

# A Framework for Economic Growth for the Pan Dorset Area

Produced by Dorset  
LEP on behalf of Dorset  
Council and  
Bournemouth  
Christchurch and Poole  
Council

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# Introduction

## Why are we producing a new economic framework now?

We have not undertaken a comprehensive review of Dorset's economic evidence base and priorities since the Local Industrial Strategy was published in 2019. A lot has changed since then, so a review and refresh is timely and aligns with government asks for updated economic strategies in 2024.

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is:

- to set out a shared sense of direction for the Pan-Dorset area, so that businesses, partners and stakeholders in the area can get behind it and take co-ordinated action
- to communicate our collective ambitions to investors internationally and establish the pan Dorset area as a destination for investment to stimulate economic transformation and drive growth
- to identify ways that we can work with partners in other geographic areas to further joint objectives (e.g. the Great South West, Central South and Western Gateway and beyond)
- to identify investment priorities for the area which will help us to inform and shape major projects and lay the groundwork devolution arrangements and future funding bids.

## Area covered

The area covered by this plan is the pan-Dorset functional economic market area, which includes the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council area and Dorset Council (DC) area. This geography reflects the need to make policy on a scale which reflects people's working, commuting and social patterns – people

often cross administrative borders every day as they go to work, shop and access services.

These two authorities became unitary authorities in April 2019 and have since worked together on a range of joint strategic planning processes including:

- a joint local transport plan
- an employment land review
- minerals and waste plans
- the joint strategic needs assessment (health)
- local nature recovery strategy
- local housing needs assessment.

Alongside this, our record of joint working also includes the Dorset Integrated Care Partnership – 'Our Dorset'. 'Our Dorset' is a partnership between the NHS, councils, public services and voluntary and community partners working together and is one of the most advanced integrated care systems in the UK.

However, we also recognise the need to work with partners beyond our immediate boundaries in order to:

- engage with a global marketplace and attract clean growth sectors
- harness the power of the private sector to accelerate economic restructuring into future facing sectors to create new opportunities for communities
- take advantage of wider opportunities (e.g. promoting opportunities which span an entire region such as the Great South West or Central South)
- tackle issues which require a co-ordinated response (e.g. north-south transport links).

Therefore, this strategy draws on evidence from across the region and highlights relevant opportunities for working at a regional scale.

## Collective voice

Whilst the strategy has been drafted by Dorset LEP on behalf of the Local Authorities, it represents the collective voice and ambition of the whole area. 'We' therefore refers to this collective voice, rather than the LEP or one single organisation. We recognise that achieving our ambitions will require collaboration and partnership working at many levels. Some of our aspirations will require new levers to enable us to deliver and where this is the case, we will work with Government, the private sector and our neighbours to develop the tools we need to achieve our vision.

## Methodology

The process has involved:

- conducting a full review of the economic data and trends affecting our area, this is provided in Appendix One
- conducting a review of existing strategies and plans across the area including
  - the local industrial strategy and previous LEP strategies and plans
  - draft local plans and corporate plans published by BCP and DC
  - economic plans and strategies published by BCP and DC
  - topic related strategies and plans covering housing, green infrastructure, skills, high streets, transport, digital, culture, energy and the environment across the area
- developing draft documents for engagement and discussion with LEP board members and partners
- facilitating a consultation workshop at the Dorset Ambassadors event on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 with 54 attendees representing businesses, education, public sector and wider stakeholders

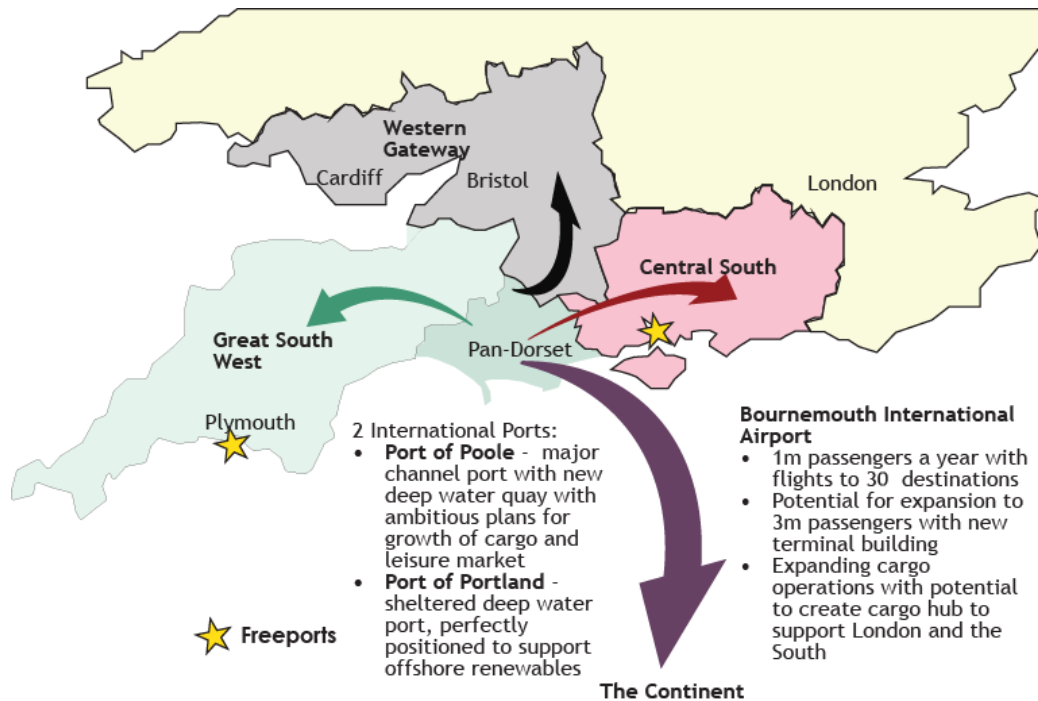
- publishing a consultation draft on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, with comments closing on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November
- responding to comments from the public consultation.

# The pan-Dorset economy today

## Our strengths and opportunities

### A prime location

The pan-Dorset area occupies a **prime location** for growth at the crossroads between wider economic partnership areas such as the 'Great South West', 'Western Gateway' and 'Central South' regions.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, our growing ports and airport provide important passenger and freight services to the continent and beyond.



### A unique blend of urban, coastal and rural opportunities

The area benefits from a unique blend of urban, coastal and rural opportunities. BCP, as the **largest conurbation on the South Coast**, with **three universities** and **a premier league football club**, offers a vibrant urban and coastal way of life and potential springboard for growth. This is complemented by a wide range of opportunities in the DC area, including nationally significant **low carbon energy projects**, which pave the way for clean growth. Likewise, our outstanding natural environment across the pan Dorset area provides the foundation for our whole economy.

### A microcosm of international corporations, scale-ups and SMEs

With an output of over **£21.9bn<sup>2</sup>**, **over 33,000 businesses<sup>3</sup>** and a population of almost **800,000<sup>4</sup>**, the area is an economic force with tremendous opportunities. We are home to an exciting microcosm of well-known international corporations, innovative scale-ups and a multitude of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs). This landscape provides a rich array of opportunities for our people.

### Case Study – JP Morgan Chase

Renowned global financial services firm J.P. Morgan has maintained a significant presence on the South Coast for 38 years. Its Bournemouth office serves as a hub for essential functions, including core business operations, technology, and operational processing, employing a workforce exceeding 5,000 individuals. As a vital component of the company's global network, this location facilitates operations spanning over 90 markets across 40 countries.

<sup>1</sup> Pan-regional partnerships co-ordinate collaboration between local authorities and government to develop economic and infrastructure strategies such as the Northern Powerhouse

<sup>2</sup> Source: ONS, Regional Gross Value Added (balanced) by industry: City and Regions

<sup>3</sup> Source: ONS, UK Business Counts, 2023

<sup>4</sup> Census, 2021

## Growth driving sectors where we have a clear comparative advantage

The pan-Dorset area has a number of growth driving sectors where we have a clear comparative advantage. These are sectors where we can compete in global markets and which offer our residents better paid opportunities. These include:

- **advanced engineering and manufacturing** (with a particular focus on **marine/maritime** and **aerospace**)
- **defence**
- **clean energy industries** (capitalising on our unique natural assets)
- **financial services (including Fintech).**

In addition, our rapidly growing **digital and creative** sector benefits from our rich cultural heritage, our investment in smart technologies and the international reputations of our universities in these fields. It therefore represents a key growth opportunity for the future.

Similarly, our integrated care system, ageing population and plethora of health science facilities within our hospitals, universities and colleges provides further opportunities for growth in the **health science** field and presents an opportunity for us to be a **test bed for how to manage ageing in our society.**

We are however, increasingly seeing growth at the intersections between sectors – for instance, where creative and digital meets defence, as the end stage case study illustrates. More information about each of these opportunities can be found in section 3.

## Underpinned by our 'everyday economy'

Our everyday or foundation economy provides a range of local services such as health, education, leisure and public services, that are essential to the effective functioning of our economy and

account for over 50% of employment. However, pay, productivity and job security are often lower than average in these sectors.

### Case Study – End State

End State is a Dorset-based video production company specialising in creating content for Defence companies supplying equipment to the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Dorset boasts an array of sites perfect for shooting End State's content.



Their primary headquarters is situated at the Dorset Innovation Park, strategically chosen for its proximity to the Defence BattleLab. This location fosters collaboration between Defence companies, the Military and Government entities, providing crucial input from SMEs.

## Development and adoption of Key Enabling Tech (KET)

The Great South West Integrated Economic Review found a total of 601 businesses were either developing or adopting KETs in the pan Dorset area (368 in BCP and 233 in Dorset). In terms of development, the data shows a significant cluster of businesses are developing:

- big data and machine learning technologies
- internet of things technologies
- robotic technologies.

However, in terms of adoption, the data shows a slightly different pattern, with a significant cluster of businesses adopting:

- big data and machine learning technologies
- photonics technologies
- additive manufacturing technologies.

These technologies matter because they are expected to define the shape, form and function of the future economy. They apply to all sectors and will be critical in supporting competitive advantage.

### Case Study: XPERTNEST

XpertNest is based in BCP and operates in the information technology and services sector. The company has been identified as a developer in '**Big Data & Machine Learning**'.

XpertNest is a technology solutions company that specializes in providing innovative digital transformation services. They focus on leveraging advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, blockchain, and IoT (Internet of Things) to help businesses optimize their operations and enhance their digital capabilities.

They use Geospatial Intelligence, Data Processing Platforms, Enterprise Resource Planning Services, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), Hyper-Automation, Video Analytics and Face Recognition and Claims Management Solutions to drive innovation, efficiency, and growth across various industries.

XpertNest is an international company with headquarters in the UK. They also operate in the Netherlands and India.

### Loop Technology

With headquarters in Dorchester, Loop Technology are specialists in **industrial automation technology and robotics**. They design and build automated systems for the high value manufacturing sector delivering improved production rates and product quality.

