

Energising Dorset

Economic Prospectus - Growth Strategy

2025 - 2040



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Introduction – Our Ambition

Dorset is a dynamic and vibrant county with nationally significant assets and potential to advance a new era of green growth.

Our business base is resilient, expanding and full of entrepreneurial spirit. There are significant investment opportunities in a county that is already forward-thinking and ambitious.

We have the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the sovereign security of the UK through the generation of clean energy, accelerating the transition to net zero, the development and manufacture of defence related capabilities, and the production of high-quality food and drink.

We can capitalise on our natural landscape and geography whether through our world class tourism offer, or through the use of natural resources to generate power or accommodate nationally significant port expansion or capture carbon emissions.

However, many of our strengths are hidden in plain sight. To make the most of these we need to address our inter-related challenges of high house prices, an aging population and low productivity growth. The aim of setting out our Growth Strategy is to realise the full economic potential of the county through a coordinated plan that addresses these challenges and is at the same time dynamic but coherent and, whilst ambitious, is persuasive, achievable and sustainable.

This strategy identifies the ambitions and intentions of a range of stakeholders and partners, to help make Dorset an even better place for business through working together and being ambitious for growth. This is just the start. We aim to be aspirational and forward thinking, to look beyond what is currently planned, identify new opportunities and build a brighter future.

We look forward to working with you to deliver this Growth Strategy for Dorset.

Leader / Richard signature



Working together, Ambitious for Dorset: a new, focused approach

Our approach will be unique and innovative. We're excited to explore new strategies and make a positive impact. Let's embrace this opportunity to stand out and achieve great results together.

We are ambitious in delivering economic change by focusing on large scale and strategic projects that represent the best prospect for transforming the Dorset economy.

Underpinning all this will be a relentless focus on delivering new, highly paid jobs for the Dorset economy. These jobs will help address the critical challenges in housing affordability, social mobility, skills availability, and low productivity.

This Growth Strategy sets out how Dorset Council will work to grow our economy. It focuses on a series of key opportunities that will contribute to the growth of the county and shows that Dorset is:

1. Ambitious for Clean Energy
2. Ambitious for Innovation
3. Ambitious for Regeneration of Weymouth and Portland
4. Ambitious for Jobs
5. Ambitious for University and Skills
6. Ambitious for Market Towns
7. Ambitious for Tourism

It sets out how the public sector, in an enablement role, can create the conditions to encourage economic growth but also focuses on where private sector investment can drive long term structural change.

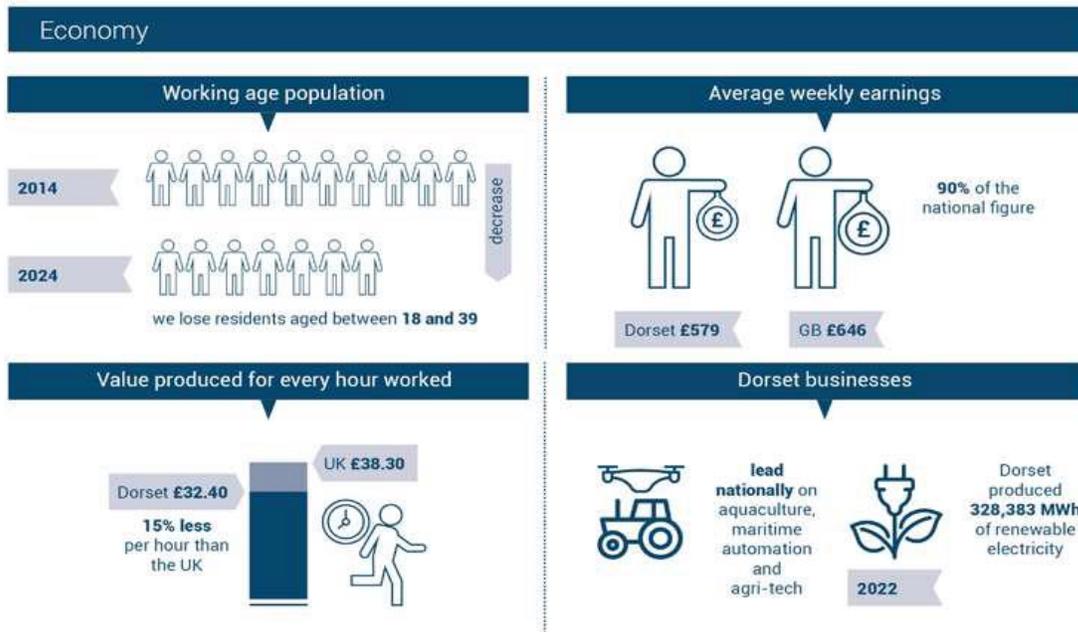
We are already charging ahead with bold and dynamic growth ambitions that promise to transform the region into an even more thriving, innovative, and sustainable place to live and work. With a focus on boosting local businesses, enhancing infrastructure, and driving forward environmental initiatives, Dorset is already investing in new opportunities and infrastructure to benefit residents and enterprises alike.

