where walking or cycling is a safe and affordable choice for residents and visitors and a car will not be necessary to get around, recognising the physical and mental health benefits of active travel. The Dorset Harbours Strategy<sup>xxxv</sup> sets out the future direction of management for Weymouth, Lyme Regis and Bridport (West Bay) harbours over the next ten years, including the need to work in partnership to mitigate, and adapt to climate change.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://public.wmo.int/en/greenhouse-gas-bulletin>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/cop27>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/08/biden-climate-spending-bill-inflation-reduction-act>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-62792025>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://theicct.org/chile-latam-lvs-leg-en-apr22/>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-63451470>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://livingplanet.panda.org/en-GB/>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-64030656>

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2022>

<sup>xi</sup> <https://www.clientearth.org/latest/latest-updates/news/clientearth-are-suing-the-uk-government-over-its-net-zero-strategy/>

<sup>xii</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/06/29/current-programmes-will-not-deliver-net-zero/>

<sup>xiii</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/04/uk-not-prepared-climate-impacts-ipcc-intergovernmental>

<sup>xiv</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>

<sup>xv</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-energy-security-strategy/british-energy-security-strategy>

<sup>xvi</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-on-energy-saving-materials-and-heating-equipment-notice-7086>

<sup>xvii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-homes-to-produce-nearly-a-third-less-carbon>

<sup>xviii</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/29/onshore-windfarm-restrictions-ministers-rebel>

<sup>xix</sup> [https://www.renewableenergymagazine.com/pv\\_solar/uk-government-ends-uncertainty-on-solar-farms-20221207](https://www.renewableenergymagazine.com/pv_solar/uk-government-ends-uncertainty-on-solar-farms-20221207)

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<sup>xx</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63892381>

<sup>xxi</sup> <https://www.wwf.org.uk/future-of-uk-nature>

<sup>xxii</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/27/green-charities-urge-millions-of-members-to-oppose-tories-attack-on-nature>

<sup>xxiii</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/52/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/news/174670/mps-say-government-must-provide-clarity-on-farm-subsidies/>

<sup>xxiv</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/feb/17/uk-green-economy-has-failed-to-grow-since-2014-official-figures-show>

<sup>xxv</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/finalesimates/2020>

<sup>xxvi</sup> <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/local-skills-report>

<sup>xxvii</sup> <https://www.thecollege.co.uk/news/bournemouth-poole-college-event-launches-dorset-s-green-skills-hub>

<sup>xxviii</sup> <https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/research/centres-institutes/centre-sustainable-business-transformations>

<sup>xxix</sup> <https://democracy.bpcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s32274/Appendix%201%20for%20Climate%20Action%20Annual%20Report%202021%2012022%20Cabinet.pdf>

<sup>xxx</sup> <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s31423/Dorset%20Council%20Climate%20and%20Ecological%20Emergency%20Strategy%20-%20Progress%20Report%20Autumn%202022.pdf>

<sup>xxxi</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-61147739>

<sup>xxxii</sup> <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s31423/Dorset%20Council%20Climate%20and%20Ecological%20Emergency%20Strategy%20-%20Progress%20Report%20Autumn%202022.pdf>

<sup>xxxiii</sup> <https://www.dorsetcan.org/ddb.html>

<sup>xxxiv</sup> <https://democracy.bpcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s32639/Appendix%201%20BCP%20Local%20Cycling%20and%20Walking%20Infrastructure%20Plan%20LCWIP.pdf>

<sup>xxxv</sup> [https://www.dorsetcoast.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Dorset-Coast-Forum-Harbour-Report-Design\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dorsetcoast.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Dorset-Coast-Forum-Harbour-Report-Design_FINAL.pdf)