The company are trusted partners of several high value manufacturing **catapult centres** and global robot manufacturers. Their experience in machine vision, industrial robotics and motion control systems allows them to create advanced solutions for niche manufacturing problems across many industries.

Their expertise includes automated preforming for composite structures, robotic arms for confined spaces such as aircraft wing boxes, automated laser cleaning, robotic machining, and vision-based inspection.

Loop Technology recently announced a partnership with Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems and AMRC that will see their automated composite preforming technology, FibreLINE, used to drive innovation in advanced manufacturing and address the growing demand for lighter aircraft whilst meeting the aviation industry's commitment to decarbonisation.

Moreover, a separate FibreLINE configuration is used at the National Composite Centre in Bristol in efforts to deliver multi-sector automated deposition capability for composite material.



## Dorset's Clean Energy Supercluster

A new UK destination for international investment in clean energy, that will support the decarbonisation of the UK, power clean growth and create prosperity for the people of Dorset.

### Offshore Wind Opportunities South of Portland

Subject to future leasing rounds by The Crown Estate, there is significant potential to develop floating and fixed based offshore wind projects in the English Channel off the Devon and Dorset coasts.

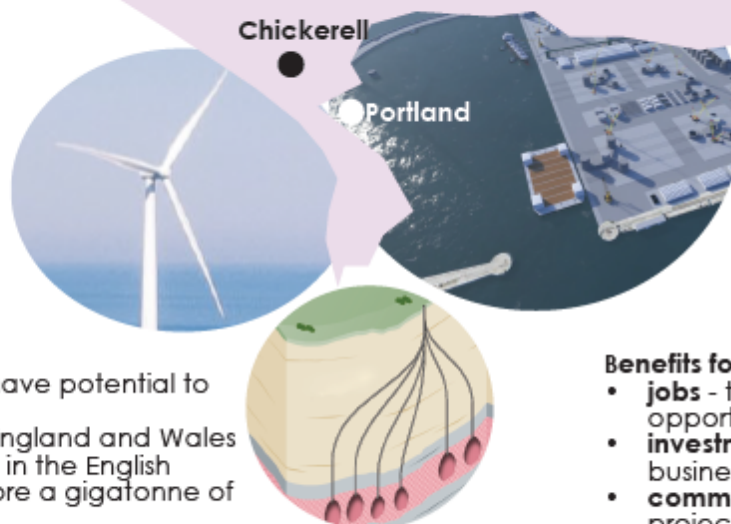
For example, the c.2GW **Portwind Offshore Wind Farm** currently being planned by Portwind, has the potential to power over 3 million households annually and if linked to battery storage and hydrogen production, could contribute to energy security in the South West.

### Unique Geological features

Dorset's unique geology means that we have potential to both:

- lead decarbonisation in the South of England and Wales through **Carbon, Capture and Storage** in the English Channel where there is potential to store a gigatonne of carbon dioxide and
- expand and accelerate the UK's hydrogen economy through the development of the **UK's largest hydrogen storage site**.

Dorset is the only place in the south of England with the right geological conditions to store hydrogen deep underground. UKEn is working on a £0.8bn project to utilise salt caverns in South Dorset to provide a significant proportion of the UK's forecast **hydrogen storage** needs by 2050. The storage will provide **security of supply** to hydrogen clusters in the south of England and Wales, buffering demand/supply spikes and ensuring pipeline stability. The project will allow **green hydrogen** to be produced from excess clean renewable power, allowing it to be stored for future use.



### Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMRs)

As an existing nuclear licenced site, **Winfrith** has the potential to host **Small Modular Reactors** which could power our digital and defence growth sectors, as well as millions of homes and provide baseload generation for more than 60 years.

### Winfrith

### Channel Gateway

Is a proposal to develop a new renewable energy port facility at Portland Port to service offshore wind projects in the Celtic Sea, English Channel and across Europe.

The new port will be the only large-scale deep water offshore wind port on the South Coast. It therefore offers a unique location for offshore wind suppliers or developers to develop manufacturing, integration or assembly facilities.

### Benefits for the pan Dorset area

- **jobs** - thousands of well paid, good quality jobs and training opportunities
- **investment** - attracting investment and supply chain businesses
- **community benefits** - interms of investments in community projects as well as lower energy bills
- **net zero** - faster progress towards net zero

### Benefits for the UK

- **energy security** - maintaining a secure and affordable energy supply
- **climate protection** - protecting future generations from the cost of climate breakdown
- **new industries** - creating new industries and export opportunities
- **job creation** - supporting job creation across the UK
- **accelerate net zero and industrial decarbonisation**



### Three universities producing 7,500 graduates each year, but low levels of graduate retention

We have three universities which produce almost **7,500 graduates each year**<sup>5</sup> and key subjects include:

- business and management
- design and creative and performing arts
- subjects allied to medicine
- computing.

However, research by ONS<sup>6</sup> exploring graduate retention, found that Bournemouth was the only town in the area to have a positive net gain of graduates. In contrast, **all other towns in the area struggled to attract and retain graduates**. Our plan seeks to address this untapped potential.

As well as producing graduates, our universities play a much wider civic role, which contributes to the economic and social well-being of the area. For instance:

- **The Health Sciences University** is home to the **Centre for Workforce and Systems Integration**, which aims to drive change by supporting workforce transformation, promoting knowledge exchange, and offering comprehensive professional development programs for healthcare professionals, healthcare educators, healthcare leaders and policymakers
- The **Arts University Bournemouth (AUB)** offers a range of **collaboration opportunities** with local businesses including research, high skills development, prototyping, entrepreneurship, knowledge exchange and an **Innovation Studio** – which operates as a lab for creative technologies and a hub for start-ups, regional enterprises and industry engagement. It also makes a significant contribution to the area's cultural scene

- **Bournemouth University's** academics and students are working with local partners in projects to:
  - help people live better, for longer
  - protect and preserve a sustainable environment;
  - help people and organisations to prepare for and recover from crisis
  - challenge marginalisation, misinformation and underrepresentation
  - help creative and cultural industries to thrive
  - act as a catalyst for growth

### Two Further Education Colleges play a vital role in our community and work to meet the needs of the local economy

- **Bournemouth and Poole College** - serves 9,000+ learners a year and works with over 1,000 employers across nearly every sector of the economy. The college offers 16-18's, apprenticeships and courses for adults studying up to degree level at its recently opened university centre
- **Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College** – recently merged, the college brings together a vibrant land-based college in the heart of Dorset with Weymouth college, which offers a diverse range of courses to over 2,500 students in partnership with over 400 employers.

Dorset is also home to specialist providers, such as the **RNLI College**, which trains volunteer crews and lifeguards from around the UK.

<sup>5</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency, HE qualifiers by subject of study, all levels 2021/22

<sup>6</sup> Geographical mobility of young people across English towns and cities, March 2024

## Green shoots of recovery in our towns

Our town centres, district centres and local centres form an intrinsic part of our community life and play a vital role in attracting people to the area. However, like many towns across the UK, our high streets have faced a range of challenges in recent years which were further accelerated by the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, with some funding and a concerted effort by a range of partners, we have begun the process enabling our communities to re-imagine and re-invent our towns to unlock new opportunities. For instance:

- In Bournemouth, a **£22m town deal** with 10 major projects, aims to turbo charge ambitious plans for Boscombe whilst protecting its unique heritage and character. Whilst in **Bournemouth town centre**, a determined effort across multiple partners (including BCP Council, the Town Centre BID, Destination Management Board, Bournemouth University, and the police amongst others), is co-ordinating efforts in making the town clean, safe and vibrant. Whilst there is much more to do, examples like the re-imagination of Bobby's department store by its new owners (Verve Properties) as a multi-function destination, centred around beauty, health, food, drink, art, culture and community and the redevelopment of the buildings previously home to House of Fraser and Beales, are leading the way as flagship projects
- The **Poole Regeneration programme** aims to deliver a transformative sustainable regeneration of the entire centre of Poole. This includes **Holes Bay**, the largest brownfield land regeneration site in the South West with potential for 830 new homes as well as employment land and commercial opportunities. Within the town centre, work by L&G, owners of the Dolphin Shopping Centre, has transformed the centre to include: a creative/maker space, event/exhibition/workshop space,

workspace and market spaces alongside a conventional retail offer

- In Weymouth, a **£19.5m Levelling Up fund** project aims to regenerate Weymouth's waterfront economy with a range of projects around the harbourside to create or improve hospitality space, create new residential units, improve public spaces and create retail spaces. This project helps to deliver parts of the long-term vision for the area
- Similarly, in **BCP, £19.9m Levelling Up funding** was awarded to revive visitor facilities and public amenities linking across Bournemouth and Poole's award-winning seafront, aligned with the Seafront Strategy
- **Six Business Improvement Districts** have been set up and are well established across the area including Bournemouth (coastal and town centre), Christchurch, Dorchester, Poole and Weymouth. A BID is a business-led and funded body formed to improve a defined commercial area..

Whilst these projects illustrate how public and private sector partners are working together to drive investment in our towns, further creative thinking, working together closely with Government, and enabling communities to do more for themselves, is likely to be required to maximise these opportunities and overcome market failures.

### With a vibrant cultural and visitor experience

Our towns, coast and countryside support a visitor economy which attracts almost 24 million visitors a year who spend over £1.6bn in the local economy.<sup>7</sup>

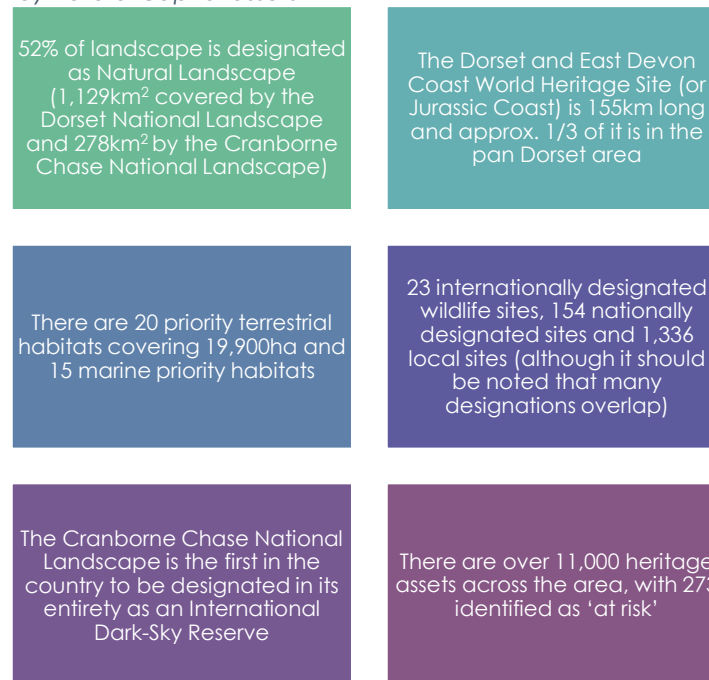
The sector is facing significant challenges post pandemic. Considerable shifts in consumer behaviour point to a need to re-balance our visitor economy in favour of higher quality, year-round, staying visitor and business tourism markets. These markets can be supported by the area's wide range of natural, cultural and heritage assets, such as the Jurassic Coast, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Corfe Castle, Kingston Lacy House as well as festivals, museums, theatres and much, much more.