Delivery of our ambition has already started and recently the Council has invested over £30m in a series of schemes that will boost economic growth, productivity and local housing provision. We have:



- Awarded over £2m of grant support to 180 Dorset businesses and secured an additional £2.6m of private sector investment to help boost productivity, reduce Carbon emissions and encourage innovation.
- Investing up to £8m on road safety improvements at Dinah's Hollow. An important step to improve the link between Blandford Forum to Shaftesbury and the north of Dorset.
- Created a new arms length company to manage the delivery of the Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone and the creation of 300 jobs on the site.
- Committed to improving Saturday bus routes between key towns across Dorset. Saturday services have been launched on routes linking Shaftesbury, Gillingham, and Sturminster Newton, plus Bridport with Yeovil. We have also funded enhancements to commercial bus services in Weymouth, Ferndown, and Wimborne.
- Collected from developments approximately £14 million per annum via the Community Infrastructure Levy and planning obligations. These funds are allocated to support the delivery of essential infrastructure and services, including schools, highway improvements and affordable housing.
- Invested £2.3m in upgrading the quayside walls and pontoon infrastructure at West Bay harbour ensuring safe, modern facilities for commercial and recreational users, supporting local marine businesses and tourism.
- Commenced a procurement process to deliver up to four new extra care facilities with first locations identified in Wareham and Bridport.





Our Growth Strategy has four key roles:

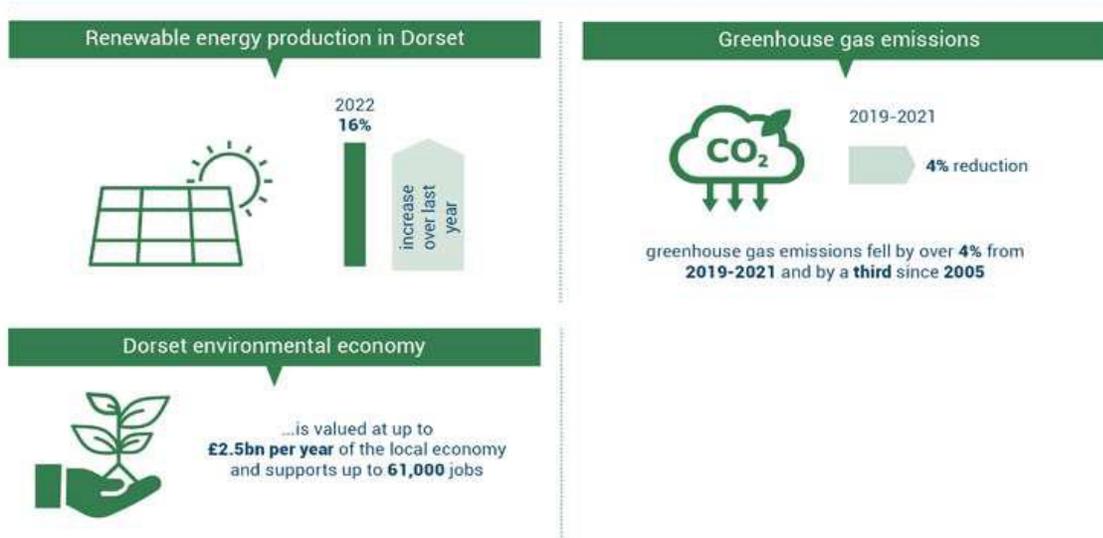
1. to support the growth of the Dorset economy by identifying priority projects:
2. to attract investment to Dorset and raise our profile as an investment location:
3. to facilitate the generation of high value and highly skilled jobs:
4. to provide Dorset with clear priorities for negotiations with government and local / regional partners.

This strategy showcases investment projects throughout the county, poised to attract over £28 billion in private sector investment. These opportunities leverage Dorset's economic strengths, promising long-term, sustainable, and well-paid jobs. This initiative will create a lasting legacy, transforming the county's image positively. The Growth Strategy marks the commencement of our exciting project, showcasing that Dorset is thriving and ready for business. By leveraging our shared strengths and addressing common challenges with neighbouring areas, this strategy will foster closer collaboration and drive forward our devolution goals. We want people to be excited about the county, to invest in our future, and to contribute to what we have to offer.



Ambitious for Clean Energy

A green growth revolution is underway which positions Dorset as a new UK destination for international investment in clean energy.



Bringing together private sector organisations, the Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster is on a mission to unlock investment and align processes to ensure the UK Industrial Strategy can be delivered in Dorset and the English Channel that includes south of Dorset. This will strengthen UK security and resilience, accelerate economic restructuring and transition whilst complimenting energy projects in the wider Celtic Sea Cluster and other parts of the UK.

Dorset presents multiple opportunities to advance Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) by harnessing its unique geography and geology, whilst leveraging the exceptional deepwater port at Portland. With an estimated investment level across all projects of £28 billion – the UK and Dorset has a strategic opportunity to enable a once in a generation transformation to drive and deliver green growth and clean power. This accelerates progress towards delivering Government ambitions set out in Invest 2035 and its commitments to clean power by 2030 and Net Zero by 2047.

