

**DORSET CAN**  
**Dorset Climate Action Network**

*Press release – for immediate use*

*20 January 2021*

***Speed up the Climate Action !***

**Civil society groups call on Dorset Council to Act on the Emergency**

Dorset Climate Action Network (Dorset CAN), a widely based group that was only set up three months ago, has called on Dorset Council to act far more rapidly than it had planned to cut greenhouse gases and stop the loss of wildlife in the county.

The Council, in its draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy published last November, set 2040 as the target for cutting to zero its own carbon emissions, and 2050 for all other organisations in the County. Dorset CAN says that this timetable grossly under-estimates the true emergency facing the world. It calls on the Council to fix 2030 as the date by which the whole county should achieve zero carbon emissions and broadly reverse the loss of wildlife.

Professor Michael Dower, editor of the Dorset CAN's formal response to the Council's Strategy, said, "Scientists worldwide are telling us that immediate action must be taken to prevent the planet's natural systems from spiralling out of control as multiple tipping points are reached and passed, and to stop the planet becoming a 'Hothouse Earth'. They say that every country and all levels of government should aim to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030."

He continued, "Other County Councils in this region, for example Wiltshire and Cornwall, have got that message, and are working urgently towards 2030 as the target for net zero. Dorset should rise to the challenge in the same way."

In its formal response, co-signed by over 20 community organisation in the county, Dorset CAN spells out practical ways to tackle the climate crisis, and offers to play an active part in the partnership that Dorset Council will need to forge with all stakeholders in the county.

"We urge the Council to work with the people of Dorset to agree a Vision of what the county could be like in 2030", said Professor Dower. The Network proposes a series of major themes for the work of the next 10 crucial years, including :

- Dorset acting to become the first Zero-Carbon County in the UK, having radically reduced its energy demands and moved wholly to renewable energy supply
- a **Dorset Lifelines** programme of widespread nature recovery to halt and substantially reverse the loss of wildlife
- an ambitious **Swim Dorset** programme to make every river and stream in Dorset safe for children to play and swim, and to make the water at every beach safe for residents and tourists alike
- a **Regenerative Dorset** programme to transform the county's economy to be green, sustainable in use of resources, with a strong dimension of local self-sufficiency - notably in food - and of circular activity including use of local timber in new buildings

- a **Clean Dorset** programme, to cut levels of air pollution to well below statutory limits, eliminate all single-use plastic and achieve the highest levels of waste reduction, re-use and recycling in the UK
- a **Planning for Resilience** programme to achieve high levels of resilience in its communities, focused on high standards in all housing and on easy access between houses, jobs and services
- a **Dorset Local Action Partnership**, through which the Dorset Council offers pump-priming grants to town and parish councils and community-based groups for climate and ecology projects.

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### Notes to Editors

1. **Attached** is the full text of the Dorset CAN Response to the Dorset Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. This Response is being submitted today to the LEADER and Chief Executive of the Council, with copies to all Dorset Councillors.
2. Also **attached** is a supporting letter from the Managing Director of the independent group Scientists Warning Europe, whose warning is quoted in the text of this Release.
3. The Response is signed (see the last page) by 25 Dorset-based organisations with a combined membership of over 3500 members and many affiliated groups.
4. Dorset CAN was formally launched on 28 November 2020, at the fourth of a series of Zoom meetings. Its membership is drawn from all parts of the county, focused mainly on civil society organisations and town and parish councils. Its action team is coordinated by Rob Waitt. He lives in Swanage and is also Coordinator of Planet Purbeck. He can be contacted at 07920 408 836, [robbiewaitt@gmail.com](mailto:robbiewaitt@gmail.com))
5. Professor Michael Dower, member of the Dorset CAN Action Team and editor of the Response, is available for comment or information at 01308 863515, e-mail [mdower6@btinternet.com](mailto:mdower6@btinternet.com). He lives in Beaminster, and is Secretary of the Beaminster Area ECO Group. He was formerly Director General of the Countryside Commission.