Preparing Dorset for the future

Working together on climate adaptation

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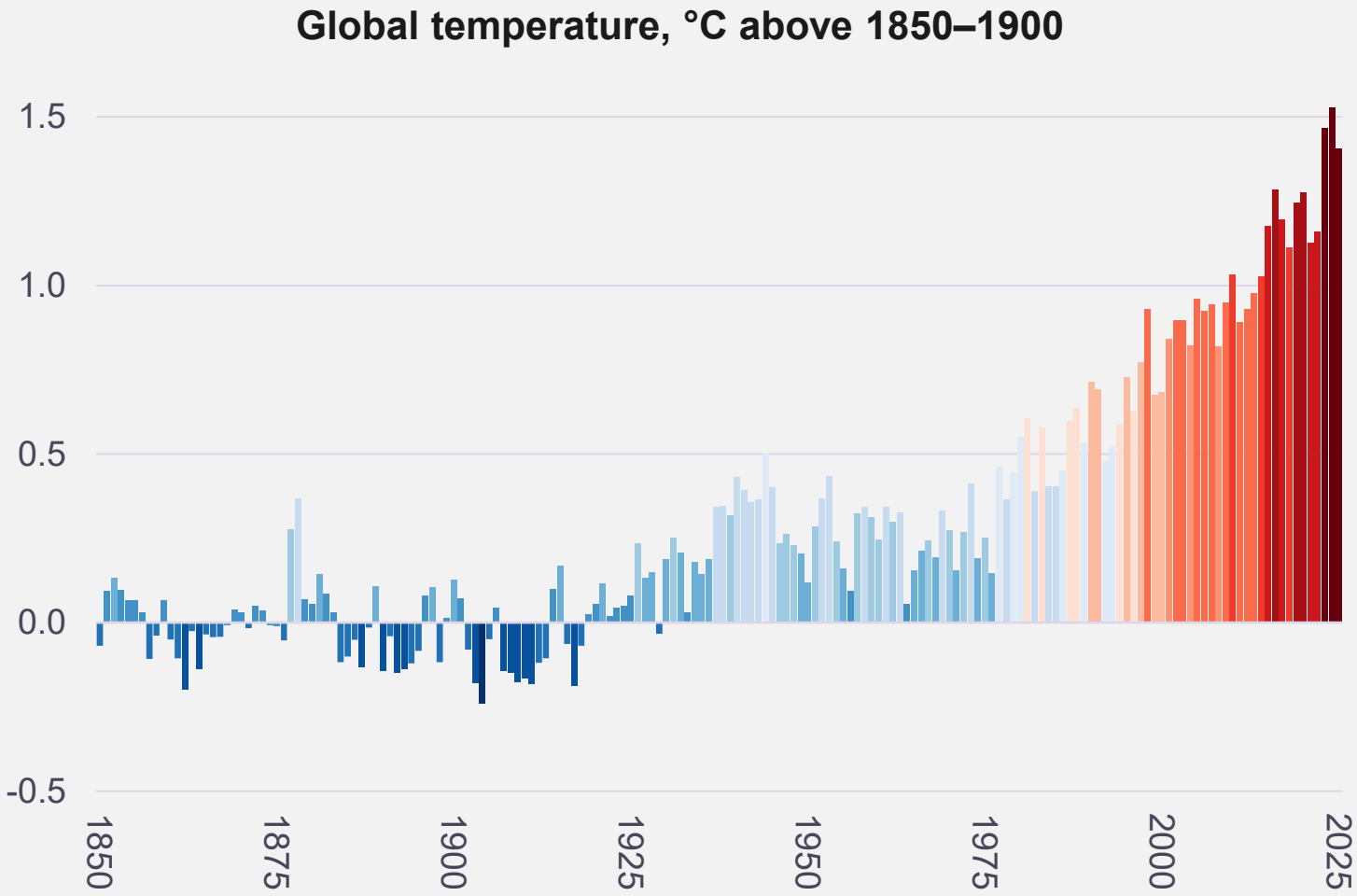


Lower Stour in flood, 2026. Photo: BCP Council

Today’s session

- ☑ **Understanding** Dorset's future climate
- ☑ **Exploring** what climate change could mean for Dorset's coast
- ☑ **Introducing** Dorset's Climate Adaptation Strategy
- ☑ **Identifying** coastal climate risks and opportunities
- ☑ **Sharing** adaptation actions already underway
- ☑ **Helping** shape Dorset's future resilience

Global signals



1.55°C

2024, the warmest year on record

Record

ocean heat in 2025, the 9th year running

4.75 mm

sea-level rise a year since 2012

Sources: Met Office Hadley Centre and University of East Anglia (HadCRUT5); World Meteorological Organization (2025, 2026); Pan, Cheng et al. (2026)

What do UK climate projections show?