Investment opportunities are centred around Winfrith and Portland Port with its strategic location, deep water, sheltered harbour and minimal tidal range, and availability of land and buildings that can be adapted to provide accommodation and manufacturing space. Opportunities include:

- Fixed offshore wind in the English Channel, South of Dorset, part of the Celtic Sea Cluster



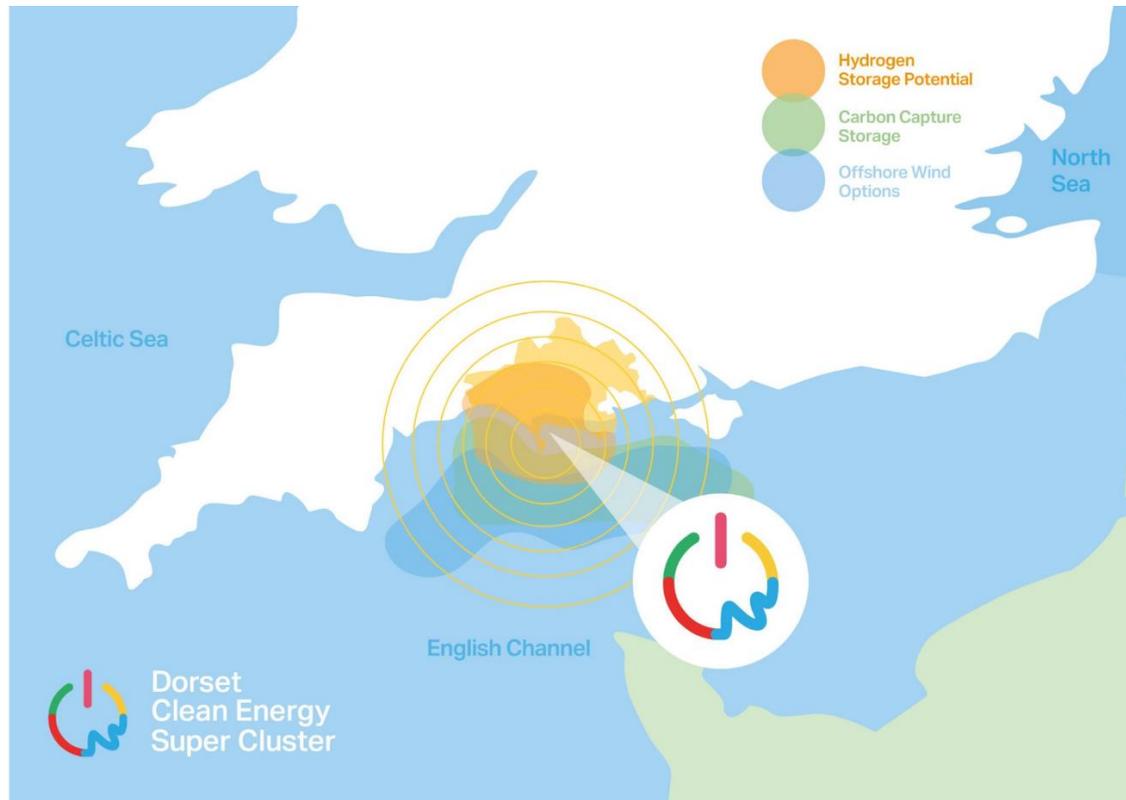
- Manufacturing, assembly and marshalling at a new deepwater, offshore wind hub
 - servicing the renewable energy sector
- Clean underground hydrogen storage
- Clean hydrogen production and import
- Carbon dioxide (CO2) capture and storage (CCS)
- Nuclear Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) at Winfrith
- Related opportunities such as grid improvements, floating solar and desalination
- Improving digital capabilities including high-capacity fibre spine and data centres.

By capitalising on Dorset's unique geological, geographical and physical assets such as grid connection points, nuclear licence, 2-3 GW of offshore wind generation potential, thick natural salt deposits, all centred around a deep-water port, a strong investment proposition for Dorset is being made with clear investor interest. Creating the conditions for investment and aligning national policy with regulatory and seabed leasing processes is now the key challenge to unlock delivery.

We want to work in partnership with Government, The Crown Estate, Great British Energy, regulators and wider private and public sector partners to maximise these opportunities. In doing this we can make positive contribution to UK energy security and achieve sustainable future-looking growth for Dorset. Furthermore, with the levels of energy being produced, opportunities for further private sector investment, such as for data centres, can be harnessed.

As a suite of projects, the Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster will provide economic opportunity far beyond its geographical location. Projects of the scale being promoted have a significant supply chain both in manufacturing terms but also in the supply of food, accommodation, and other ancillary services. The travel to work area for these projects will be considerable and, if replicating similar projects at Hinkley and Bridgwater in Somerset, will enable workers from across the county to benefit from the job opportunities.





Energy type	Process	Locations
Hydrogen	Storage – construction, operations and servicing	Dorset salt caverns
Hydrogen	Production – construction, operation and servicing	Portland and Winfrith
Carbon	CCS, construction, operations and servicing	Subsea, Weymouth, Dorset salt caverns, Lyme Bay / English Channel
Floating and Fixed offshore wind	Manufacturing, assembly, marshalling and servicing	English Channel
Floating and Fixed Offshore wind	Energy generation and onshoring - operations and servicing	Portland
Nuclear	Small Modular Reactors (SMR) – construction, operation and servicing	Winfrith



The NSIPs are connected in spatial terms and will influence strategic spatial plans to be produced by the National Energy System Operator (NESO). Both NSIPs and the local plan must influence the NESO Strategic Spatial Energy Plan and the work of the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) to ensure join up in project planning and delivery.

Complimenting these NSIPs, a wider network of smaller innovation projects are aligned to our green growth agenda. Supporting smaller scale projects through the Council is an important transition and restructuring opportunity as we work towards a net zero economy. Examples include:

- Extracting carbon from seawater at Weymouth
- Latent Drive - alternative fuel marine vessel, Portland Port

These future looking industries and environmentally sustainable new technologies are attractive to younger people, providing secure, skilled and well-paid jobs. Science technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education in schools, and higher education provision will be supported and enhanced to provide for the development, skills and research for these industries.