### Recognised for its biodiversity and landscape character

The pan-Dorset area is also recognised for its **biodiversity and landscape character**, with 52% of the landscape designated as a National Landscape. Surprisingly, almost 20% of the BCP conurbation comprises SSSI's, reflecting the high quality of the national environment so close to our principal urban centre. However, despite these designations much of our wildlife is at risk.

Figure 1: Key natural capital assets



Source: Natural Value 2023: The Stage of Dorset's Environment. Dorset Local Nature Partnership

Our natural environment and our **cultural assets** are key drivers of our **tourism sector** and provide the foundation on which much of our economy is built, through ecosystem services such as flood control,

<sup>7</sup> The economic impact of Dorset's Visitor Economy, 2022, SWRC, December 2023

climate regulation, pollination as well as recreation and tranquillity which support our health and well-being.

### Contributing to UK food security

Our farms make a vital contribution to UK **food security** and the area has an emerging reputation for the development of **agri-tech**. As such, our agricultural sector provides opportunities for a proactive response to climate change and improved food security and a new generation of agri-tech could diversify and strengthen our agricultural roots.

Similarly, our excellent water quality means that our coast has the potential to contribute to the growth of the English Marine **aquaculture** sector with an emerging cluster of aquaculture businesses operating off Dorset.

### Case Study - Cefas, (Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science)

As an Executive Agency of Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Cefas spearheads sustainability efforts for UK waterways, striving for robust marine and freshwater ecosystems. Its work relies on cutting-edge technology and data-driven approaches, utilising a range of surveillance tools and deploying assets like the Cefas **Endeavour Research Vessel** and autonomous marine vehicles to **monitor aquatic environments** meticulously.

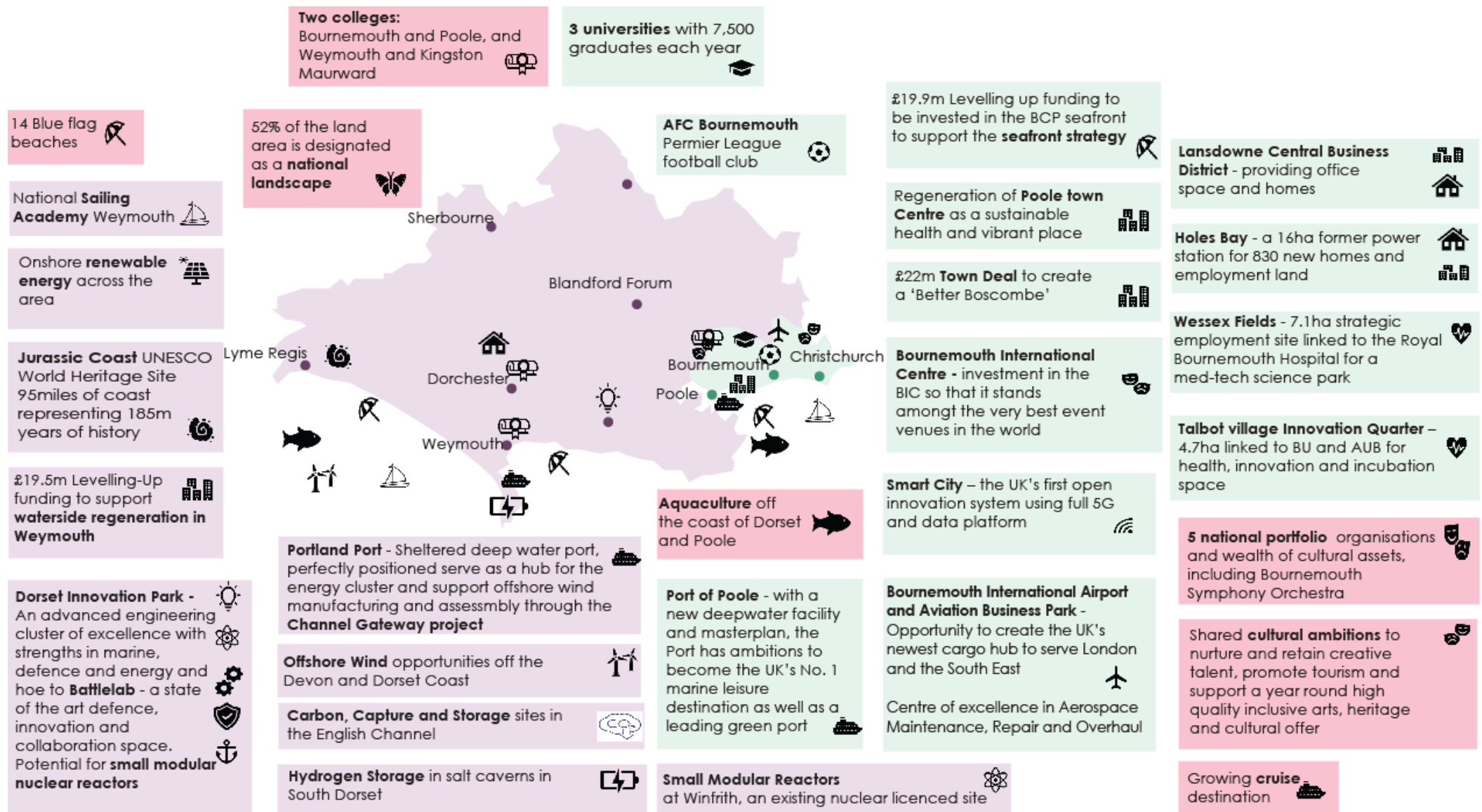
Cefas assembles specialists across aquatic sciences domains to address challenges from aquaculture to future energy. This proactive stance extends to rapid response to marine and freshwater emergencies.

Cefas's laboratory in Dorset is a hub for innovation, integrating advanced technologies with cutting edge research. It collaborates closely with stakeholders to pioneer solutions, offering services such as regulatory testing and modelling for risk assessment through its Weymouth Laboratory and the Cefas

aquaculture regulatory toolbox, ensuring streamlined processes for aquaculture supply chain companies.



# Our Opportunity Map



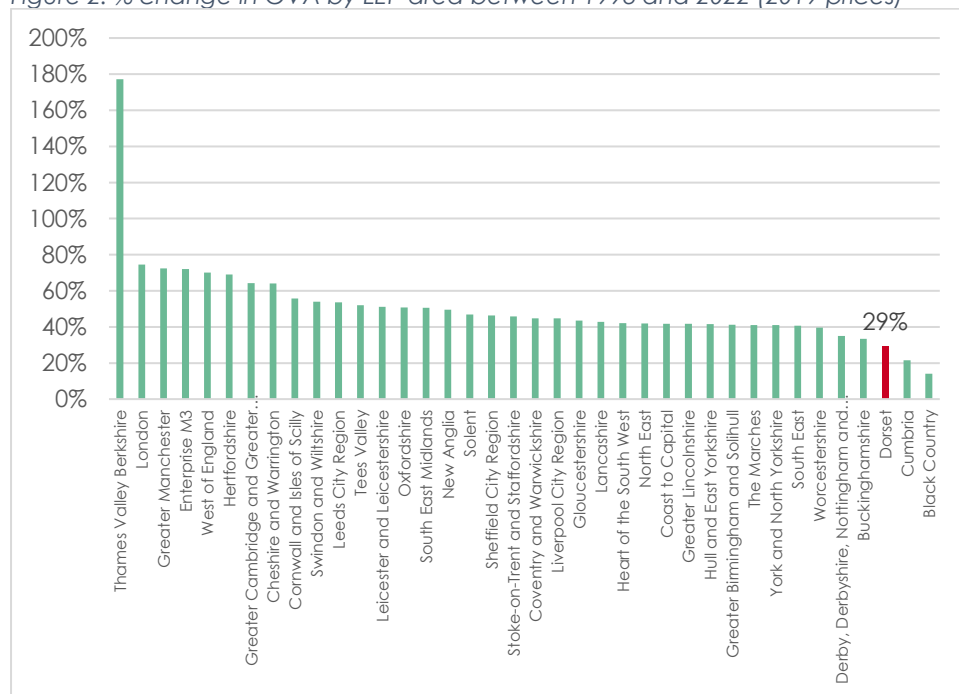
## Challenges

Whilst we are fortunate in our bounty of opportunities, we must also recognise and address the challenges which are holding back our economy and prospects of our residents.

### Our growth has been slower than other places

Figure 2 shows that between 1998 and 2022, economic output increased by only 29% in real terms and that of the 38 enterprise areas in England, **only the Black Country and Cumbria grew more slowly**. This means that our economy is falling behind and if this trend continues there will be fewer opportunities for our residents.

Figure 2: % change in GVA by LEP area between 1998 and 2022 (2019 prices)

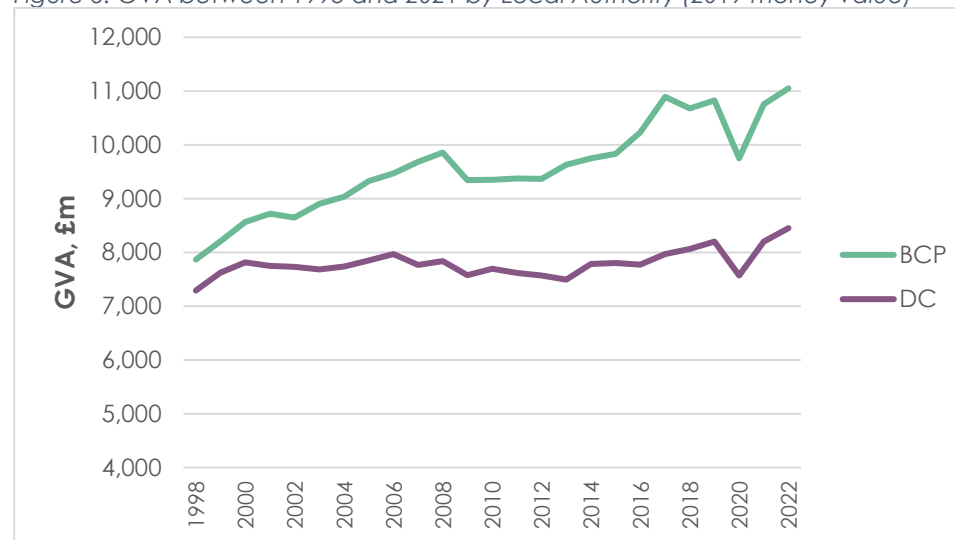


Source: ONS, Regional Gross Value Added (balanced) by industry: City and Enterprise Regions

### Whilst output growth has been stronger in BCP than DC it still lags behind the national average

Figure 3 shows that whilst GVA grew by 41% between 1998 and 2022 in the BCP area, it only grew by 16% in the DC area. This compares to growth of 50% for the South West and 52% for the UK.