Global | **UK**

Southern England | Dorset

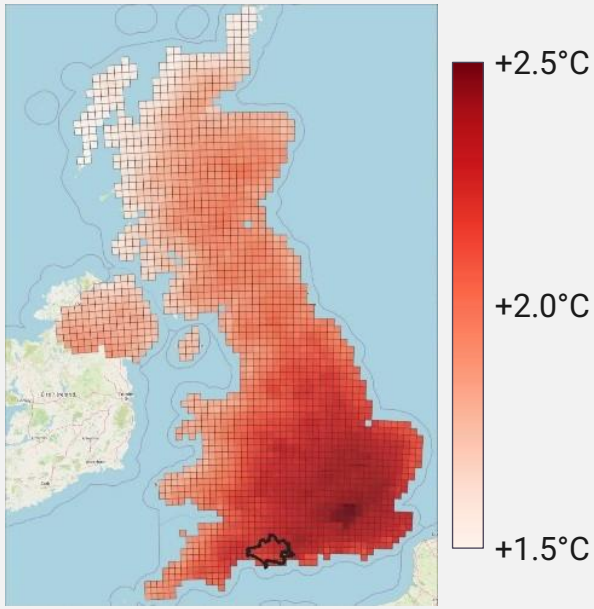
	UKCP18, about 2070, high emissions	Projected range	Already seeing
	**Hotter summers**	**+1.3 to +5.1°C**	Summer 2026: UK's hottest on record
	**Milder, wetter winters**	**+0.6 to +3.8°C**	2025: UK's warmest year on record
	**Intense downpours**	**~3× more often in the south**	Direction of travel, not a design value
	**Drier summers**	**Up to 45% less rain**	July 2026: South West's driest July on record
	**Sea level by 2100**	**+0.29 to +1.15 m (London)**	UK sea level up about 20 cm since 1901

Sources: Met Office UKCP18 Headline Findings v4.0 (2022); Kendon et al. (2023); Met Office (2026); HadUK-Grid; State of the UK Climate in 2025 (2026)

What does this mean for southern England?

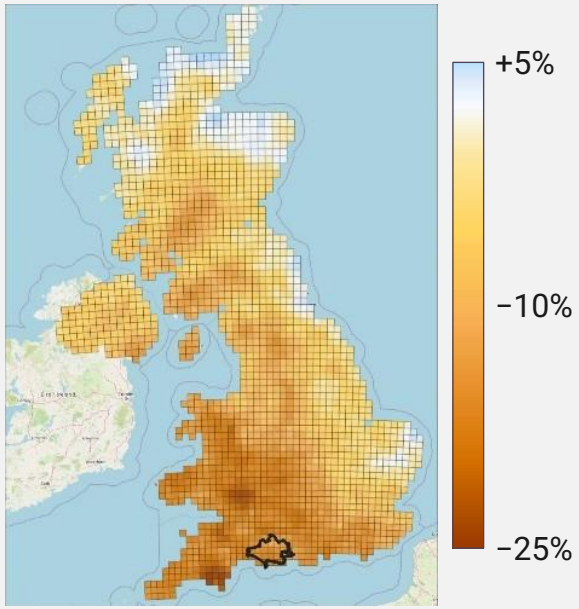
Global | UK | **Southern England** | Dorset

