

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



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FOREWORD

Whoever said, “The only constant in life is change” must have been talking about 2022/23. We have had a new monarch, two new governments and yet more LEP reviews. We also found ourselves in another crisis to add to war and disease, with soaring energy prices fuelling double digit inflation, affecting individuals and businesses across the county.

Ever alert to the changing needs of businesses in Dorset, I'd like to thank Dr. Corrina Osborne for her leadership in developing a 3 year business plan, as it accurately anticipated the direction of travel for LEPs and has enabled us to focus on delivering for Dorset. The plan required a full restructuring of the LEP organisation and has ensured that we were well placed to face the future. I would also like to thank all the LEP staff, many who left us last year, for their part in successfully driving economic growth, creating jobs, helping our young people take the next step in education or employment and assisting businesses in Dorset. I would also like to welcome Vinita Nawathe, who joined us as Director in October 2022 to guide the implementation of this plan and our renewed priorities.

Some highlights of our work this year include establishing a Digital Skills Hub in Boscombe high street to provide learning opportunities for residents and businesses principally around technology adoption and the revitalisation of our “invest in Dorset” programme aimed at promoting some of the key sectors in the county to encourage inward investment. Our Careers team continued their outstanding work with 82 schools and colleges, facilitating the delivery of the national careers education framework to all schools including those with SEND provision, fully supported by colleagues in both local authorities and our wonderful cornerstone employers.

On a regional level, we finally achieved government recognition for the Great South West, a partnership of the private sector, local authorities, universities, MPs and the three South West LEPs, established as a joint task force with Government and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the South West, working to ensure our regional offer and ambitions are understood and supported across Government.

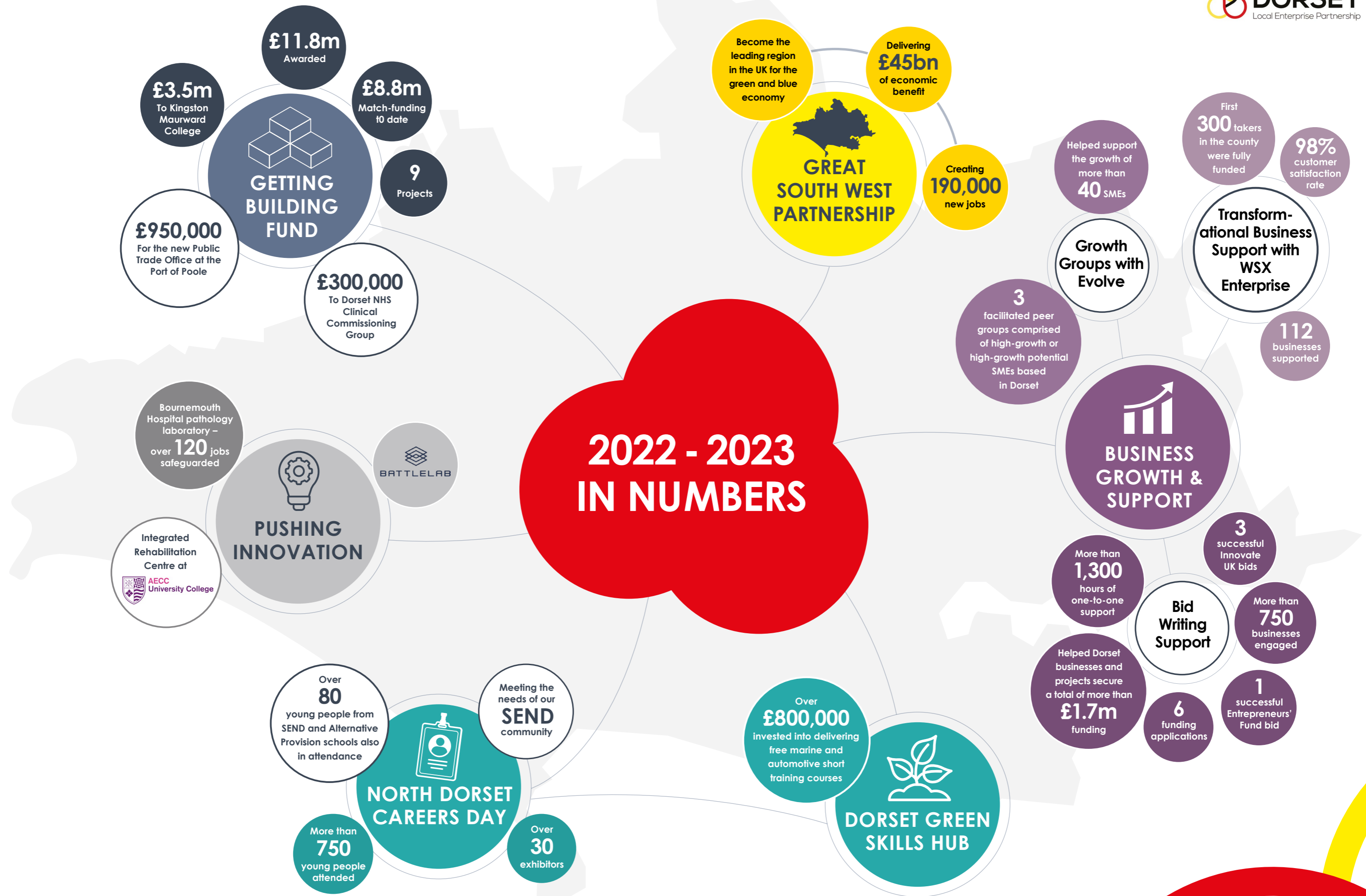
Members of the LEP Board are business and educational leaders sitting alongside our democratically elected local authority leaders. We will continue to work in partnership to offer a forum for business to influence infrastructure and place shaping, to achieve an agreed approach that creates the conditions for business to succeed, the houses we need for our workforce, the infrastructure to move our people, goods and data and the places where our communities feel proud and happy to call home.

I hope you enjoy this latest review of Dorset LEP's work and achievements.

Cecilia Buffon

Chair, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership







Lansdowne Campus



DCH EA Meeting



Dorset Healthcare NHS Trust at Broadstone Middle School Careers Fair



West Dorset Schools Careers Fair at Sir John Colfox School

DELIVERING FOR DORSET

£11.8 million invested to help Dorset's post-pandemic recovery

In 2022 we successfully delivered our **£11.8 million Getting Building Fund investment programme**, utilising effective collaborative working to deliver value for the region.

Nine "shovel-ready" projects across the county were made possible by Dorset LEP's investment of the government fund, launched in 2020 as an accelerated funding scheme to aid economic recovery in the face of the pandemic.