We want to collaborate with regional universities on industry and academia collaboration, including the take up of research and development, technology transfer and the location and support for university spin-out businesses. To do this, we can build on our existing contacts, such as Exeter University's carbon capture from sea water pilot demonstration project. There is also significant experience in Somerset to share on workforce development to enable NSIPs.

How we will do this

- Work with Government, The Crown Estate, Great British Energy, investors, key stakeholders and partners to promote and secure Portland as a location for servicing and manufacturing of fixed and floating offshore wind farms, a new and expanded port facility, and unlock a new offshore wind leasing Round 6 in the English Channel (to include south of Dorset).
- Secure in Dorset projects delivering clean hydrogen storage, hydrogen production and import.
- Secure projects in Dorset and offshore to capture carbon in underground strata subsea with operations at Portland Port.
- Develop, adopt and implement a new masterplan for the Nuclear Restoration Services (NRS) Winfrith site prioritising clean energy production as part of the End State.



- Encourage and facilitate investment in digital infrastructure to provide a foundation for economic growth and prosperity and so we can capitalise on the clean energy generation to power data centres and AI Growth Zones.
- Pursue a Devolution Deal with neighbouring authorities to secure devolved powers and funding from government which can support green energy projects, digital and transport infrastructure, skills and housing.
- Promote Dorset to feature in:
 - Offshore Wind Industrial Council
 - The Crown Estate Regional Growth Prospectus
 - Industrial Strategy
 - Clean Sector Plan
- Promote the Channel Gateway Project as a Supply Chain Accelerator Fund bid.
- Engage with regulators to ensure that licences are issued to enable investment and project development e.g. NISTA, The Crown Estate
- Engage with NESO to ensure that Dorset and the Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster is included in strategic spatial energy plans

Target Measures

By bringing productivity up to the UK average, we would generate an additional £1.6 billion for Dorset, leading to higher paid jobs and greater disposable income. We want to:

- Narrow the Dorset to UK productivity gap by 5% by 2029

The emerging Dorset Clean Energy Super Cluster is an area of significant opportunity for Dorset. We want to:

- Generate at least 2000 jobs and over £500m of private sector investment in renewable energy projects by 2035



Ambitious for Innovation

Dorset Innovation Park is an important employment site in Dorset as a high security business park and the location of Dorset's Enterprise Zone. We want to build on the existing defence, security and maritime cluster on site by attracting additional advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses. With an accelerated planning process in place, new and expanding businesses benefit from swifter planning decisions.

We want to bring about the expansion of Dorset Innovation Park as the county's premier location for high technology businesses. We have established a new arms-length company that has responsibility and autonomy for the delivery of the Innovation Park as a major employment and investment site.

We want BattleLab to be the headquarters of the new Defence Innovation Organisation, capitalising on the facility's remit to support our growing SME base through innovation and collaboration with MOD personnel and major companies in the MOD supply chain. Access will be provided to the Lulworth ranges, uniquely enabling companies to conduct live testing of equipment and systems across air, land and sea capabilities.

We will lobby Innovate UK to make BattleLab the new Defence Catapult Centre, and a part of the wider governments catapult network, pulling in research and development opportunities in partnership with Dorset's own SME community.

We will partner with universities for collaboration, research and development opportunities and create spaces on site where universities can conduct their research and teaching. We will also work with further education and higher education institutes to develop a programme of graduate placements and encourage spinout businesses.

In Dorset, we need to develop our economy by embedding digital technology across all sectors, investing in our niche and specialist advanced engineering and manufacturing sector.



With its sector specialisms and a secure 5G network, Dorset Innovation Park is well placed to make more of our natural advantages in clean energy and defence. Increasing



levels of successful innovation is key to securing well paid jobs, increasing productivity, improving wages in Dorset.

How we will do this

- Support and develop the operations of the arm's length company to manage and run Dorset Innovation Park with responsibility for selling land and commercial space, and creating a high-quality network of defence related businesses centred on the Innovation Park.
- Capitalise on opportunities for industry / academia collaboration by working directly with universities to provide student placements, research facilities at the Innovation Park and research projects.
- Negotiate with the MOD the future role of BattleLab as a centre for defence innovation and collaboration and as home of the UK Defence Innovation service.
- Promote inward investment in Dorset to innovative sectors and companies, such as those in defence, security, clean/ green energy technologies, marine and maritime, and provide a specific inward investment package as an offer to attract companies.
- Encourage incubation of innovative business through a range of commercial units and workspaces, including collaboration and coworking spaces, and a package of bespoke support to growing businesses.
- Expand the size and capabilities of Dorset Innovation Park through the acquisition of neighbouring land including the current NRS owned site, ensuring the Innovation Park's role as a long-term generator of jobs and investment.
- Develop an "innovation community" centred on Dorset Innovation Park but reaching across the county and into neighbouring areas who collaborate and assist each other to secure investment, research and commercial opportunities.

Target Measure

To enable private sector investment into the build out of Dorset Innovation Park, a new delivery company for the innovation park will be launched in 2025, bringing opportunities for growth. We want to:

- Maximise new floorspace development in target business sectors to generate business rates returns.
- Create 300 jobs at Dorset Innovation Park by 2029.
- Build an Innovation Community with over 50 participants by 2027.