Figure 3: GVA between 1998 and 2021 by Local Authority (2019 money value)



Source: ONS, Regional Gross Value Added (balanced) by industry: City and Regions

This low level of growth is due to a combination of:

- lower than average productivity
- a plateauing working age population.

Taking each in turn.

### Lower than average productivity

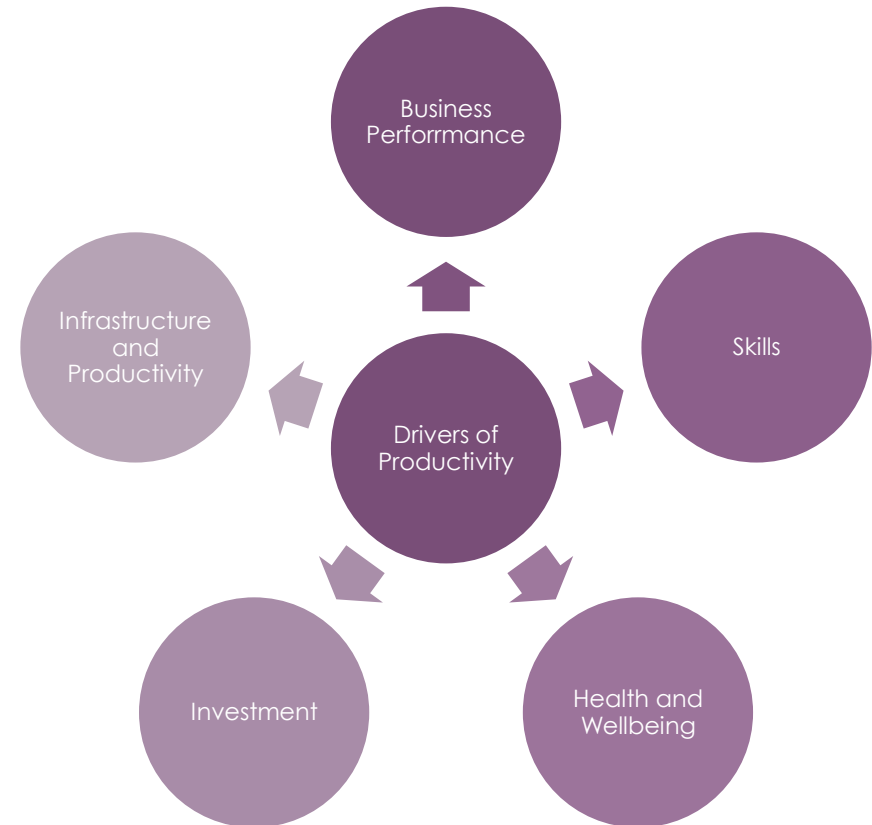
Productivity in 2021 was £33.7 per hour worked, compared to £38.33 per hour for the UK (£34.8 for BCP and £32.4 for DC). This **£4.63/hour gap equates to an output gap of £2.68bn a year**. Furthermore, analysis by the Productivity Institute categorised UK sub-regions into four groups:

- steaming ahead (above average productivity and faster than average growth in productivity)
- losing ground (above average productivity, but lower than average growth in productivity)
- catching up (lower than average productivity, but faster than average growth in productivity)
- falling behind (lower than average productivity and lower than average growth in productivity).

Both the BCP and DC areas are in the **'falling behind'** group.

Productivity matters because it remains the key determinant of wages and living standards - therefore our productivity gap also manifests itself as a **wage gap**. In 2023, gross median weekly pay for full time workers was £616 in the DC area and £662 in the BCP area, compared to £681 for UK workers.

However, the productivity issues within the Pan Dorset area are set within a wider **national productivity challenge**. Between 2010 and 2022 the annual average growth in UK GDP per hour worked was just 0.5%, with little sign of improvement in recent years. The reasons for this remain the subject of intense debate, however, at a regional level, key drivers of productivity include:



Source: Productivity Institute

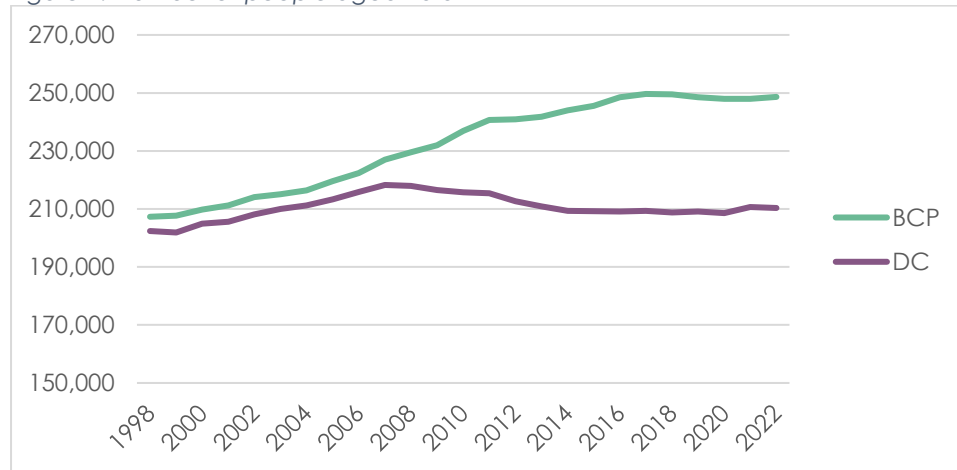
#### What is productivity and how does it differ from growth?

Productivity is a measure of value created for each hour that is worked in a society – therefore it can be thought of as an efficiency measure. Growth on the other hand relates to the overall size of the economy and how that has changed (see figure 3 above).

### A plateauing population of working age people

Figure 4 below shows that **the number of working aged people in the DC area plateaued** between 1998 and 2022 which helps to explain the poor overall growth. The number of working aged people continued to grow in the BCP area until 2016 after which the number also appears to plateau. This is consistent with the pattern of GVA growth shown in Figure 3.

Figure 4: Number of people aged 16-64



Source: ONS Mid-year population estimates

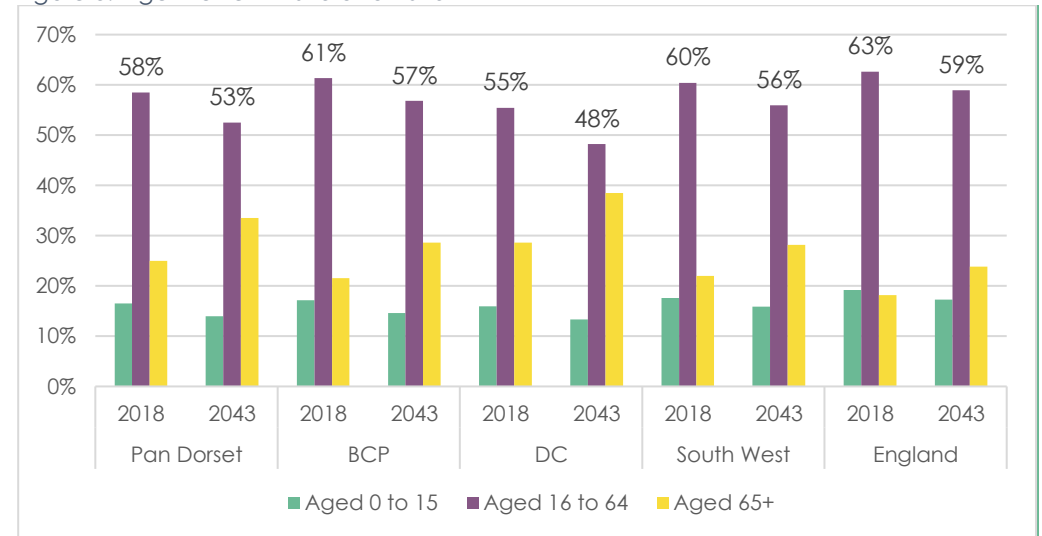
### Our population is ageing at a faster rate than the rest of the UK

In 2022, 58% of our population were aged 16-64 compared to 63% for England<sup>8</sup> (62% for BCP and 55% for DC). As the England figure is not projected to reach 58% until after 2043, we are **20 years ahead of the national trend**. This means we can be a **test bed for how to manage economic growth in an ageing society**.

The aging trend is set to continue and ONS projections indicate that **by 2043 only 53% of people will be aged 16-64 in the pan-Dorset area** compared to 59% for England. The demographic challenge is

particularly significant for the Dorset Council area where only 48% of people are expected to be of working age by 2043, compared to 57% in BCP. See Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Age Profile in 2018 and 2043



Source: ONS Population Projections 2018-based

Fewer people of working age will mean that the area will have **fewer people to fill jobs in all parts of our economy and existing labour market shortages will become even more extreme**. Therefore, maximising participation in the labour market will be a key priority for us.

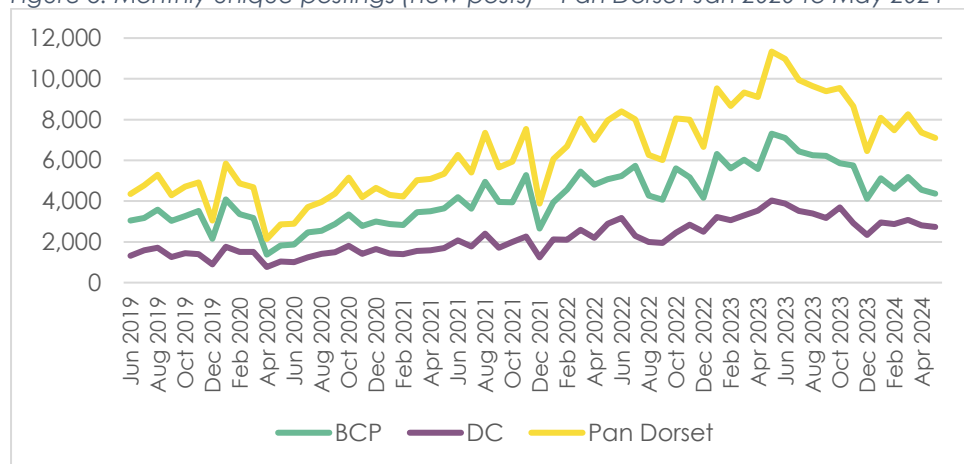
<sup>8</sup> ONS, Mid-year population estimates



### Strong demand for labour

The **demand for labour has been increasing since the pandemic**, with vacancies reaching a peak in May 2023 (See Figure 6). Whilst demand appears to have softened slightly since then, employers are continuing to report **significant recruitment challenges**, particularly in the BCP area.