By 2025, these initiatives are expected to yield the following benefits:

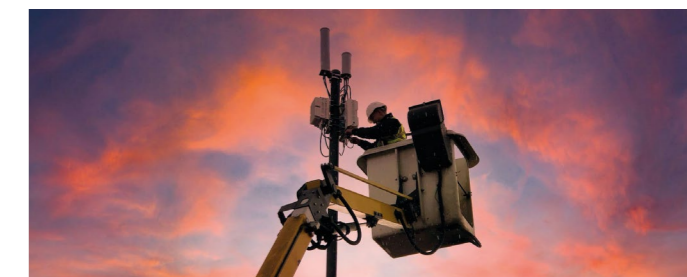
- Establishment of more than 14,000 essential superfast broadband connections in rural Dorset.
- Reduction of CO₂ emissions by over 23,000 kilograms, contributing to Dorset's efforts to meet national targets for a net-zero economy by 2050.
- Creation or safeguarding of over 300 jobs.
- Support for more than 250 businesses.
- Development of 1,500m² of commercial space, nearly 2,000m² of learning space, and 150m² of research and development space.

The investment included the following allocations:

- **£950,000** for the new Public Trade Office at the Port of Poole, designed to streamline freight processing. This investment has already led to the creation of 480m² of commercial floor space and is on track to generate nine new jobs, safeguard 69 existing jobs, and attract £1 million in private investment.
- **£1.59 million** to Dorset Council, matched with funds of **£8.8 million**, to enhance digital connectivity through full fibre across the Dorset Council spatial area, with a particular emphasis on rural areas with poor connectivity.
- **£300,000** to Dorset NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for hypertension remote monitoring, education, and support.
- **£3.5 million** to Kingston Maurward College for a flagship university centre and rural business hub. This development will facilitate rural business support, growth potential, and potential business incubation units focused on agri-environment delivery.



Kingston Maurward College



LGC Awards - Future Places - Smart Place - 5G Unit

PROMOTING DORSET AS A CENTRE OF INNOVATION

Bournemouth Hospital Pathology Lab

Situated at the Wessex Fields site, adjacent to Bournemouth Hospital, this advanced facility has been purposefully designed to deliver swift, precise, and comprehensive testing services, catering to both routine and specialised diagnostics. Its primary goal is to enhance the diagnostic capabilities of hospitals across the region, ensuring that patients receive first class care and treatment while addressing the growing demand for specialised medical services. Additionally, the laboratory will offer valuable development opportunities for staff.

This facility is a pivotal component of the One Dorset Pathology network, a collaborative initiative uniting Dorset County Hospital and University Hospitals Dorset. Its completion is imminent, and we eagerly anticipate the positive impact it will have on healthcare services in the region.



Integrated Rehabilitation Centre at AECC University College

Opened in October 2022, the AECC University College's Integrated Rehabilitation Centre offers a wide range of services, including neurological rehabilitation, exercise classes, frailty and falls prevention, occupational health testing, and sports rehabilitation. This state-of-the-art, 746m² building represents a significant investment in the university's health sciences campus, with nine treatment rooms and a spacious rehabilitation area to aid recovery after injury or illness.

The centre offers a diverse multidisciplinary clinical team, comprehensive treatments, therapies, and ultramodern equipment, catering to a broad audience, from the general public to individuals with complex medical conditions, including amateur and professional athletes. Students at AECC University College also gain hands-on experience working with rehabilitation experts.

Funded by a £2.7 million grant from the Getting Building Fund by Dorset LEP, alongside additional funding from AECC University College, this facility is part of nine projects supported by Dorset LEP. It aligns with Dorset's Living Better investment portfolio and One Health agenda, bolstering the Bournemouth East economy and establishing Boscombe as a hub for excellence in clinical and rehabilitation education, care, and research.

Additionally, these facilities supported the launch of new health sciences courses, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, and podiatry. These started in January 2023.

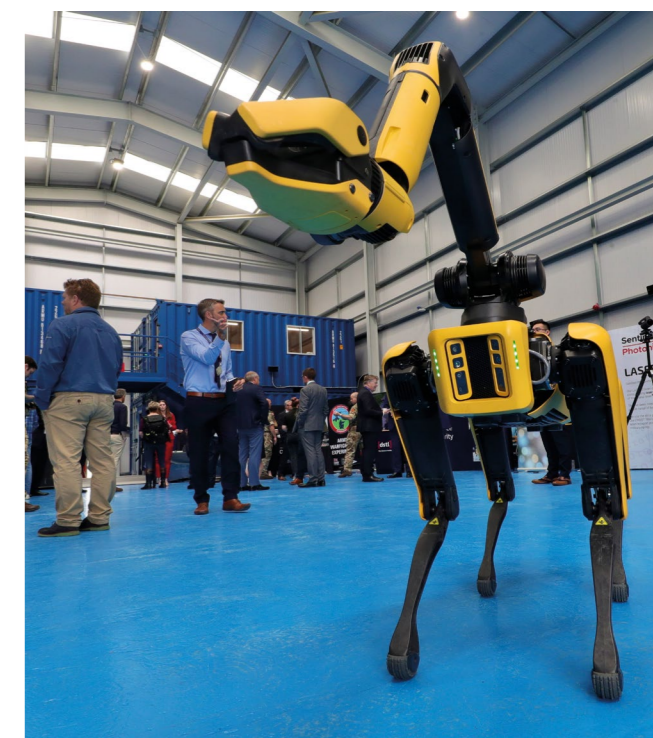
BattleLab

Expanding upon successful global innovation models and UK Defence initiatives, the Dorset-based Defence BattleLab - opened in May 2022 - is a dynamic hub for military personnel, academic institutions and private sector companies to explore and experiment with cutting-edge technology.

BattleLab offers a range of state-of-the-art facilities, including access to the UK's exclusive multi-domain ranges at Lulworth, equipped with 15,000 feet of cleared airspace, sea areas, and live fire capabilities. Additionally, it provides a live trial and showcase workshop for both digital and physical technology, three 5G testbeds for secure network testing, and over 100 rentable desks for companies, along with office space for Defence staff.

While the BattleLab doesn't have a singular focus, it's dedicated to fostering innovative thinking and unconventional approaches to address challenges across the land, sea, and air military domains.

The realisation of this facility was made possible through a **£1.7 million investment by Dorset LEP** through the Dorset Local Growth Fund, demonstrating our commitment to driving innovation and progress in the field of defence technology.



BUSINESS LED GROWTH

Dorset LEP is awarded funds by the Department for Business and Trade to provide a dedicated business support function for Dorset. Through this we are able to deliver a free service, offering advice and support for businesses within the county, including providing them with business diagnostics and signposting to the most appropriate commercial or public funded assistance available to help them grow.