Ambitious for Regeneration of Weymouth and Portland

The Weymouth, Chickereil and Portland area boasts a plethora of distinctive features that together create a compelling and unique selling proposition. Weymouth's town beach is among the finest in Europe, complemented by magnificent Georgian-era seafront architecture. It's active working harbour adds vibrancy and interest for visitors, alongside a marina with over 650 boat berths.

Portland enhances this offering with the National Sailing Academy and additional marina berths for 500 boats. It is a regional hub for water sports, such as kite surfing, sea kayaking, and wind surfing and is internationally known for sports climbing.

Chickereil provides a thriving employment hub, with its industrial parks, which are home to many defence contractors and specialist engineering businesses.

With marine conservation areas and the UK's longest beach, Weymouth, Chickereil and Portland are prominent features on the Jurassic Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site making tourism a major industry for the area.



We aim to capitalise on the natural beauty of the Jurassic Coast by enhancing the value of our tourism offerings through major projects like Eden Portland – an Eden sponsored attraction focused on the science of species diversity, evolution and extinction, as told through geological records utilising old mine workings on Portland as gallery space. We additionally plan to extend the tourism season by providing year-round points of interest and activities.

Vision for Regeneration:

In spite of the area's unique assets, Weymouth, Chickereil and Portland face several challenges, including:

- economic decline, with increasing deprivation and low social mobility
- tourism dependency, with seasonal and low wage employment



- harbour maintenance with significant repair needs
- inner harbour environment, dominated by busy roads and unattractive buildings



A vibrant and attractive Weymouth is a benefit to the whole county. The town benefits from a high profile and is a significant tourism draw meaning a successful Weymouth will encourage additional visitors to the county, people who have the potential to stay longer and make complementary visits to other towns.

We are embarking on a transformative journey to reinvigorate Weymouth, maximising the regeneration and renewal opportunities provided by the harbour and marina. Our goal is to turn these waterside locations into focal points for an expanded maritime leisure offer.

We will rejuvenate the local economy through a comprehensive redevelopment of the harbourside and old ferry terminal at the peninsula, creating high-quality public spaces where people want to spend time and money. This will reduce dependence on seasonal work, enhance the vibrancy of the town centre, and establish a high-quality leisure destination.

Through targeted interventions at underutilised council sites and properties, we will support the long-term regeneration of Weymouth, Chickerell and Portland. This includes cultural facilities, active leisure facilities, educational premises, wide-ranging retail opportunities, and an extension of the public realm to attract both local residents and tourists.

We aim to elevate the area's attractiveness as a national and international tourist destination by offering premium, high-quality hospitality and retail sectors backed by exceptional architecture and built environment. Our goal is to increase tourist spending to levels comparable with Bournemouth and Poole.

We will promote the area as the location for a world-class tourism attraction, such as Eden Portland, located predominantly underground in the mines, providing year-round, weather-proof leisure activities that attract higher tourist spend.



How we will do this

- Seek development partners to develop underused sites with high quality residential, retail and leisure schemes to enhance the town's offer and vibrancy.
- Create a "growth corridor" with Portland and Dorchester, bringing economic benefits to the wider area
- Encourage increased levels of sustainable, high value tourism and extend the visitor season throughout the year
- Give cross-council support for developers and builders to provide the right new and affordable homes in the right place for sale or rent
- Promote inward investment in Dorset to innovative sectors and companies, such as those in defence
- Promote the designation of suitably located and deliverable employment land allocations
- Promote and seek investment in Eden Portland, a world class tourism attraction focusing on the science of the Jurassic Coast UNESCO World Heritage site
- Use Local Development Orders (LDOs) on town centres and existing industrial estates to simplify and speed up planning permission.

Target Measure

Through working in partnership, we want to:

- support community-led masterplans in at least 70% of the coastal and market towns by 2029
- increase total visitor-related spend in Dorset by 5% by 2029
- implement approved new models of delivery to increase affordable housing supply making best use of council assets



Ambitious for Jobs

Dorset is a hot bed of innovation and entrepreneurship. Over 1,500 new companies are started each year in Dorset, many of them in high technology sectors. Our Small and Medium size Enterprise (SME) base is the bedrock of the economy with over 90% of all companies being either a micro or SME businesses. Equally we have some fantastic, advanced larger businesses operating across the County such as: Dextra Lighting in Gillingham, Eaton Mission Systems in Wimborne, Hall and Woodhouse in Blandford, and BAE Systems in Dorchester and Weymouth.

Supporting businesses that have the greatest capacity for growth will create our next generation of successful companies and enhance their ability to create high value jobs. We will adopt a focused approach to business engagement and support, targeting resources towards those businesses with the best growth prospects in our key sectors. Our major employers and most prominent businesses will be able to access dedicated one to one support to assist them with their growth proposals. We will create a team that signposts to finance and support, assists with planning or regulatory queries and permissions, builds relationships with politicians and senior managers, and lobbies on behalf of business within the council.

The Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business, as representative organisations, are critical in highlighting the key concerns experienced by the Dorset business community. The council will build strategic relationships with both organisations to better understand the everyday challenges faced by their members and to identify solutions to these problems.

We will form a new dedicated Dorset Growth Board which will champion Dorset, and Dorset businesses, within the county and at a national level. Led by the private sector and with representatives from key sectors, the Dorset Growth Board will advise on emerging concerns and opportunities for the Dorset Economy and how best to respond to them.

The Board will promote Dorset and lobby on behalf of the county to government departments and agencies, investors and other decision-makers on all matters relating to the county's strategic economic development.