Figure 6: Monthly unique postings (new posts) – Pan Dorset Jan 2020 to May 2024



Source: Lightcast™ 2024

### Replacement demand will drive demand for labour

In the medium term, we must also recognise the challenge associated with replacement demand, linked to the age profile of our current workforce. In 2023, **38% of all economically active people in the pan Dorset area were aged over 50**, compared to 32% in the UK (34% in BCP and 43% in DC).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, there will be **significant replacement demand as this cohort starts to retire** over the next 10 years. Indeed, 84% of the projected employment

<sup>9</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, December 2023

<sup>10</sup> Institute for Employment Research, the Skills Imperative, Dorset LEP workbook. Note, this data is not available at local authority level.

<sup>11</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, December 2023

change (204,000 jobs) between 2020 and 2035 is expected to be driven by replacement demand, compared to 39,000 associated with growth.<sup>10</sup>

### Despite our tight labour market, there are approximately 25,500 workless people in the area who would like to work

Our labour market is relatively tight. Compared to the national average, we have **a lower proportion of people who are unemployed and inactive**, and the proportion of workless people has been going down since the pandemic.<sup>11</sup> Despite this positive picture, in absolute terms, there continues to be a large number of people who are unemployed or inactive in the area. As of December 2023, there were:

- 10,300 unemployed 16–64 year-olds (6,500 in BCP and 3,700 in DC)
- 84,600 economically inactive 16-64 year-olds (47,900 in BCP and 36,700 in DC).<sup>12</sup>

National estimates indicate that approximately 18% of inactive people wanted a job<sup>13, 14</sup> which, when combined with the unemployed population, would suggest that **there are approximately 25,500 workless people in the area who would like to work**. Helping these people back into the labour market is a key opportunity to improve the health, wealth and well-being of our residents.

<sup>12</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, December 2023

<sup>13</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey, December 2023

<sup>14</sup> National estimates used as local data has significant variability and is not very reliable for this indicator

### Long term sickness and early retirement are now the most significant reason for economic inactivity

The most significant reasons for inactivity amongst 16-64 year olds include: long-term sickness, being a student, being retired and looking after family/home.<sup>15</sup> **Since the pandemic, the proportion of people that are inactive due to long-term sickness has been increasing**, with the latest figures suggesting that almost 25% of inactive people in the area are inactive for this reason. Understanding and tackling this challenge, could give a significant boost to our economy.

However, within the **DC area, the most significant reason for inactively was (early) retirement**, with approaching 30% of inactive people in the area inactive for this reason.

Whilst people in both the BCP and DC area generally live longer than the England average, **health outcomes are strongly linked to deprivation levels**. In BCP the difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas was 8.9 years for men and 6.1 years for women. Similarly in the DC area the difference was 5.3 years for both men and women.<sup>16</sup>

### High levels of part-time work

The area has a **higher proportion of people working part-time** (particularly in the DC area and amongst women). A recent review by the Productivity Institute suggests that while part-time work can be a mechanism to enable productive lives by allowing retention in career jobs and/or reducing work burdens for those with care responsibilities or ill-health, it may also limit talent utilisation and therefore affect productivity.<sup>17</sup>

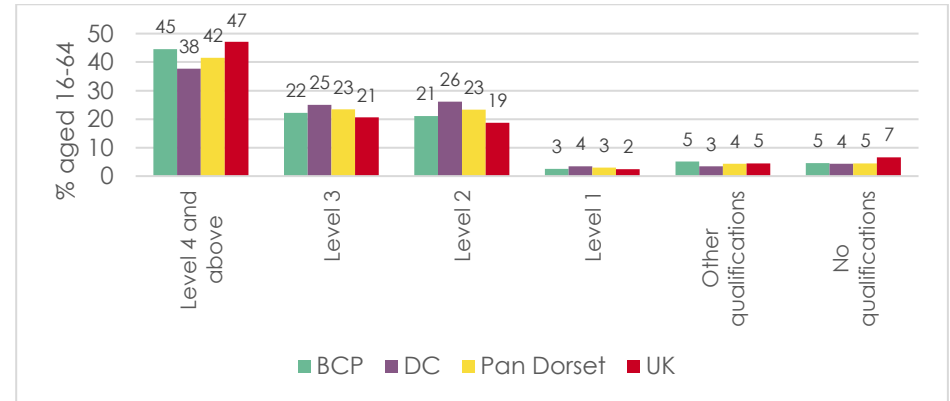
<sup>15</sup> ONS, Annual Population Survey

<sup>16</sup> Fingertips Public Health Data

### And a lower proportion of people with high level qualifications

Despite the presence of three universities, Figure 7 shows that whilst the area has higher than average 'mid level' qualifications (Levels 2 and 3), it has a **lower proportion with Level 4 or higher** qualifications. This matters, because higher skills levels are a key driver of growth.

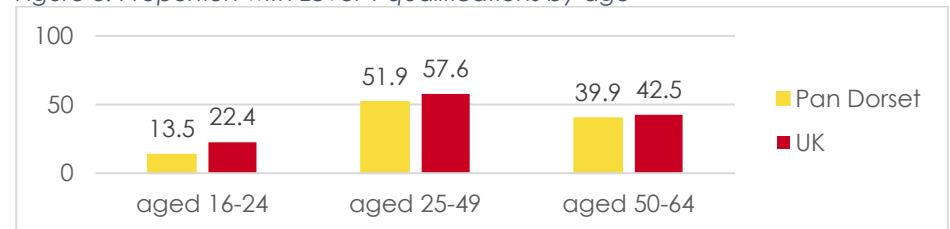
Figure 7: Highest level of qualification achieved (aged 16-64)



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS

Figure 8 shows that the Level 4 gap between people in the Pan Dorset area and the UK is largest for the younger age groups, which potentially highlights the graduate retention challenge.

Figure 8: Proportion with Level 4 qualifications by age



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS. Note, data not broken down by LA, as the sample size is too small and the data is not reliable

<sup>17</sup> The Productivity Institute, Part-time work and productivity (2024)

### Case Study: Dorset Careers Hub

Dorset Careers Hub connects education and employers with the aim of improving the careers provision across the region.

**Dorset**  
CAREERS HUB

THE **CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE**  
COMPANY

Funded by Dorset LEP and The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) in partnership with BCP Council and Dorset Council, its role is to help young people in Dorset progress into promising careers and fulfil their potential. It does this by:

- Raising the quality of careers provision in schools, special schools and colleges by supporting them to achieve the national careers education quality standards
- Linking teachers and young people with employers to drive more high-quality experiences through a network of 63 volunteer Enterprise advisors and 15 Cornerstone Employers
- Amplifying apprenticeships, technical and vocational routes
- Addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged young people and those who face the most barriers
- Connecting careers provision in schools and colleges to the needs of the local economy

Performance of the Careers hub is measured against the Careers Education Quality Standards, the Gatsby Benchmarks. In 2023/24 institutions supported by Dorset Careers Hub achieved an average of 6.6 Gatsby Benchmarks, compared to 5.9 nationally and Dorset schools and colleges are collectively in the top national quartile for four of the eight Gatsby Benchmarks.

### High house prices relative to incomes are constraining the labour market

Median house prices (2023) in the area ranged from **10.23 times median earnings** in the BCP area to **11.03 times median earnings** in the DC area.<sup>18</sup> This compares to 9.27 in the South West and 8.26 in England. A similar pattern was observed for lower quartile price to income ratios. This means that **housing is simply not affordable for many people in the area**, especially people on low incomes. Within this context it should be noted that **39,000 jobs in the pan-Dorset area were paid below the living wage** in 2023 (18,000 in BCP and 21,000 in DC).<sup>19</sup>

A **shortage of affordable housing and high house prices can affect productivity** by limiting the ability of workers to move to productive places with high wage jobs, resulting in labour shortages and eroding potential agglomeration benefits. Employers attending a Dorset LEP Homes and the Economy conference in February 2024 provided examples of how they struggled to attract and retain staff due to the availability and affordability of housing.

Researchers from the University of the West of England<sup>20</sup> identified that increases in affordability ratios in the South West were driven by earnings not keeping up with house prices. Increases in house prices in turn have been fuelled by shortfall in the delivery of new homes, coupled with increasing demand associated with migration and second home ownership. The researchers also found a number of supply side issues which affected housing affordability including competition for land, development viability, right to buy, planning and environmental designations.

<sup>18</sup> Source: House price to workplace-based earnings ratio, ONS

<sup>19</sup> ONS, Number and Proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage

<sup>20</sup> Housing affordability in the South West of England. University of the West of England on behalf of Homes for the South West. March 2023

### **Case Study: Modern Methods of Construction**

In June 2023, Magna, a Dorset based housing association delivered its first rural modular build using Modern Methods of Construction in Halstock Dorset. Manufactured off-site and delivered into communities, the MMC process reduces disruption and waste normally associated with new builds.

Magna's portfolio of 12 house types has been designed by Dorset-based manufacturer, Rollalong and with a wide range of finishes can be designed to complement the area's architectural heritage. The homes also go beyond current building regulations, with enhanced air tightness, additional insulation and solar panels, making them warmer and cheaper to run.

### **Land constraints**

Development of land for housing or business use is severely constrained in the BCP area due to a mixture of:

- the green belt around BCP which halted outward expansion
- the proportion of land covered with environmental designations
- the sea to the south.

This means the area needs to focus on delivering sustainable growth within the existing urban area and making efficient use of brownfield land and grey belt. We also need to ensure that many sites across the area with current planning permission for thousands of homes are built out.

Whilst the DC area is also constrained by the same issues, its more rural character means there is more scope for growth, particularly for industrial uses which require more space.

### **Transport connectivity remains a challenge**

Work on the fourth local transport plan for the area highlights a range of infrastructure challenges including:

- north/south connectivity to the area by road/rail to and from Bristol, the Midlands and the far South West
- congestion hotspots on the A31, A35, A351 which worsen with tourist seasonality and high (and increasing) levels of car based commuting
- poor rail connectivity both to and within the region and constraints on main lines into the region restrict the development of rail services (including freight). Furthermore, the level crossing in Poole creates a barrier to more frequent train services
- large rural areas without high quality infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling as the default option
- poor electricity grid capacity acting as a barrier to EV charging infrastructure.

Analysis shows that there is a significant gap between the current trajectory and meeting net zero targets for transport.

### Digital connectivity is a challenge in the Dorset Council area

Whilst fixed broadband connectivity is better than the national average in BCP (with 100% of premises having access to decent broadband and 99% having access to superfast broadband), in the DC area fixed broadband connectivity is worse than the national average with 3% of premises unable to access decent speeds.<sup>21</sup>

**Lack of digital and transport accessibility is a significant growth constraint in rural areas in particular.** However, with improving levels of 5G coverage, both councils have delivered pioneering projects to demonstrate the benefits of 5G including BCP's Smart Place programme.