2022 and 2023 were difficult years for businesses in Dorset which, like most other businesses in the UK, experienced a range of challenges such as increased cost of energy, skills/workforce shortages and supply chain disruption. Our activity focused on supporting businesses to manage and recover from these impacts to build back a stronger economy.

Our primary objectives revolved around providing

strategic direction in shaping the current and future business support provision across the county, and helping businesses to access opportunities for growth and increase their resilience against the impact of economic shocks.

Our re-branded business support programme focused on Transformational Business Support - providing information, diagnostics and signposting with access to a full suite of video content in addition to one-to-one support - and Business Growth Group programmes.

We continued to work very closely with local and national business support providers across the public and private sector. We worked alongside European Regional Development Fund programmes and the local authorities to ensure interventions add capacity and value to the local business support ecosystem.

Transformational Business Support

In August 2022 we commissioned award-winning business support and employability company WSX Enterprise to help small businesses in Dorset to access free support via training videos, drop-in sessions and one-to-one guidance from their leading experts. This was specifically for people running, starting or scaling up small business ventures.

The scheme is generally available on an affordable annual subscription, but thanks to an agreement between the not-for-profit provider and Dorset LEP, the first 300 takers in the county were fully funded.

The programme was designed to offer essential help for sole traders and small companies, such as hairdressers, plumbers, builders, therapists, food and drink producers, craftspeople, tattooists, mechanics, painters and decorators.

The scheme was also open to students with a business idea alongside their courses, unemployed workers seeking to invest their redundancy settlements in new careers, would-be influencers ready to monetise their social media channels and business hobbyists keen to supplement their main income to cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

Subjects covered included marketing, time management, financial planning, website design, cyber security, social media and how to build a personal brand. The **programme supported 112 businesses** with one-to-one specialist support as well as 74 with video access, and achieved a **98% customer satisfaction rate**.

CASE STUDY: SKYFAST MEDIA



Skyfast Media is a filming, photography, animation time-lapse and 360° virtual reality production company based in Blandford, North Dorset. Skyfast Media used the Dorset LEP Transformational Support Service from WSX enterprise for a one hour one-to-one and follow up online video support.

Owner Mark Hume also attended face-to-face events that were hosted by the Dorset Growth Hub. He said: *"The advice has been really helpful and opened opportunities to grow the business in different directions and see potential growth when the economy recovers. It's given me a better understanding of marketing and how to drive the business forward, and a good understanding of the grant landscape and how to apply when appropriate opportunities arrive.*

The discussions have opened my eyes to new business products and concepts. This included retraining and qualifying as a domestic energy advisor offering an additional service. Following the one-to-one with the advisor, I have designed new packages and the price points have been successful in growing revenue."



Business Growth Groups: Boosting Businesses in Dorset

Running a business in good times is difficult enough, let alone being at the helm during the current storm of economic challenges. We commissioned Business Growth Groups programmes to help ensure businesses were well placed to address and overcome these challenges, while positioned to take advantage of opportunities that arise through local and national programmes, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Innovate UK funding and the planned South West Investment Fund.

Working in partnership with Dorset Chamber and professional training and coaching company Evolve, we helped support the growth of **more than 40 SMEs**. This free online programme - open to businesses in all sectors particularly marine, maritime, advanced engineering, manufacturing, defence and security, agritech, aquaculture and digital health and care - explored a range of key themes that could make a positive difference for participants and the companies they are responsible for.

The programme - which ran from October 2022 to March 2023 - saw the creation of up to three facilitated peer groups that comprised of high-growth or high-growth potential SMEs based in Dorset. Topics covered growth strategies, financial resilience, recruitment and retention, leadership and management and net-zero solutions.



Dorset LEP high-potential peer group

Bid Writing Support

Dorset LEP provides a fully funded, specialist bid writing support service to help more Dorset entrepreneurs, SMEs and projects access government funds to power their business growth, increase collaborations and drive innovation.

Since its launch, the service has helped Dorset businesses and projects secure **more than £1.7m of funding** from the likes of Innovate UK. We have provided more than **1,300 hours** of one-to-one support and engaged with more than **750 businesses** through conferences, workshops and masterclasses. In 2022/2023 our bid writing support service led to **six funding applications** (five Innovate UK and one Entrepreneurs' Fund) with three successful Innovate UK bids and one successful Entrepreneurs' Fund bid - a **total of £822K of funding** for Dorset businesses.

Dorset LEP ScaleUp Support Programme

We have continued our relationship with Evelyn Partners (previously Smith & Williamson) who provide an exclusive tailored programme of ScaleUp support to high-growth businesses.

We promoted the work of the ScaleUp Institute, encouraging businesses to participate in their events and complete the Annual ScaleUp Survey. Where appropriate, we signposted businesses to other scaleUp programmes such as those run by South West Manufacturing Advisory Service and Innovate UK EDGE.

The Dorset LEP's Primary Business Support Objectives

We have set forth a comprehensive strategy to drive the region's business support initiatives. Our primary objectives encompass a range of crucial areas aimed at not only shaping the current business landscape but also paving the way for future growth.

At the forefront, the LEP is committed to providing strategic direction, acting as a guiding force in moulding the present and future framework for business support services across Dorset. Simultaneously, we actively promote Dorset as a prime destination for inward investments, emphasising its appeal to innovative, ambitious, and rapidly growing businesses.

Recognising the global landscape, the LEP aims to assist Dorset's businesses in tapping into opportunities abroad, facilitating the export

of goods and services. The focus remains on leveraging existing strengths and bolstering high-growth sectors, channelling resources effectively for optimal impact.

Strategic resource allocation is a key facet of the LEP's approach, concentrating efforts on medium and high-intensity interventions. This ensures that resources and funding are utilised judiciously to maximise their efficacy.

In line with the ever-evolving business environment, the LEP places a premium on innovation, considering it a fundamental pillar for enhancing productivity in Dorset. By fostering an environment conducive to innovation, the LEP aims to fortify the region's economic resilience against potential shocks, thereby supporting local businesses in navigating and overcoming challenges.

High Level Achievements

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, we have achieved significant milestones that showcase our commitment to fostering a thriving business ecosystem in the region.

A notable accomplishment was the rebranding of the Growth Hub service from Dorset Gateway to Dorset LEP Business. This strategic move reflects a dedication to clarity and alignment with the broader goals of the LEP. Complementing this, substantial investments and updates to the Dorset LEP website have been made, ensuring that businesses can easily access important information and support.

The website itself has undergone a transformation, with key sections added to

provide comprehensive support. From general business assistance, start-up guidance, financial support and sector-specific aid, to co-working hubs, office space, international trade and exporting - each aspect is meticulously covered.