Summer heat



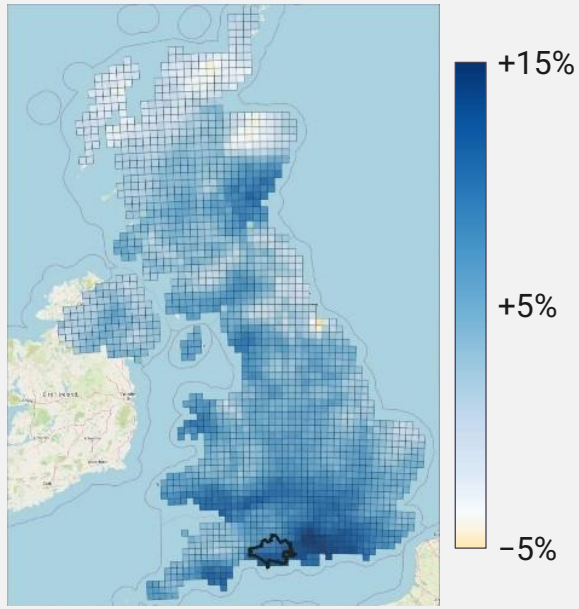
+2 to +2.5°C across the south

Summer rain



−15 to −25% in the south and south-west

Winter rain



+10 to +15% along the south coast

UKCP18 median change at 2°C global warming (2037–2056 vs 1981–2000)

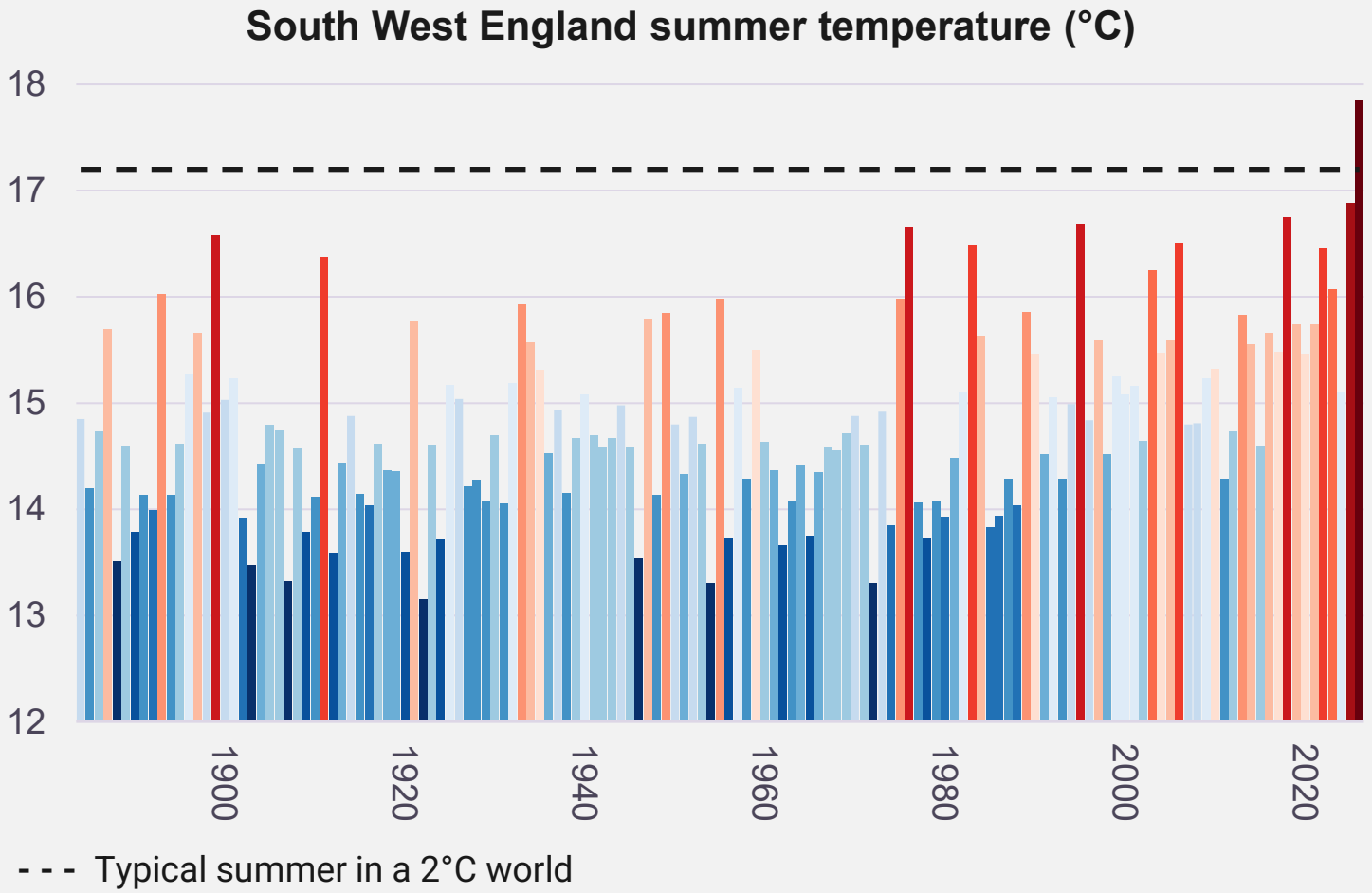
Why the south?