Alongside our established businesses there is significant potential to capitalise on the spirit of entrepreneurship that exists across the county. Through our business mentoring service, Dorset Business Mentors, we will support multi-generational learning and the transfer of business knowledge and enterprise experience across generations. The mentoring service has supported over 2400 businesses and currently runs with 105 volunteer mentors, the majority of which are retired or former business executives, who want to give back to society.





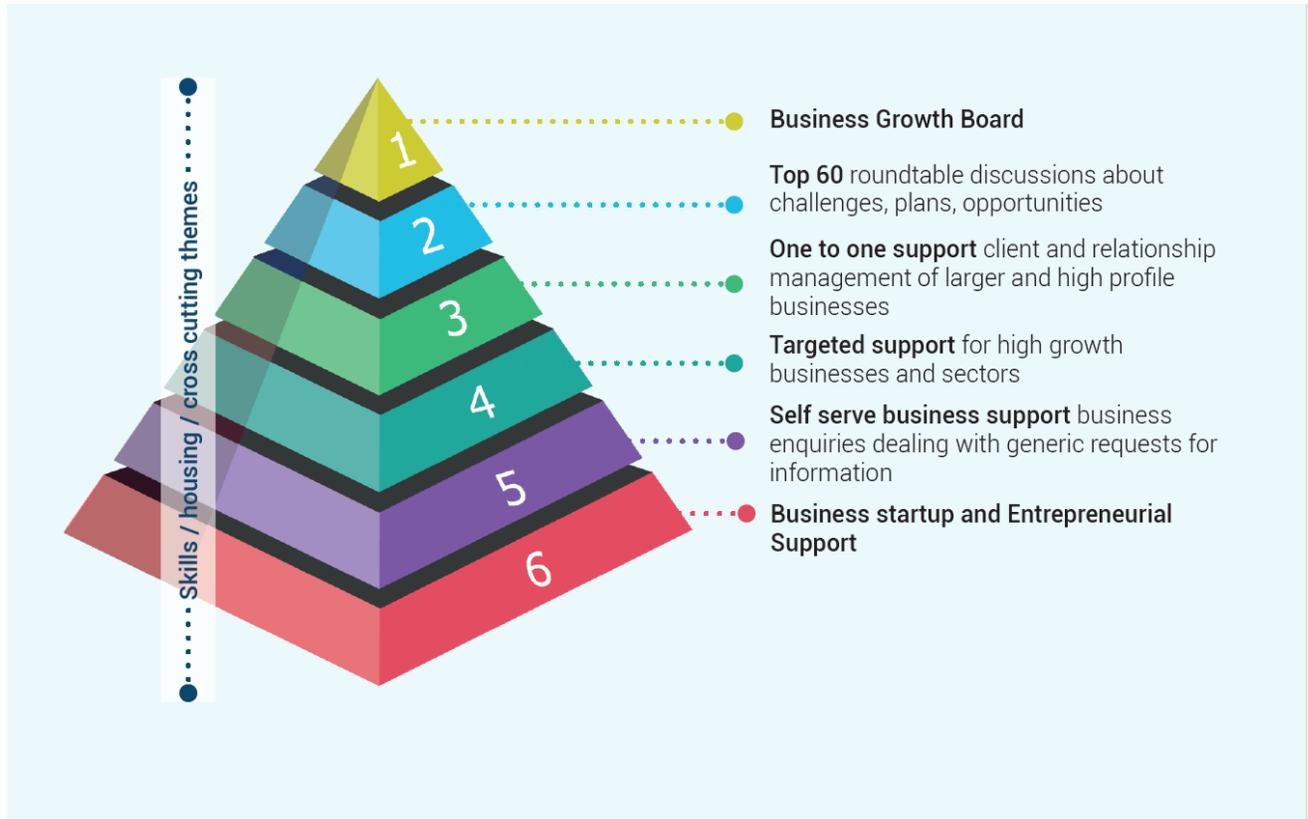
We will provide people looking to start their life in business with the resources and head-start that makes this journey less difficult. Bringing together dedicated expertise, funding, and access to programmes we will increase the number of new business start-ups and give them the best possible chance of success.

How we will do this

- Target the use of government support towards businesses, regardless of location or business sector, who can provide higher paid jobs, research and development opportunities, and are more productive.
- Establish a new Dorset Growth Board made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies
- Develop a strategic relationship with the Dorset Chamber of Commerce and support the development of local chambers and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to generate business engagement and intelligence.
- Introduce a new approach to business support provision - with resources, most effort will be put into the businesses across the County which offer the greatest opportunity for economic growth and productivity gains.
- Support and promote the service provided by Dorset Business Mentors.
- Work with schools and colleges, alongside Dorset Careers Hub to embed entrepreneurship into the delivery of the curriculum.
- Establish and roll-out a business start-up programme targeted at young people in the 16 to 34 age range.



- The model below shows how Dorset Council will support and target its interaction with key businesses. For smaller businesses a self-service option with signposting will be available.



Target Measures

By bringing productivity up to the UK average, we would generate an additional £1.6 billion for Dorset, leading to higher paid jobs and greater disposable income. We acknowledge this is a significant challenge that will take time and capacity. We want to:

- Narrow the Dorset to UK productivity gap by 5% by 2029

Retaining and attracting entrepreneurial young people will be key for the future success of Dorset's economy. We want to:

- create 1,000 business start-up courses for 16 to 34 year-olds to encourage young people into entrepreneurship by 2029



Ambitious for University and Skills

In Dorset, we want to attract and retain young people. With limited higher education provision, Dorset's brightest students often move out of the area to study and then not return until much later, if at all. A university in Dorset will provide a source of graduates for local businesses offering high quality jobs.