Collaboration with the Department for International Trade underscores the LEP's global perspective, encouraging connections between local businesses and initiatives like the Export Academy and the SME Internationalisation Fund. This collaboration led to **76 Dorset SMEs securing funding**, thereby enhancing their global reach and impact. The Dorset LEP's achievements in 2022/2023 exemplify a proactive and impactful approach to bolstering the region's business landscape.

INVEST IN DORSET

As one of the UK's top areas for high growth digital businesses and second fastest growing area for start-ups in the UK, we continually work to promote Dorset as a highly attractive investment region and help local businesses access global markets.

We have continued in our membership of the South West Trade steering group with colleagues from five other LEP regions in the south west and are also active members of the SW Foreign Direct Investment Operations group.

We have an existing memorandum of understanding with the Department for Business and Trade and continue to develop this relationship through both the export and foreign direct investment arms. This relationship is managed through the Invest in Dorset team - the Inward Investment team - which is a subgroup of the LEP that is led by the Head of Business Growth & Inward Investment.

Our work alongside the Department for International Trade continues to connect local businesses with the Export Academy and SME Internationalisation Fund. To date, **49 Dorset SMEs have applied for and been accepted** onto the SME Internationalisation Fund, which offers match-funded grants of between £1k and £9k to help support future export activity. Similarly, we have helped businesses across the county and across a range of business sectors to enrol onto the Export Academy programme.

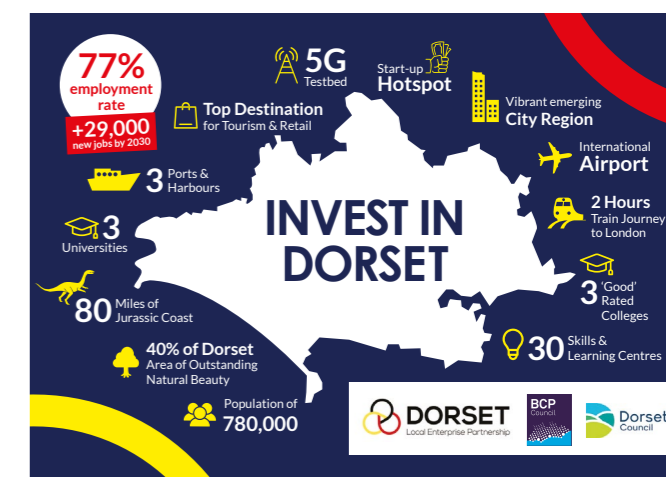
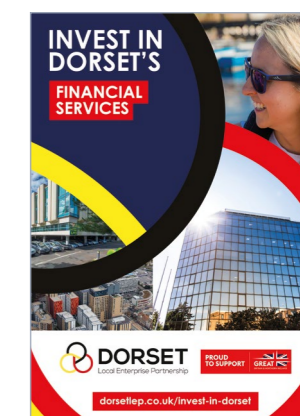
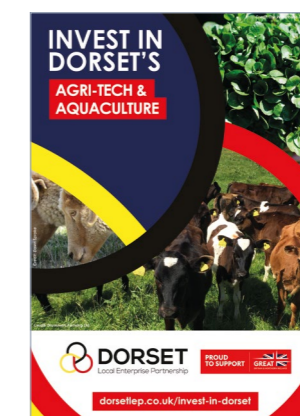
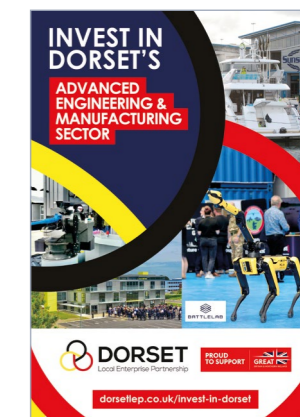
Members of the LEP team also attend and feed into the Department for International Trade's Internationalisation Fund for the South & West project advisory group. We have an active Dorset Ambassador network of which business investment including inward investment, is a key focus.

New Investment Guides Unveiled to Boost Economic Growth

Businesses and investors across the UK and abroad were able to access a new suite of guides showcasing the potential for millions of pounds worth of opportunities to invest in Dorset.

Six investment prospectuses are now available to download free from our website. They highlight more than fifty case studies of transformational business success from Dorset, including companies such as Lush and Sunseeker who compete on the global stage.

Each guide covers a specific sector key to the Dorset economy - advanced engineering and manufacturing, agritech, financial services, marine, and digital and creative. They have been produced by our Invest in Dorset team, a group of economic development professionals who help clients identify opportunities for growth and expansion in Dorset.





Our strategic oversight and collaborative efforts bridge the gap between the needs of businesses, the aspirations of residents, and the capabilities of educational institutions. This holistic approach positions us at the forefront of fostering a well-equipped, adaptable, and mutually beneficial ecosystem for businesses and individuals alike.

In the context of our 2022/2023 skills investment initiatives, several standout achievements underscore the LEP's commitment to encourage a highly skilled and adaptive community.

One noteworthy accomplishment involves providing local context data analysis and crafting a skills strategy plan for both BCP and Dorset Council. This strategic support serves as a

foundation for discussions and investment planning related to their allocations of the Shared Prosperity Fund, ensuring that resources are directed where they are needed most.

The Train4Tomorrow Skills Bootcamps take centre stage as a dynamic avenue for adult education. These face-to-face and online courses, spanning up to 16 weeks, empower adults to retrain for high-demand job roles in emerging or rapidly growing sectors. This proactive approach not only addresses the evolving needs of the workforce but also opens doors for individuals seeking new opportunities in dynamic industries.

A key facet of our efforts involves delivering regular Labour Market Updates, offering insights into the

INVESTING IN SKILLS

Our ambition is for Dorset's workforce is to be highly productive, aspirational and agile so that the talents of all contribute to prosperity, wellbeing and innovation. LEPs have a future in continuing to enable the voice of business and support the skills provision with clear insight and direction.

Through the strategic oversight of our Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board, we play a pivotal role in forging connections between businesses and education and training providers. This concerted effort is geared towards achieving several key objectives that form the backbone of our mission.