1. Land is slowly sinking, so relative sea level rises faster
2. Soft, exposed coast facing Atlantic storms and Channel surges
3. Strongest summer heat and drying in the UK
4. Largest winter-rain increase is right on the coast

Sources: Sustainability West Midlands (2026) for BCP Council and Dorset Council, from Met Office UKCP18; Bradshaw et al. (2016); UKCP18 Marine Report (2018)

2026: a preview of the 2050s?

Global | UK | Southern England | **Dorset**



17.9°C

Summer 2026: record by almost 1°C

2026 in Dorset

Jan Storm Chandra: Dorset's 2nd-wettest January; rivers at or above record

Feb Groundwater at or near record highs

Summer Hottest on record; driest July in the South West

Oct Severe drought declared in parts of Dorset (15 Oct) followed by Storm Austen (23 Oct) and Storm Boelo (24 Oct)

Sources: Met Office HadUK-Grid (England South West and South Wales, to summer 2026); Met Office (2026); BCP Council (2026); Environment Agency (2026)

Sector by sector: direct impacts

Global | UK | Southern England | **Dorset**

Homes and communities

Winter 2025/26: over 250 properties flooded across Wessex, Dorset worst hit. About 18,000 properties in Dorset and Wiltshire at groundwater flood risk.

Tourism and the coast

Longer warm seasons, but more heat stress, cliff-path and beach closures, and storm damage. Storm Ciarán, 2023: cliff collapse at West Bay.

Infrastructure

Storm Chandra, January 2026: 153 road-flooding reports in BCP; river levels in several areas met or exceeded records.

Natural habitats

Drier summers stress heathland and chalk streams. Heath fires: Wareham Forest 2020 (over 190 ha), Holt Heath 2025 (about 72 ha).

Heritage

Jurassic Coast geology, coastal archaeology and historic harbours face faster erosion and flooding.

Water resources

2026: near-record groundwater in February, then severe drought in parts of Dorset from 15 October.

Sources: Environment Agency (2026); BCP Council (2026); Met Office (2023); Forestry England (2020); Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (2025)

Knock-on impacts: people and the economy

Global | UK | Southern England | **Dorset**

Heat and health

2,877 heat-related deaths in England in May–June 2026 alone. Nearly 30% of Dorset residents are 65 or over.

Mental health

A year after the 2013/14 floods, over 1 in 3 people whose homes flooded showed probable PTSD.

Beach and water safety

Hot days, cold seas (about 12°C): cold water shock. Hottest day of 2020: BCP declared a major incident.

Visitor economy

£1.73bn and about 30,000 jobs in Dorset, exposed to heat, storms, closures and water quality.

Services and travel

26% of England's healthcare sites at flood risk; heat speed limits on Bournemouth and Weymouth lines.

Work, food and costs

June 2026 heatwave cost the UK about £1.15bn; drought cuts harvests; warmer seas affect shellfish.

Sources: UK Health Security Agency (2026); Census 2021; Waite et al. (2017); RNLI (2021); BCP Council (2020); Visit Dorset (2026); Climate Change Committee (2026); Network Rail (2022); LSE Grantham Institute (2026)

If today's trends continue: Dorset in the 2050s

Global | UK | Southern England | **Dorset**

Climate	Summers ~2°C hotter; 2026 is typical
Coast	Faster erosion, more cliff falls
Sea level	34–42 cm above 2000 by 2050
Rainfall	Wetter winters, drier summers
Extremes	More heat, drought and downpours

South West temperature, 1884–2025



Dorset's future climate won't resemble its past

Sources: Sustainability West Midlands (2026), from Met Office UKCP18; Environment Agency climate change allowances (2022); Met Office HadUK-Grid

Why does Dorset need a strategy?

- adaptation activity already underway across organisations and sectors
- clear need for:
  - shared understanding of local risks & opportunities
  - co-ordinated and aligned action
  - clarity on roles, responsibilities and decision making
- opportunity to prepare for future national policy, funding and reporting requirements

How will the strategy help Dorset prepare?