University provision in Dorset, linked to our growth sectors, will provide improved careers choices, awareness and opportunities for young people. This will inspire them about Dorset and create the ambition to succeed. We want to increase the take up of STEM subjects in schools - driving attainment through ambition, tackling social mobility and inspiring our children for the future.

The evidence is clear, increasing the level of skills in the workforce is fundamental to long-term economic growth. The UK economy is moving to more high performing and high value-added sectors, which needs more people to be employed in higher skilled jobs. Higher education courses are key to increasing the skills base of Dorset's workforce.

It is vital that we ensure that young people have the skills that they need to work locally. Promoting STEM subjects in schools linked to our high growth sectors is important for achieving this. Additionally, working closely with universities, which have these specialisms, will provide people with greater visibility of training and development opportunities to upskill and achieve their potential. Through this collaboration between businesses and education institutions, training provision will be responsive to changing and emerging business and skills needs.

With the Health Sciences University, which has existing student facilities in Bournemouth (Boscombe) and London (Southwark), we are planning to establish a training hub specialising in reablement and nursing facilities. The hub will be able to provide on-site training up to masters' level.

Working closely with universities which have specialisms in our growth sectors will provide opportunities for university spin out businesses to be supported and nurtured in locations such as Dorset Innovation Park. The benefit from the commercialisation of university research is that it feeds through to knowledge transfer to Dorset businesses. This drives technological and productivity improvements, as well as attracting young people into increased numbers of secure, high skilled and well-paid jobs.



How we will do this

- We will work with schools and businesses to increase the visibility and take up of STEM subjects and to raise the aspirations of young people, demonstrating the progression routes to high level achievement and well-paid secure jobs.
- Work with regional and local colleges and universities to increase higher education and university student work placements in Dorset focusing on our growth sectors.
- Collaborate with regional universities on industry and academia, promoting the take up of research and development, technology transfer and the location and support for university spin-out businesses.
- Develop a new university campus in Dorset, focusing on healthcare, with associated student facilities and accommodation.
- Investigate the potential for a new Further Education facility to provide academic and vocational training in the north of the county and south Wiltshire / east Somerset.
- Establish a business broker service between the Dorset business community and Weymouth College to facilitate the update of industry specific courses, and development of students with a skills set to fit with local business needs.
- Raise skills levels in priority and future growth sectors, including advanced manufacturing, and clean energy, through new and enhanced provision of further and higher education in Dorset.
- Establish higher education provision on Dorset Innovation Park linked to defence and advanced engineering
- Develop Dorset Careers Hub activities to build greater awareness of Dorset careers

Target Measures

Retaining and attracting technological knowledge transfer, university spinout businesses and entrepreneurial young people will be key for the future success of Dorset's economy. We want to:

- Encourage young people into entrepreneurship, by creating 1,000 business start-up courses for 16 - 34 year olds by 2029.

By working together in partnership, we want to:

- Transfer up to £500,000 a year of Dorset Council's apprenticeship levy to increase the number of apprenticeships offered by local businesses and organisations
- Improve educational attainment by working through leadership in the education community: increase Dorset's Key Stage 2 results (55% in 2024) to be as good or better than the national average levels by 2029 (60% in 2024)



Ambitious for Market Towns

For Dorset to be successful, it needs to promote economic growth across all its communities. To do this we will work in partnership with the Town and Parish Councils to celebrate their uniqueness, and support what works well in their areas for their businesses and communities.

We will develop a framework for the production of Market Town Masterplans, setting out a route for the development and adoption of community based plans for towns and their surrounding parishes. This approach will empower local communities to take the lead on individual town strategies that are rooted in their own distinctiveness and strengths and build upon community need and priorities.

Asset development / repurposing has a key role to play in supporting place making and regeneration in a town centre setting, building sustainable and creative communities which support local people with a range of good quality employment opportunities.

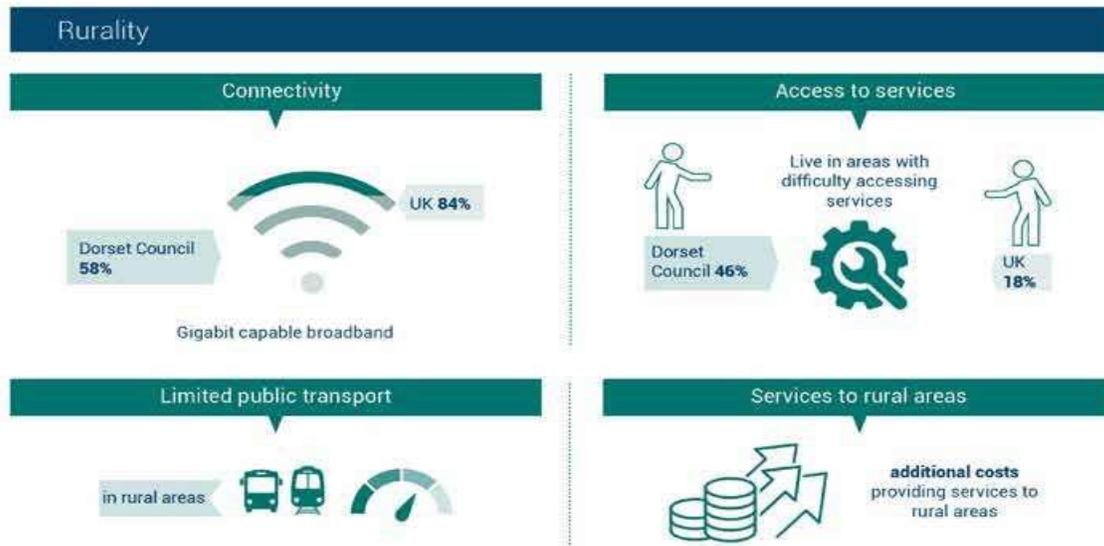
Through our Strategic Asset Management Plan, we will facilitate the repurposing of town centre assets to support the implementation of Market Town Masterplans where they contribute to economic development, resulting in economically viable, vibrant town centres and mixed-use town centre sites to support both service delivery and economic growth.