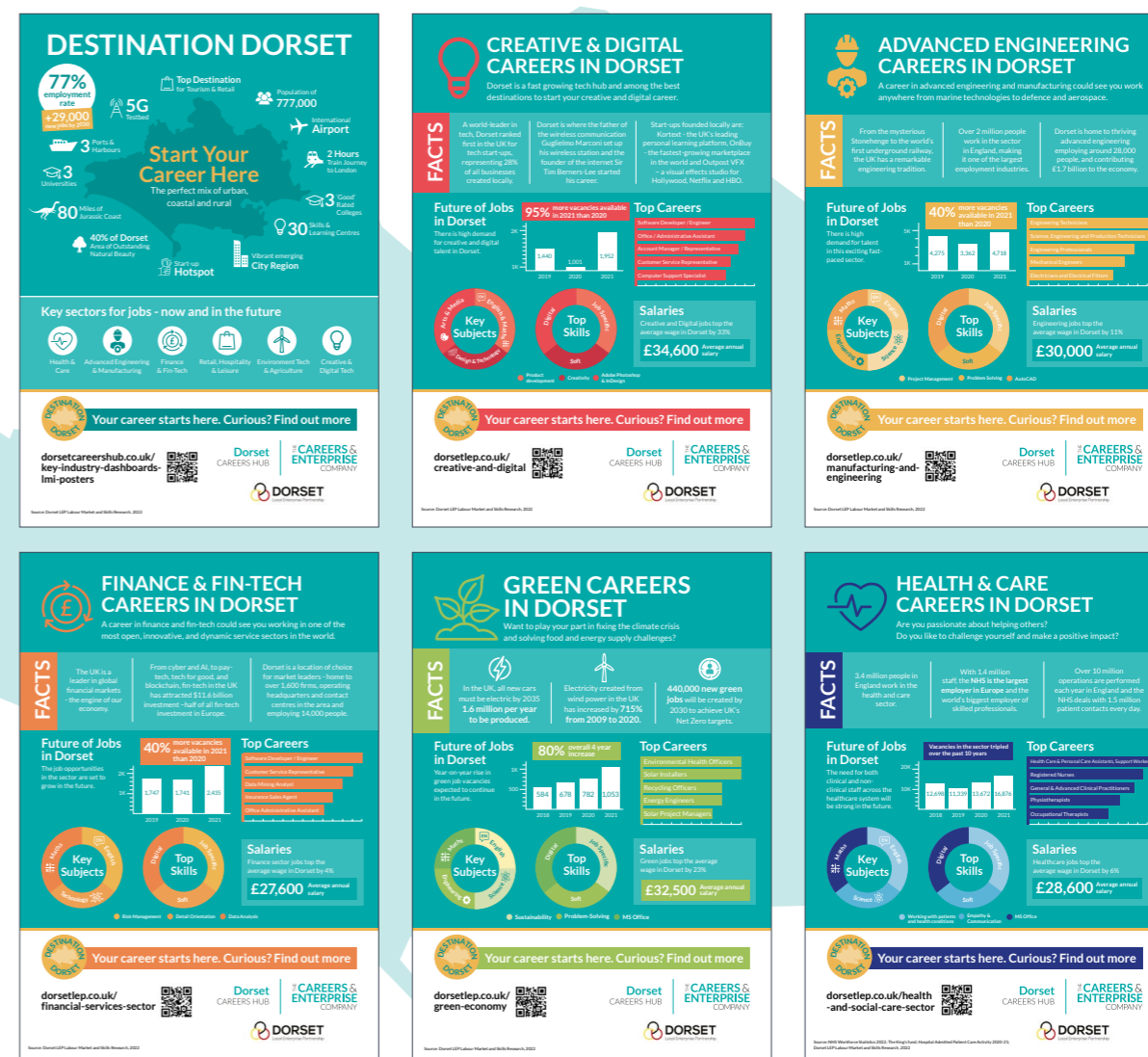
Firstly, we work diligently to guarantee that residents possess a skills mix precisely tailored to meet the demands of available jobs. This proactive approach aligns education and training with the ever-evolving requirements of the job market, ensuring a skilled workforce that can seamlessly integrate into the professional landscape.

Secondly, we act as facilitators in the symbiotic relationship between businesses and the skills they require to not just survive, but thrive in a competitive environment. By identifying and addressing these

needs, we contribute to the overall resilience and growth of businesses within our community.

Equally important is our commitment to ensuring that residents have unfettered access to training opportunities. This involves breaking down barriers and creating pathways for individuals to acquire the necessary skills that align with their aspirations and the demands of the job market.

Lastly, our engagement extends to supporting higher and further education institutions. By collaborating with these institutions, we aim to fine-tune their offerings to directly align with the skills businesses require. This ensures a dynamic and responsive educational landscape that contributes to the continuous development of a skilled workforce.



LMI posters

ever-evolving landscape of the labour market and economic developments in Dorset. This information serves as a valuable resource for individuals, businesses, and educational institutions navigating the complexities of the professional world.

Striving to empower the younger generation, we've produced Labour Market Information (LMI) posters for use with young people and parents. These materials provide valuable insights and guidance, equipping young people with the information needed to make informed decisions about their educational and career paths.

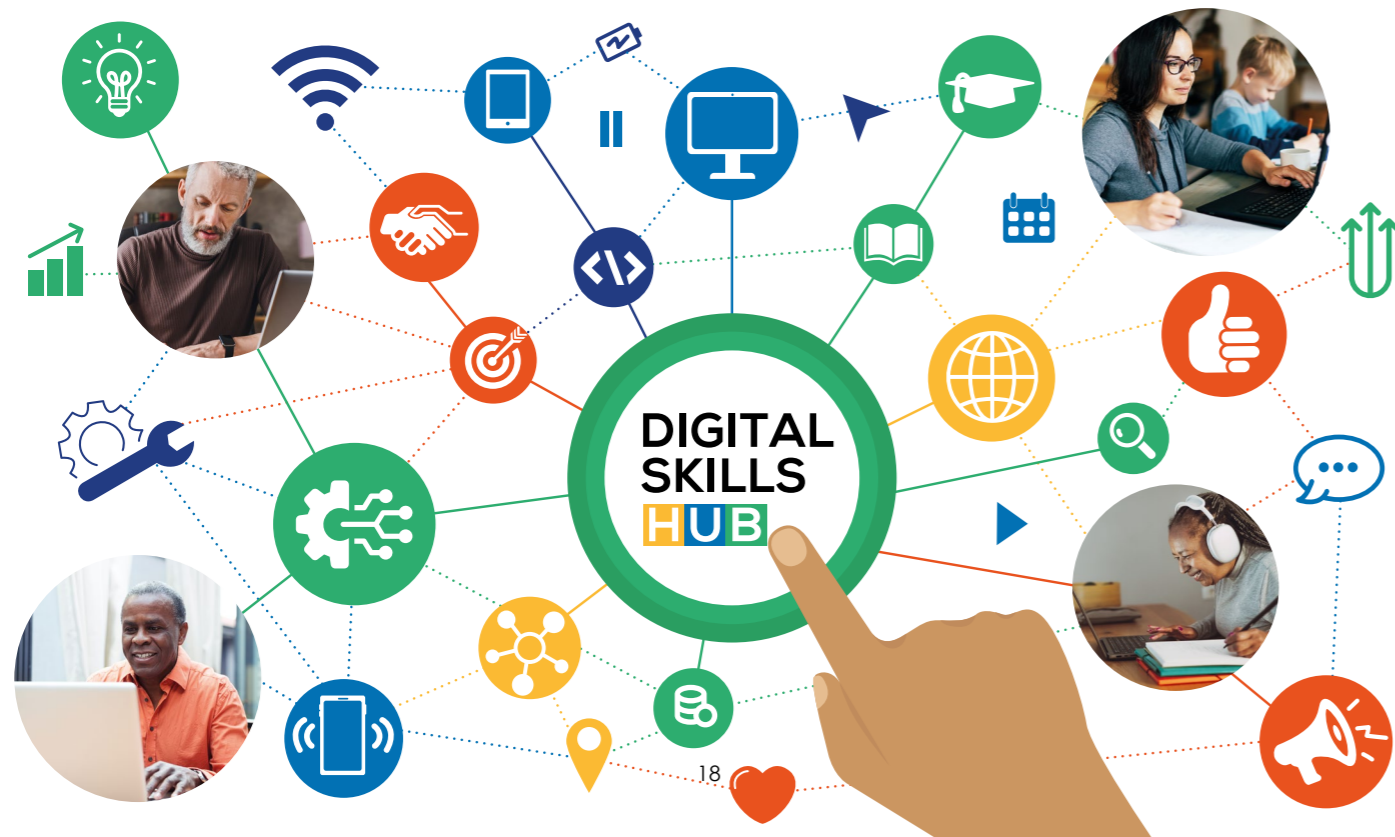
Launching the Dorset Green Skills Hub stands as a testament to our commitment to sustainability. In collaboration with Bournemouth & Poole College, Weymouth College, and Skills & Learning Adult Community Education, this initiative, funded by the government's Strategic Development Fund, **injects over £800,000** into delivering free marine and automotive short training courses. These courses, utilising cutting-edge equipment, ensure that technicians are well-versed in electric vehicle and boat engine technologies, supporting the growth of sustainable, climate-friendly green technologies locally.