#### Case Study: Smart Place Opportunity

BCP's Smart Place programme is an initiative to improve the lives of the community by developing technological solutions for some of the biggest challenges in our society, such as health and social care, mobility and the environment and industry and logistics.

At the heart of this plan is the vision to build Smart Places that create significant value from within cities, towns and other areas, through a unique, financially successful business model that provides a range of major investment opportunities. BCP Council and Smart Place are offering major investment opportunities across four programmes:

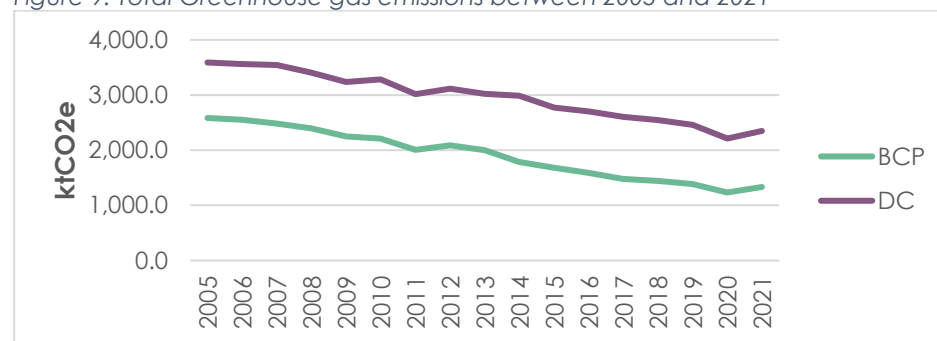
- Gigabit Speed Fibre
- 5G Solution
- Place-based Data Insight System
- Place-Based Integrated Applications.

### Climate and ecological emergencies

Both Dorset Council and BCP Council have **declared climate and ecological emergencies** and have set out ambitions for the area to be carbon neutral by 2050 or earlier. They are also working together and with partners to prepare a **local nature recovery strategy** for the Pan Dorset area.

The challenges are significant. Figure 9 shows that between 2005 and 2021 greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 40.3% across the Pan Dorset area (48% in BCP and 35% in DC).

Figure 9: Total Greenhouse gas emissions between 2005 and 2021



Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005-2021

Climate change is expected to affect almost all aspects of our life, but as a coastal area, climate related flooding could pose an existential risk to the pan Dorset area.

At the same time, the area's **environment has been seriously degraded over the past 80 years**. Declining levels of biodiversity, soil degradation and falling water quality all impact on the ability of our natural world to mitigate the impacts of climate change and provide wider ecosystem services.

<sup>21</sup> Source: Connected Nations, Summer 2023

Whilst responding to the climate and ecological emergency is one of the biggest challenges we face, it also provides opportunities to:

- create skilled jobs,
- make our food and energy systems more secure and
- make our homes and transport systems healthier and cheaper to run.

Addressing sustainability challenges is a key area of research for Bournemouth University which has just been ranked in the top 10 in the UK for its sustainability<sup>22</sup>.

### Case Study: Protecting coastal and freshwater regions

Natural reefs are one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, but they are rapidly disappearing. To combat this, a team of BU marine scientists are trialling the deployment of artificial 3D printed reef blocks in Poole Bay. Working with other European universities, the findings from the project will be used to perfect the design of 3D printed artificial reefs and prove their use in providing a habitat for marine life.



<sup>22</sup> <https://www.bournemouthcho.co.uk/news/24382142.bournemouth-university-achieves-sustainability-rankings/>

### Case Study: One Health Enterprise Network

One Health is an internationally established approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant, and wider environmental health. Globally recognised, the 'One Health' approach is advocated for by the [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO) and its international partners.

The One Health Approach offers a framework for industry, academia, and policymakers to guide the design, development, and implementation of new ideas and products. It ensures 'green' and 'clean' innovation to tackle global challenges like sustainable food production, pollution, and climate change.

The Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership's One Health Enterprise Network (OHEN) supports businesses to connect with research institutions and wider partners across industry and government to design and develop clean, green solutions to global challenges arising from changing environments (including from climate change).



## Our growth driving sectors

The pan-Dorset area has a number of high value sectors where we have a clear comparative advantage.

### Advanced manufacturing

The pan Dorset area is a thriving hub for Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing. The sector employs approximately 24,000 people in the area and accounts for £1.1bn GVA.

With major primes and their supply chains already flourishing we offer a fertile ground for expansion and partnerships, building on our strengths in **key enabling technologies**.

Supported by the **Dorset Engineering and Manufacturing Cluster** group, the sector benefits from a range of R&D assets including:










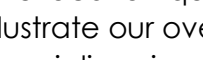
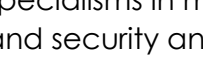
- **Dorset Innovation Park**, an enterprise zone that is developing as an advanced engineering cluster of excellence for the SW
- Bournemouth University's **Joint Centre of Advanced Materials** with Northeastern University in China which focuses on creating new materials that can have large scale applications in manufacturing, healthcare and consumer products
- **The Innovation Studio at AUB**, which features state-of-the-art equipment and digital resources, plus the latest digital and physical manufacturing technology
- The **Centre for Plastic Identification and Curation at AUB**, which will explore how plastics degrade over time or behave in different environments
- Close links to 11 neighbouring universities and the National Composite Centre, located at Bristol & Bath Science Park and the Satellite Applications Catapult.

### Advanced Manufacturing in numbers:

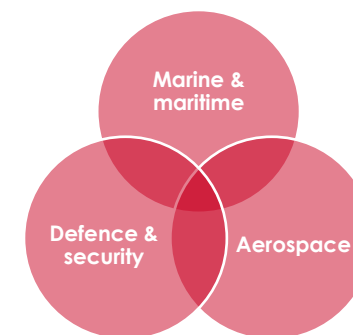
Employment	Businesses	GVA	Growth since 2010
			
24,000	1,700	£1.1bn	15%

Note: Some businesses/jobs may sit in more than one sector.

### For every one person employed in the UK, we employ...

	14 building pleasure and sporting boats
	8 manufacturing military fighting vehicles
	7 manufacturing office machinery and equipment
	7 repairing and maintaining aircraft and spacecraft
	7 manufacturing electric motors, generators and transformers
	5.5 repairing and maintaining ships and boats
	5 manufacturing other special purpose machinery
	4.5 manufacturing electric lighting equipment
	4 manufacturing of other general-purpose machinery not elsewhere classified
	3 manufacturing wire products, chain and springs
	3 manufacturing of instruments and appliances for measuring, testing and navigation

The location quotients above illustrate our overlapping specialisms in marine, defence and security and aerospace, which are supported by high levels of **supply chain integration**. Our capabilities can also be utilised to support our **clean energy cluster opportunity**.



## Advanced manufacturing: marine and maritime

Dorset is a leading force in clean propulsion, marine security and yacht manufacturing with a significant share of marine manufacturing jobs in Southwest England.

The sector benefits from:

- **2 ports (including Poole and Portland) and 3 harbours** - sites that provide opportunities for the creation of a marine innovation cluster at the Port of Poole and support for floating offshore wind through Portland Port.
- Being part of a wider cluster which spans the South Coast, with support from **Maritime UK South West** and the British Marine Federation
- A range of leading businesses such as: Sunseeker, Atlas Elektronik UK, AGI/Aish Technologies, Caterpillar, Marine Power, RNLI, Norco GRP, Global Marine Systems, Manor Energy Group, Wärtsilä, Pixii Boats, Cobra Ribs, Actisense

### Case Study: Global Marine

As a key subsidiary of the Global Marine Group, Global Marine stands at the forefront of subsea fibre optic cable installation and maintenance solutions for the telecommunications sector.



From projects in the Arctic Circle to operations in the depths of the Mariana Trench, the company has amassed a wealth of technical expertise, state-of-the-art technology, specialised equipment, and valuable assets. These resources enable Global Marine to undertake comprehensive activities such as planning, installation, burial, storage, testing, recovery, and maintenance of subsea fibre optic cables – a crucial amalgamation for sustaining global connectivity.

### Case Study: Sunseeker

Sunseeker stands as the foremost luxury performance motor yacht brand globally. Renowned for their sporty aesthetics and racing heritage, Sunseeker has evolved into an industry icon.

Operating from its manufacturing hub in Poole, Sunseeker boasts a workforce of approximately 2,200 employees and produces around 130 boats annually. Sunseeker offers industry-leading training and development opportunities and had pioneered the Sunseeker Skills Academy in collaboration with Bournemouth and Poole College.

### Case Study: Port of Poole

Poole Harbour, Europe's largest natural harbour, encompasses over 10,000 acres and holds a prime location on the South Coast, with excellent connectivity to major airports and road networks.



As one of the UK's largest trust ports, it handles approx. 30,000 freight units and serves 200,000 outgoing passengers annually. It features:

- Two Roll-on/Roll-off berths facilitating cross channel services
- Berths to accommodate containers, general cargo, bulk, project cargoes, yacht transfers and hazardous goods
- Capacity to accommodate vessels up to 9.7m draft and 210 in length
- Sought after destination for cruise ships
- 2 marina's with the esteemed 5 Gold Anchors from the Yacht Harbour Association



## Advanced manufacturing: aerospace

The pan Dorset area is a leading hub for Aerospace Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), which is expected to grow by 4.1% per annum.

The sector benefits from:

- Access to **Bournemouth Airport** and **Aviation Business Park**, which is a centre of excellence in aviation/aerospace manufacturing and MRO
- Opportunities for **airport expansion** to create the UK's newest cargo hub to serve London and the South East
- A range of leading businesses such as: Eaton Mission Systems, Draken Europe, Curtiss-Wright, Honeywell Aerospace, Micro-Nav, Sphera Test & Services, AVIC Cabin Systems, Copperchase, Gama Aviation, Walker AEC, Field International, Aviation Defence, Spares Ltd, Beagle Technologies
- Being part of the **South West Aerospace cluster** which is one the largest and most significant in the world and includes 14 top prime companies and over 800 supply chain companies
- Networking and support through the **West of England Aerospace Forum**

### HeliOps

Based in Portland, HeliOps offers bespoke aviation training and operational services to diverse clients globally, including superyacht owners and Government Departments. With a unique license to operate on the UK Military Register, HeliOps caters to the needs of clients such as the UK MOD, Home Office, and international forces like the German Navy and Norwegian Navy. Its authorisation on the UK Civilian Register has also attracted clients such as Exxon Oil Company.

### Draken

Draken specialises in adversary training and delivers highly realistic scenarios that serve as rigorous tests for both existing and emerging military hardware, as well as the capabilities of military personnel to fend off attacks. This expertise has positioned Draken as a key participant in major international training exercises, providing support to over 20 nations annually.

Operating from its headquarters at Bournemouth's Aviation Park East, Draken's distinctive dark blue Falcon 20 jets have graced the skies above the South Coast for many years. Equipped with advanced electronic warfare systems, these aircraft have been integral to the UK and allied military training programs since the company's inception as FR Aviation in 1985.