Often our market towns are reliant on a small number of businesses for the majority of the area's employment. It is important that we support these businesses and ensure that they have the space to grow and thrive. In planning for the future of our towns we need to ensure that there is good supply of land, in the right places, which is allocated for work and employment.

We want all of Dorset's market and coastal towns, to each have a suitable allocation of deliverable employment land to facilitate local company growth. We will identify additional employment land allocations at locations of opportunity particularly where these are well served by communication linkages and market demand.

Additional growth should be targeted along communications corridors. Providing affordable housing, in perpetuity for local working people, in locations where they can easily access employment is vital for the future growth of Dorset's economy and the continued sustainability, vitality and viability of its towns and villages.





How we will do this

- Develop a coastal and market towns strategy framework to support growth and regeneration, working in partnership with town and parish councils.
- Give cross-council support for developers and builders to provide the right new homes in the right place for sale or rent, including affordable housing
- Promote the designation of sizeable, suitably located and deliverable employment land allocations through the local plan for each of Dorset's coastal market and towns, and along existing communication routes such as the A303 and A31.
- Use LDOs on town centres and existing industrial estates to simplify and speed up planning permissions.

Target Measures

By working together in partnership, we want to:

- support community-led masterplans in at least 70% of the coastal and market towns by 2029
- implement approved new models of delivery to increase affordable housing supply making best use of council assets



Ambitious for Tourism

Dorset has a strong history of tourism, supported by its cultural, literacy, and geographical assets. Dorset is internationally recognised for its outdoor sports and leisure activities. Younger couples and groups looking for unique, good quality experiences in Dorset are strong and growing markets. Equally we will maximise the opportunities to attract older people with greater disposable income who are seeking high quality leisure and culinary experiences. Furthermore, Dorset excels at attracting overseas visitors from places like Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA.

Visit Dorset, the county's tourism organisation, collaborates with local and national businesses and partners at all levels, including VisitEngland, the national tourism body, to support and promote Dorset's visitor economy. It promotes the whole of Dorset including the rural parts of the county to help spread the benefits of visitor spend over an extended tourism season, through:

- targeted marketing campaigns aimed at specific demographic groups identified as likely to be interested in the Dorset offer
- encouraging more off-peak visits
- promoting rural events
- promoting businesses on social media, highlighting the uniqueness of rural Dorset.
- working with market towns to promote events and activities such as the Purbeck Walking Festival
- promoting unique events and activities that will encourage visits like the Dark Skies campaign
- hosting town micro-sites on their award winning and acclaimed tourism website

Visit Dorset is excited about joining the nationally accredited, Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Programme. Working collaboratively with Dorset Tourism Association, it has demonstratable strengths in destination management. Visit Dorset prides itself on bringing together all elements of the local visitor economy and providing them with a strong voice. LVEP participation will give Dorset the opportunity to work in a proactive partnership with Visit England and help shape and deliver national strategies in Dorset.

The key goals for Visit Dorset are to:

- increase the individual levels of spending per visitor
- spread the benefits of tourism across the county, focusing on the more inland areas and market towns
- ensure tourism provides a year-round driver of economic activity throughout Dorset



To provide a high-quality tourism offer, covering accommodation, hospitality and attractions throughout Dorset, requires the industry to focus on innovation to increase its productivity, profitability and sustainability. It is vital that all facilities and amenities are inclusive and accessible for both tourists and residents. Through this the tourism industry will be able to provide skilled, decently paid, year-round employment.

In developing Dorset's tourism offer to bring the benefits of high-value tourism to all parts of the county, Visit Dorset will work in partnership with town and parish councils to promote the richness of the area's offerings, focusing on identified growth markets of:

- Luxury and Learning
- Nature and Culture
- Comfort and Convenience
- Fun and Relaxation
- Active and mindful

How we will do this

- Encourage increased levels of sustainable, high value tourism and continue to explore ways to extend the visitor season throughout the year
- Work with VisitEngland to develop the Dorset LVEP
- Develop a Visitor Economy Strategy that identifies and targets key demographic groups likely to be attracted to visit Dorset.
- Include within the Local Plan, policies that are supportive of tourism and tourist infrastructure particularly where this helps diversify the type and location of tourist activity.

Target Measure

By working together in partnership, we want to:

- increase total visitor-related spend in Dorset by 5% by 2029



Ambitious for Delivery

The scale of our ambition is significant. We want to have conversations with investors and prospective partners interested in helping us achieve our aspirations.

To speak to someone about the implementation of our Economic Growth Strategy please contact:

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