Our collaboration with Dorset Chamber on the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan further reinforces our dedication to strategic partnerships. This plan serves as a blueprint for enhancing the skills landscape in the region, ensuring alignment with the progressive needs of businesses and the workforce.

In the realm of inclusivity, our Disability Confident initiative is gaining momentum, currently working with nine businesses to attain Disability Confident level 3. Focused on the 19-24 age bracket, this effort aims to create a more inclusive and supportive working environment for individuals with disabilities.

Lastly, the awarding of a contract to deliver the Digital Skills Hub marks a significant step in enhancing digital literacy and addressing digital exclusion. The Hub, established following a tender from BCP Council, operates from Boscombe High Street, offering bespoke programmes tailored to business and population needs.

In essence, our 2022/2023 skills investment highlights a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to nurturing a skilled, informed, and inclusive community ready to meet the challenges of the future.



Collaboration

With a collaborative foundation spanning three key organisations - Dorset LEP, BCP Council, and Dorset Council - our strategic response thrives on a close working relationship that has reaped significant benefits over the past 12 months. The synergy of this partnership is evident in our multifaceted approach to addressing challenges and propelling key initiatives forward.

Integral to our collaborative efforts is our participation in a T-Levels steering group. This involvement serves a dual purpose - supporting schools in the implementation of T-Levels and encouraging employers to actively engage with and support this educational pathway. By nurturing this connection between education and industry, we contribute to the cultivation of a workforce that rises confidently to the demands of the professional landscape.

Additionally, we actively share data on young people's destinations, playing a crucial role in NEET prevention. This collaborative, information-sharing approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by young individuals, enabling targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

Addressing the unique challenges posed by Education Investment Areas remains a priority. Through cooperative efforts, we identify and tackle these challenges head-on, working towards creating an environment conducive to educational growth and development.

Ensuring the robust representation of key industries within the county, our Cornerstone Employers actively engage in schools outreach, aligning with our overarching goals. This cooperative approach ensures that students receive exposure to diverse career paths and industries, laying the foundation for informed decision-making.

In the realm of key activities and achievements,

Dorset
CAREERS HUB

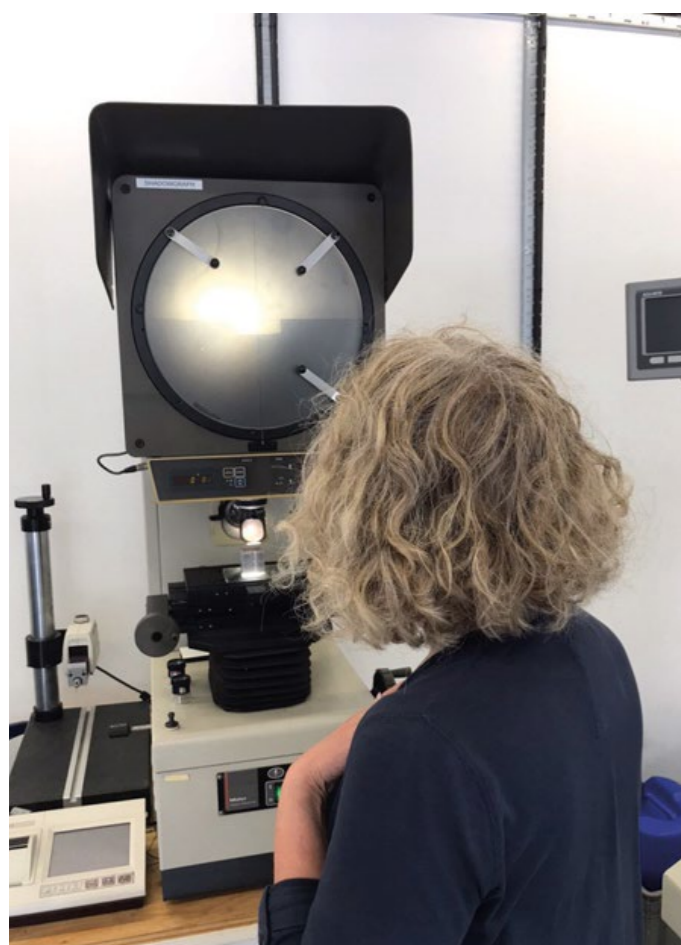
THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

The Dorset Careers Hub works with schools, colleges and employers to deliver excellence in careers education and connect young people with the world of work, helping them to find their best next step. Funded by the Department for Education, and the Careers & Enterprise Company, our team supports careers leaders in individual institutions offering consultancy, training and continuing professional development.

Our ultimate aim is to impact the lives of young people, show them what they can be, and pave the way to the future they choose. We do this through close working partnerships with our two local authorities, Employer Representative Bodies (ERB's), Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE) and apprentice providers and experts, and employers.

Core focus areas of the Hub include promoting apprenticeships and technical education pathways to educators, parents, young people, and businesses, tackling disadvantage, providing employer encounters and experiences of the workplace, and connecting educators and young people to the world of work through dissemination of LMI.