# Defence

As a strategic centre for Defence and Security, Dorset is anchored by a significant Ministry of Defence (MoD) presence which is engaged in research, development and operations. Dorset's geography and secure facilities provide an ideal environment for high-tech development and testing across land, sea, and air. Land-based ranges at Bovington and Lulworth, along with facilities at Blandford Forum, complement sea-based MoD ranges, offering comprehensive support to the UK armed forces.

The sector benefits from:

- Access to **Dorset Innovation Park** and **Battlelab**
- Being part of the **South West Defence and Security Cluster**
- A range of leading businesses such as: BAE Systems Army, BAE Systems Defence & Intelligence, BAE Systems Royal Navy, Battlelab, Amsafe Bridport, Atlas Elektronik UK, Babcock International, Coda Octopus, IAP G3 Systems, QinetiQ, Armour Centre, Intrepid Minds, HeliOps

## Case Study: G3 Systems

G3 Systems is an engineering company known for its diverse capabilities in fixed and deployable infrastructure, along with support solutions.

Their services cater to both UK and overseas clients, focusing on integrating hardware systems into various deployable structures such as containerised, soft and hard-walled shelters, covering a wide range of land and sea-based requirements. Their portfolio includes engineering workshops, vehicle repair facilities, office and communications setups, data centres, emergency response and control facilities, medical facilities, and more.

## Case Study: Battlelab

Situated at Dorset Innovation Park, the Defence BattleLab is a result of a collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, Dorset Council and Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership. This pioneering and unique facility serves as a hub for end-users and experts from various defence sectors, facilitating collaboration and engagement with the MOD.



As part of the government's **National Strategic Technology and Innovation Exchange** programme (NSTIx), BattleLab serves as a Co-Creation Space for defence innovation.





Defence in numbers:			
<b>Employment</b>  <b>8,600</b>	<b>Businesses</b>  <b>280</b>	<b>GVA</b>  <b>£440m</b>	<b>Growth since 2010</b>  <b>14%</b>

Note: Some businesses/jobs may sit in more than one sector.

# Clean energy

Our clean energy sector benefits from:

- The largest onshore oil field in Western Europe, at Wytch Farm
- Existing port facilities at Portland and Poole which can be deployed to serve as a hub for the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster. The **Channel Gateway project** at Portland could provide the only large-scale deep water offshore wind manufacturing and assembly port on the South Coast
- An existing **nuclear licenced site** at Winfrith, which has the potential to host Small Modular Reactors in the future
- Unique geological features, which means we have the potential to:
  - lead decarbonisation in the South of England and Wales through **Carbon, Capture and Storage** in the English Channel
  - expand and accelerate the UK's hydrogen economy through development of the **UK's largest hydrogen storage site** to ensure energy security
- The presence of renewable energy resources across the area including solar, onshore and offshore wind to enable the clean energy transition
- Transferable skills from the oil and gas industry from Wytch Farm
- Bournemouth Universities faculty of Science and Technology including its department of Design and Engineering and innovation centre
- A range of leading businesses such as Portwind, UKEn, Morwind, Channel Gateway, Latent Drive and Manor Renewable Energy
- Proximity to the Somerset based Hinkley Point C project, Hinkley Connection project and the Gravity enterprise zone, providing an opportunity for learning.

Clean energy in numbers:			
<b>Employment</b> 	<b>Businesses</b> 	<b>GVA</b> 	<b>Employment Growth since 2010</b> 
<b>5,900</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>£800m</b>	<b>36%</b>

Note: Some businesses/jobs may sit in more than one sector.

## Latent Drive

Latent Drive, a pioneering company based on the Dorset Innovation Park, are making significant strides in the green hydrogen sector with their innovative Catrode® mass-production process. They are currently developing the SeaStack™, a first of its kind direct seawater electrolyser. This cutting-edge technology is uniquely designed for the needs of offshore hydrogen production from renewable wind power, further enhancing the sustainability and performance of offshore hydrogen production.

The company's breakthrough technology not only supports the global shift towards green energy sources but also represents a leap forward in material science.

## Manor Renewable Energy

Manor Renewable Energy (MRE) – part of the OEG Group – was established in 2013 and has garnered recognition for its prowess in delivering temporary power and engineering solutions offshore with a fleet of 16 specialist offshore support vessels.

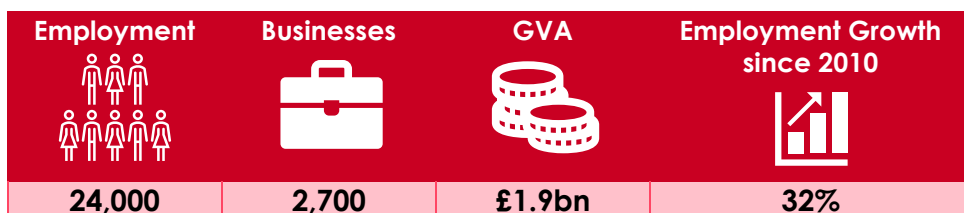
Headquartered in Portland, Dorset, its capabilities include end-to-end engineering solutions, from design to fabrication and has collaborated with numerous OEMs, wind farm developers and operators worldwide.

## Financial services (including fintech)

BCP's financial services sector is renowned as a UK Centre of Excellence for financial services, benefitting from a wealth of local expertise, including Fintech. Bournemouth hosts a range of global business headquarters and specialises in securities processing and fund trustee management. Bournemouth also leads in the 'near-shoring' trend, attracting firms relocating jobs from London or overseas back to the UK.





The sector benefits from:

- The **Lansdowne district of Bournemouth** - a key financial centre, where there is new energy efficient Grade A office accommodation and opportunities to develop more
- A range of leading businesses such as: Ageas, Gallagher, Investec, Phoenix, Liverpool Victoria, Morning Data, JP Morgan, Lloyds Bank, BNY Mellon, Teachers Building Society, RiskSTOP Group Ltd, PKF Francis Clark, Vitality Health, Richmond Group, Handlesbanken and Hazeltree
- Support from **Fintech West**, through its new **South Coast Hub**
- Links to a business ecosystem that spans the Western Gateway and Central south areas
- Technical qualifications through BCP College and Weymouth College
- Bournemouth University Business School (which is accredited by the Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business)



Note: Some businesses/jobs may sit in more than one sector.

### For every 1 person employed in the UK, we employ

	3 in non-life insurance
	2 in other monetary intermediation
	2 in other activities auxiliary to insurance and pension funding
	2 in activities of insurance agents and brokers

### Case Study – iplicit

iplicit, a Dorset-based financial software platform, provides cloud accounting software for medium sized businesses and nonprofits.

Launched in 2019, it aimed to challenge the status quo for accountancy software by filling a gap in the market for two different types of organisations:

- Those that were stuck with on-premises software that only functioned with the aid of multiple spreadsheets and manual intervention; and
- Those that had out-grown entry-level cloud systems.

Funded by £18.5m in private investment to date, iplicit has grown by more than 100% annually since 2019 and is on course to do so for a seventh consecutive year. It has more than 30,000 daily users and is structured to scale twentyfold in the next seven years.

It was 18th among UK companies on the 2024 FT1000 list of Europe's fastest-growing businesses. Weeks later, it was named among the top 10 medium-sized employers on the Sunday Times Best Places to Work.

## Creative and digital

The pan Dorset area has a strong digital creative scene, with particular strengths in visual effects, gaming, animation, creative agencies, app development and post-production.

The Digital Creative community benefits from a rich talent pool nurtured by the Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth University and surrounding colleges. Particular assets include:





- the largest film school outside of London at the Arts University Bournemouth
- centres for digital entertainment, applied creative technologies, computer animation and computing and informatics at Bournemouth University which has the largest centre for professional higher education for film and media in the UK
- courses in animation, computing, IT and creative enterprise at Bournemouth & Poole College

The sector also benefits from:

- access to **Silicon South** as a networking organisation
- work by BCP to establish a Film Office, to promote the area as a destination for filmmakers
- the opportunities associated with BCP's **Smart Places** programme
- the newly consented Innovation Park within the **Talbot Quarter development**, which will offer R&D space for businesses looking to grow across creative technologies including areas of AI, machine learning and AR/VR as well as an **internet exchange** which provides low latency dark fibre 5G

connectivity enabling R&D in high tech wearables, autonomous robots and augmented reality

- leading businesses such as: End State, Intergage, LoveLove Films, Poundbury Systems Ltd, Spyrosoft, Studio Global, Talk Think Do, Treehouse, You are the Media

	Employment 	Businesses 	GVA 	Employment Growth since 2010 
<b>Digital</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>£550m</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Creative</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>2,900</b>	<b>£580m</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Combined<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>£820m</b>	<b>23%</b>

Note: Some businesses/jobs may sit in more than one sector.

### Case Study: Treehouse

Nestled in Poole, the Treehouse team stands as frontrunners in animation and film production.

Since 2020, they've honed their craft in Unreal Engine, propelled by a MegaGrant from Epic Games, which culminated in their acclaimed short film, 'The Well'. This innovative technology forms part of a highly collaborative ethos that encourages a team-led studio culture. Following 'The Well', Treehouse collaborated with industry giants Warner Bros. and Paramount.

Presently, they spearhead all visual and animation aspects for Duncan Jones' upcoming feature, 'Rogue Trooper', in partnership with Liberty and Rebellion Films, slated for completion in 2025.





<sup>23</sup> Due to some SIC codes falling in both the Creative and Digital sectors, the combined value is less than the sum of the digital and creative sectors

## Health sciences

The pan Dorset area's integrated care system (and associated data), ageing population and wealth of health expertise provide the ideal conditions to create a 'Living Lab' to pioneer solutions to many of the UK's health challenges. Aligned to this, we are leading the UK's approach to 'one health', an integrated approach which aims to sustainably balance and optimise the health of people, animals and ecosystems – contributing to global health security.<sup>24</sup>

As well as our research and innovation assets (see table), health science businesses in our area benefit from:

- **Health Innovation Wessex** – which works with a variety of public academic, commercial and community organisations to identify best practice in healthcare and to drive the adoption and spread of innovation for a healthier Wessex
- A consented scheme for a **state-of-the-art Nuffield Health Hospital** as part of the **Talbot Quarter** development. This will have new technology to enhance leading medical research and will sit alongside an **Innovation park** which will act as an accelerator for the development of Createch and advanced engineering solutions for the challenges of supporting people to live well for longer and reducing frailty in the home.