1



Build a shared understanding of our **climate risks & opportunities**

Output: high-level climate risk & opportunity register for Dorset

2



Agree our strategic **adaptation priorities, actions & governance**

Output: high-level strategic adaptation plan for Dorset

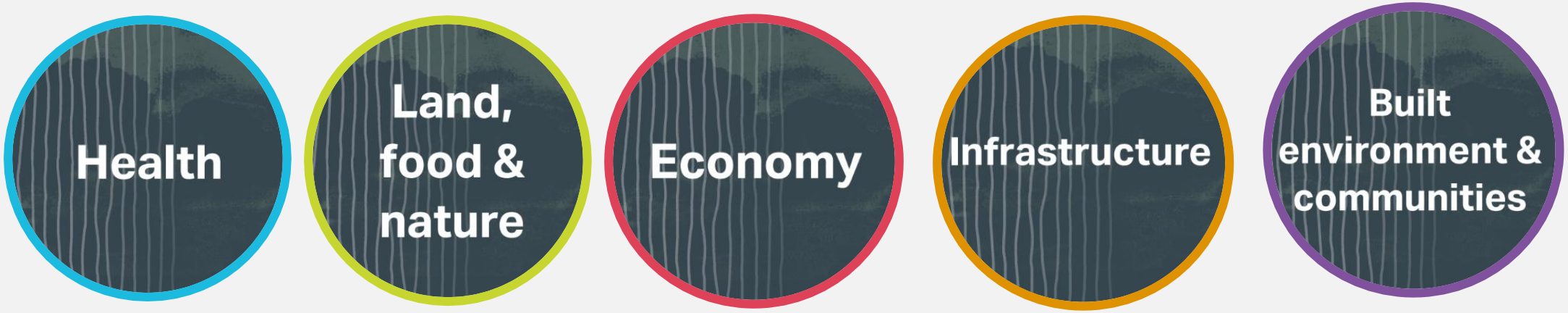
3



Deliver a **short-term action plan**

Output: clear, time-limited adaptation action plan for Dorset

How will today's workshop help?



We'd like your help to:

- ☑ **Explore** what national climate risks mean for Dorset's coast
- ☑ **Identify** Dorset coast specific risks and opportunities
- ☑ **Share** adaptation actions already underway
- ☑ **Identify** priorities for action

Today’s workshop

Activity 1 Sense checking the national picture (20 mins)

- How well do UK climate risks reflect Dorset's coast?

Activity 2 Dorset's coastal opportunities (10 mins)

- What opportunities could climate change create for Dorset's coast?

Activity 3 Adaptation responses (15 mins)

- What action is already happening, what is planned, and what more should be considered?

Activity 1: National picture

20 mins

How well do national climate risks reflect Dorset's coast?

Each table has been assigned a theme and a shortlist of relevant climate risks from the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment.

For each risk, discuss:

- Is this risk relevant to Dorset's coast?
- How significant is it locally?
- Are we already seeing evidence of this risk locally?
- How well does the national description reflect local circumstances?
- Are there any risks missing?

Activity 2: Dorset coastal opportunities

10 mins

What opportunities could climate change create for Dorset's coast?

Still focusing on your coastal theme:

- identify opportunities or benefits that could arise from a changing climate

If you have time, use the red dots to show the opportunities you think are most likely to provide the greatest benefit for Dorset's coast.

Activity 3: Adaptation responses

15 mins

What adaptation actions are already underway, being planned, or should be considered to help Dorset's coast prepare for climate change?

Discuss:

- What adaptation activities are already taking place?
- What activities are being planned, developed or funded?
- What new ideas or opportunities should be considered?
- Where are there gaps, barriers or opportunities for collaboration?

Thank you for your contributions!

Your insight and experience will now help inform:

- Dorset's climate change risk assessment
- future stakeholder engagement activities
- the development of Dorset's Climate Adaptation Strategy

What happens next?

Findings from today will be analysed alongside feedback from our wider engagement programme and shared for further feedback in the new year.

Didn’t get a chance to share everything?

We'd still love to hear from you. Please get in touch:

- Katie Dawes - **katie.dawes@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk**
- Ewa Idzikowska - **ewa.idzikowska@bcpcouncil.gov.uk**