DCH Apprentice for a day Superior Seals

our focus extends to revitalising, growing, and strengthening our business volunteer network of Enterprise Advisers linked to each school. This dynamic network facilitates the exchange of insights and experiences, enriching the learning and career development of students.

Engaging with Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) and Governors is another facet of our collaborative strategy. Through initiatives like the SLT Sessions conference, we foster increased engagement and garner support for careers leaders, driving a collective focus on school improvement.

Our Apprenticeships 2.0 campaign has proven highly successful, comprising a research project, conference, and Apprentice for a Day programme for teachers. This campaign has been instrumental in dispelling misconceptions surrounding apprenticeships and raising awareness. Notably, the Apprentice for a Day initiative gained national recognition, adopted by the Careers and Enterprise Company as a national programme for Teacher Encounters. In addressing the needs of rural cold-spots, the delivery of the North Dorset Careers Day in Sturminster Newton stands out. Drawing 750 young people, including 85 from SEND institutions, and featuring 35 employers and apprenticeship providers, this event has become a highly successful annual fixture.

Finally, our joint efforts with institutions, coupled with in-depth data analysis and a focus on narrative understanding, have propelled the Dorset Careers Hub to remarkable heights. Hitting all targets and ranking among the top third highest achieving hubs nationally, this accomplishment reflects the impactful outcomes of strategic, highly targeted activities implemented in response to the unique needs of our community.



Apprentice for a day at Brewhouse & Kitchen

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Effective Transition Fund - Dorset Marvels

We launched this project offering targeted interventions to 120 young people at risk of NEET across Dorset. The cohort had regular meetings with careers champions, met with employers and undertook work experience. The impact is highly tangible with aspirations raised and employment secured. Learnings from the project are rich, and it is clear that more one-to-one work and a focus on the Home Educated and School Refusers is vitally important for individual and family lives, and communities.

Removing Barriers Project

Our year long project to increase the number of Disability Confident Employers in Dorset, with a view to improving the long-term sustainable job opportunities for young people aged 16-19 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, commenced in September 2022. The programme saw companies large and small follow the programme and make a commitment to being more inclusive, through recognition of all disabilities, physical and invisible, making reasonable adjustments, and bringing about organisation-wide culture change. By introducing young people to our employers we removed some of the fear of the unknown.



CASE STUDY: NORTH DORSET CAREERS EVENT

As a strategic response to feedback from a cluster of our more rural schools, we planned and delivered our first careers fair in the area, addressing the barriers of rurality and poor infrastructure, as well as meeting the needs of our SEND community, who had never had access to such events, that are held regularly in more urban areas of the county.

Over 30 exhibitors, ranging from businesses large and small, local and national, to universities, colleges and apprenticeship training providers and experts, came to The Exchange, Sturminster Newton for this 1-day event. The event welcomed over 750 young people and was fully inclusive, with over 80 young people from SEND and Alternative Provision schools also attending the day. We worked with Sturminster Newton



Simon Hoare MP at North Dorset Careers Day

High School, Harbour Vale, Gryphon, Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury, The Forum Centre and Yewstock schools.

With a tight schedule the young people came in on foot, by bus or taxi, and we used separate entry and exit points to manage the flow. We raised funds from a local charity and exhibitors to support schools with transport costs. The students were prepared for the day by considering the different industry sectors and education pathways via dissemination of Labour Market Information from the LEP. They were challenged to interact with as many businesses as possible and have engaging conversations, and were rewarded with stickers on a passport, for effort and meaningful encounters.

One exhibitor said, *"I liked the passports the children had, as it encouraged them to come over and chat and for some it took a lot of courage to come to the stand."*

Our exhibitors were given a pre-event briefing during which we explained the running order of the day, and gave them tips for interacting with different cohorts, which they found invaluable. Arts University Bournemouth ran a popular 'creative careers finder' workshop in the computer lab and a quiet space was provided for anyone that needed to step away from the buzz of the halls. MP's and councillors attended and were



AECC Stand at North Dorset Careers Day

impressed by the meeting of employers with their future talent. A public session in the evening saw queues of people at our apprenticeship experts' stand and some great meetings take place with parents and carers present.

It was a busy but amazing day and the feedback from all parties was fantastic.

The Impact

The impact is far-reaching, but some key highlights and outcomes were as follows:

- Employers loved meeting this wide range of young people
- Students had their eyes opened to different opportunities both on their doorstep and further afield - one student headed straight to the NHS stand and came away excited by her future career path
- Young people stepped out of their comfort zones to have conversations with employers and were awarded with certificates of achievement
- Head teachers saw that the aspirations of their pupils was raised
- One young man met and impressed his local MP, and was further inspired to pursue politics as a career
- One of our SEND students requested and secured work experience in the venue's cafe
- A parent reconnected with colleagues from our team and was hired onto one of our projects as a careers adviser
- We are repeating the event again in March 2024

OUR BOARD 2022-2023

Our Board brings together a wealth of experience from the private, public and education sectors, and collectively, they are our key decision-making body.

We are fortunate to have Board members whose energy, commitment and wisdom lead the development of our strategic priorities and oversee all our decisions and activities over 2022 - 2023.

We would like to extend our thanks to all those Board Members who have served April 2022 – March 2023.

Cecilia Buffon (Chair)	Independent Board Member
Drew Mellor	Leader of BCP Council
Ian Girling	Chief Executive of DCCI
Jim Andrews	Chief Operating Officer Bournemouth University
John Beesley	Councillor BCP Council
Luke Rake	Principal and Chief Executive of Kingston Maurward College
May Palmer	Managing Director of Harry J Palmer Ltd
Nick Gaines	Independent Board Member
Nicola Newman	Independent Board Member
Paul Gough	Vice-Chancellor Arts University Bournemouth
Paul Read	Director of Sustainability and Investment, Magna Housing Ltd
Sophia Story	Independent Board Member
Spencer Flower	Leader of Dorset Council
Tony Ferrari	Councillor Dorset Council
Julia Howe (appointed 1 July 2022)	Principal Weymouth College
James Stewart (resigned 9 June 2022)	Chief Executive Poole Harbour Commissioners
Phil Sayles (resigned 4 July 2022)	Principal Bournemouth & Poole College
Sara Uzzell (resigned 4 July 2022)	Independent Board Member
Andrew Wickham (resigned 7 July 2022)	Managing Director Go South Coast
John Sutcliffe (resigned 15 July 2022)	Independent Board Member
Liz Williams (resigned 1 December 2022)	Independent Board Member

OUR TEAM

We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all those who worked for, and with, the Dorset LEP team in the last year.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Working Beyond County Borders & Green Ambitions

The Great South West is a partnership between Dorset LEP, Heart of the South West LEP and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LEP, local authorities, universities and businesses.

Its vision is to become the leading region in the UK for the green and blue economy, delivering £45bn of economic benefit and creating 190,000 new jobs. The ultimate goal is to create a future that is smart, connected and green, and become the cleanest economy in England and the first to be net carbon zero.

The huge potential of the South West's green energy credentials, and its progress in becoming the UK's green energy powerhouse, were showcased at a key Energy Summit in the region. Held at the University of Plymouth in November 2022, the summit brought together leading figures across industry and government.

Cecilia Buffon, Chair of the Dorset LEP, said: "This was the first Great South West Summit and it showcased very clearly our region's green energy strengths and potential for leadership in this field. The Great South West partnership is well placed

to coordinate those involved in delivering clean, affordable and sustainable energy for businesses and homes in the region. By working together, we also have the opportunity to become a net exporter of clean energy, related technologies and knowhow. Whilst we face numerous challenges, with a shortage of skilled workers and constrained grid infrastructure being the most cited issues, we have the scale and commitment to attract investors, and the talent to make progress across a range of solutions."

The launch of the Great South West's Prospectus, developed in partnership with the region's Members of Parliament, local authorities, and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), was launched at a Parliamentary Reception at the House of Lords in January 2023. The launch highlighted Great South West's initial successes, including securing £1.5 million from the Government to begin its work, and its vision to build on the region's 'blue and green' strengths and develop a prosperous and clean economy. The event was attended by partners, businesses, educational providers, and MPs from all over the south west.



THE 'P' IN LEP IS 'PARTNERSHIP'

The Chancellor announced in March 2023 that he was "minded to" stop funding LEPs directly and to transfer their core functions to local democratic institutions. During the information gathering exercise that followed, it became clear to Government that the consequences of this decision would not be the same in each of the 38 LEPs around the country. Subsequent guidance has promoted a locally agreed approach to what comes next. The Dorset LEP board agreed that it was sensible to continue with our 3 year budgeted plan to 2025 and take the time to determine and

transition to a long term delivery model that suits the needs and ambitions of the area.

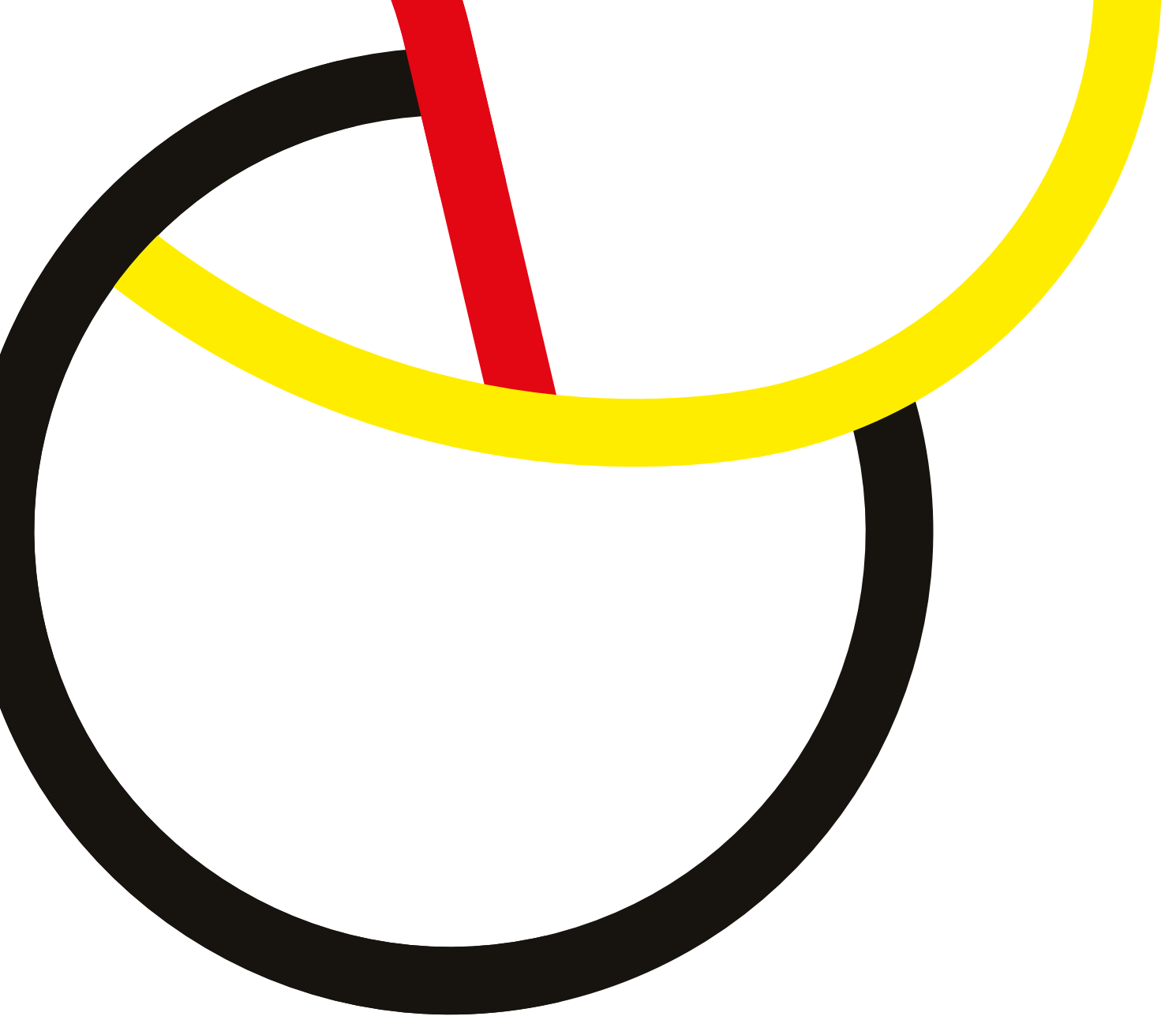
The role, remit and funding of the of Dorset LEP has changed over time but the central premise of a strong local partnership, bringing different perspectives together with a common goal of securing economic prosperity for our area, has remained constant. Going into the next financial year we look forward to continuing working with our partners for the resilience and sustainability of our businesses and our workforce.

OUR FINANCES

We publish our financial statements online (www.dorsetlep.co.uk/finance), in accordance with our Local Assurance Framework.

BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24

We publish our annual business delivery plan online (www.dorsetlep.co.uk/delivery-plan), in accordance with our Local Assurance Framework.



If you would like more information about Dorset LEP, the work that we do, the support we provide, and how we are structured, please visit our website

dorsetlep.co.uk

dorsetlep@bournemouth.ac.uk