	Employment 	Businesses 	GVA 	Employment growth since 2010 
<b>Health and social care</b>	<b>54,500</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>£1.5bn</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Health science</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>£100m</b>	<b>37%</b>

Our innovation and research assets are highlighted below:

Organisation	Centres and Expertise
<b>University Hospitals Dorset</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Histopathology Diagnostic Hub</li> <li>• Dorset Clinical Trials Unit – which will allow Dorset Companies to deliver research-led health and medical innovations, clinical products and clinical practice enhancements</li> </ul>
<b>Health Sciences University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialising in health science and key areas of research activity including radiology, chiropractic, rehabilitation, sport and psychology.</li> <li>• Includes a new £4.5m state of the art rehabilitation centre, funded through the Getting Building Fund.</li> </ul>
<b>Bournemouth University</b>	<p>The faculty of health and social science at Bournemouth university includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Research Centres relating to women's health, orthopaedics and medical imaging (including orthopaedic Research Institute)</li> <li>• Research into long term health challenges including ageing and dementia and well-being</li> <li>• Research into marginalised voices within the health and care system</li> </ul>
<b>Bournemouth and Poole College</b>	<p>The Health and Care Academy will expand the college's activities to train people to work in these sectors, including through new T Level courses and progression to Level 4 &amp; 5 and degree level qualifications.</p>

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab_1)

## Orthopaedic Research Institute

The [Orthopaedic Research Institute \(ORI\)](#) works across Bournemouth university and with hospitals, industry partners and academia to produce world-class research and high quality patient outcomes across the fields of orthopaedic surgery, related diseases, treatments, technologies and devices. The institute is recognised as combining the latest professional thinking with clinical best practice, to create a rich environment that stimulates new ideas, learning and thought leadership.

A particular area of expertise for ORI is osteoarthritis – a condition which Dorset clinicians frequently face owing to the high numbers of older people living in the region. Through ongoing research and teaching in this area, ORI has the potential to make a real impact on local and national practice.



## Where do we want to be?

*By 2035, the pan Dorset area will be one of the best places in the world in which to live, work, invest and play.*

*Brimming with optimism and fuelled by dynamic, productive businesses it will be an exemplar of a modern economy in an urban, coastal and rural landscape.*

*Our quality of life, exciting job opportunities and culture will attract and retain young people and families. At the same time, our integrated health system will ensure everyone who wants to work is able to do so.*

*Finally, as one of the most biodiverse places in England, we will be an exemplar of a sustainable economy, effectively balancing the needs of today with those of tomorrow, capitalising on our world-class natural resources and supporting nature recovery.*

## How will we get there?

Our approach to growth is broad based and recognises that whilst we have many opportunities to stimulate growth, we also have challenges that we need to address to create the right conditions for long term, sustainable growth. Our approach therefore recognises:

1. The urgent need **to address skills shortages**. This means taking immediate action to unlock the potential of people already living here by improving skills, health and access to opportunity.
2. The need (in the medium to long term) to **retain and attract young people** to live and work in the area to counteract our ageing demographic. This means providing a combination of:

- a. vibrant, connected places where people want to live;
- b. affordable homes; and
- c. rewarding job opportunities.

3. The opportunity to **expand our growth driving sectors** at the frontier of our economy, which have the potential to create well-paid rewarding jobs, boost economic output and compete on the international stage. But, at the same time, we must recognise that if we want to improve our productivity and wages, we must **improve the productivity of businesses in the foundation or everyday economy** which accounts for over 50% of employment in the area.
4. The need to shape and inform **nationally significant energy projects** to transform the economy and maximise their benefits for communities and minimise their impacts
5. That to operate effectively, our economy needs **functional transport and digital infrastructure, an energy grid** that has capacity for new connections and **places for people to work**.
6. That our **natural capital supports our economy**, providing essential eco-system services as well as making the area an attractive place for people to visit and live. Our plans for growth must not erode this asset but look to enhance our natural environment for future generations.

These imperatives form the basis of the six themes and strategic objectives that run through this strategy and are illustrated in our strategic objectives overleaf:



## Area of Outstanding Natural Business

### Growth Driving Sectors

#### Cutting Edge Industries

Stimulate, promote and support our high value clusters by:

- Establishing the area as a destination for international investment
- Stimulating inward investment and exporting
- Strengthening R&D, science and innovation investment
- Promoting strong links between businesses, research assets and supply chains
- Attracting and retaining graduates and technical skills

### Everyday businesses

### Empowered people

#### Growth and Opportunities

Improve the productivity, resilience and sustainability of our everyday businesses by:

- Improving technology adoption, innovation and agile thinking
- Improving access to finance
- Supporting start-ups and scale-ups
- Improving energy security and climate adaption

Empower all our residents to access employment and better opportunities throughout our economy by:

- Improving education and skills and preparing our workforce to support our growth driving sectors (including Energy)
- Enabling access to opportunity
- Tackling health related barriers to work and underlying causes of ill-health

### Working Places

### Vibrant Places

### Natural Places

#### Essential Foundations

Provide the infrastructure to support growth by:

- Improving transport and digital connectivity
- Improving energy supply, security and grid capacity
- Increasing the availability of employment sites
- Developing construction skills

Champion the creation of vibrant places where people and businesses want to be by:

- Increasing the supply of homes and improving energy efficiency
- Investing in town centres
- Supporting culture
- Tackling deprivation and supporting communities

Maximise the potential of our natural resources by:

- Facilitating the development of the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster and other clean energy opportunities
- Encouraging a one health approach
- Improving food security
- Providing green infrastructure to support health and well-being
- Supporting opportunities for integrated nature recovery and nature-based solutions



## Strategic objective 1: working places

Objective: Provide the infrastructure to support growth

### Why is this important?

To operate effectively, our economy needs functional transport and digital infrastructure, energy supply and an energy grid that has capacity for new connections and places for people to work:

- congestion and inadequate transport infrastructure constrain growth by:
  - reducing the distance that people are prepared to travel to work – therefore affecting the size of the labour market
  - hampering access to markets
  - affecting health
  - increasing emissions
- digital connectivity plays a key role in improving productivity and addressing environmental challenges. COVID-19 demonstrated the absolute necessity to have reliable, resilient and up to date digital infrastructure
- lack of power and energy is already constraining economic development and a constrained electricity grid means that new connections (for both energy supply such as renewable projects and energy demand such as homes and businesses) can be prohibitively expensive
- insufficient employment sites mean that businesses can't expand or relocate into the area.

### Which sectors will we focus on?

Whilst this objective is primarily concerned with improvements to place, rather than 'supporting sectors' per se, it will have implications for the construction sector, energy and transport and logistics sectors.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- Improved connectivity that supports sustainable housing and employment growth
- Congestion reduced at key hotspots on the A31, A35, A37 and A351, enabling people to get to work
- Improved air quality and decarbonised transport system
- Residents can access walking, cycling and public transport options with more frequent bus and rail services
- People and freight able to travel easily to and from the midlands and the north to the south coast
- Everyone can access full fibre broadband
- Our energy grid is capable of supporting both demand and supply side opportunities (inc. the Dorset Energy Supercluster) to support economic growth
- Our growing businesses can find suitable sites and premises.

### What are we building on?

	<b>Transport</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint work to develop a new local transport plan</li> <li>• Membership of Western Gateway Strategic Transport Board</li> </ul>
	<b>Digital Connectivity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Gigabit</li> <li>• Smart Places programme (BCP)</li> <li>• 5G Rural Dorset</li> </ul>
	<b>Energy and Grid Capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset Energy Supercluster project opportunities</li> <li>• Dorset Council Grid Capacity Review</li> <li>• Participation by Dorset Council in the new Local Energy Net Zero Accelerator (LENZA) tool</li> </ul>
	<b>Employment sites</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset and BCP Employment Land Study and draft local plans</li> <li>• Existing enterprise zone at Dorset Innovation Park</li> <li>• LEP Growing Places Fund</li> </ul>

## What activities will we focus on?

- **Transport** – delivering investment in our transport infrastructure to create an integrated transport system that supports our economic growth priorities, enables safer travel and supports decarbonisation of the transport system (including electrification)
- **Digital connectivity** – continuing the roll-out of full fibre connectivity, attracting an internet exchange, expanding 5G delivery and stimulating private sector investment in smart infrastructure
- **Grid capacity and energy supply** – boosting energy supply and the capacity of the electricity grid where supply/demand connections are most constrained
- **Employment sites** – bringing forward strategic employment sites across the area (see opportunities map) and maximising growth from the Dorset Innovation Park
- **Construction skills** – ensuring the sector has skills and capacity to fill the construction jobs required to take forward the pipeline of capital projects expected in the region over the next 10 years (including the Dorset Energy Supercluster)

## What next?

We will:

- With the Western Gateway STB<sup>25</sup>, work with National Highways to assess and deliver appropriate recommendations from the M4 to Dorset Strategic Study
- Work through the Western Gateway Strategic Transport Body to secure investment in the 12 projects identified in the draft Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) 2025-2035 (see maps overleaf) as well proposals outlined for the Strategic Road Network (which are not currently included in the SIP), such as improvements to the

A35 Dorchester roundabouts.

- Support expansion of Bournemouth Airport, particularly in relation to its potential as a freight hub
- Seek further investment in the Transforming Cities Fund to deliver a network of new cycle routes, walking routes and bus improvements
- Consider opportunities for transport electrification and enhancing EV charging infrastructure
- Work in partnership with the Government and private sector to improve digital connectivity including attracting an internet exchange to the South Coast
- Develop strategic and operational relationships with network operators to strengthen forecasting work, develop energy plans, co-develop innovation projects and explore opportunities from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund
- Engage with proposed Regional Energy System Plans
- Co-ordinate a developer and funders forum to identify long term private (and public) finance opportunities including the development of a housing and infrastructure revolving loans fund to address viability challenges
- Develop a public-private partnership model akin to the 'Building Plymouth' concept to increase the number of people entering the wider construction sector to support the implementation of housing and infrastructure projects

And as part of our collaboration with partners in the GSW, we will:

- Work with the GSW to establish a new high level cross-departmental contact group for the region to identify early solutions to progress the business case for the A303 scheme and wider strategic infrastructure investment into the region

<sup>25</sup> Western Gateway Strategic Transport Plan, 2024-2050, page 10

STB proposals commencing between 2025 and 2030 (south)



- Capacity and facility improvement at Bournemouth Station
- Strategic travel network (South East Dorset to BCP)
- Port of Poole Expansion, reopening of Hamworthy Branch Line and supporting access improvements
- All BCP rail stations to be made fully accessible
- Christchurch Town Centre sustainable access package
- A338 BCP sustainable access package
- Regional Cycle Network routes/schemes (BCP)
- Bournemouth Travel Interchange (bus/rail station) and links to town centre/seafront + Bournemouth Town Centre sustainable access package
- South East Dorset Rural Mobility Pilot
- Heart of Wessex rail service enhancement
- A354 multi-modal corridor improvements south of Dorchester to Weymouth and Portland.

STB proposals commencing between 2030 and 2035 (south)



- Westbury station additional platform
- Dorset Metro Shuttle (Wareham to Brockenhurst)
- Salisbury Rail Service Enhancements
- Yeovil to Salisbury Rail Service Improvement (Tisbury Loop)
- Gloucester station layout improvements
- Westerleigh rail junction upgrade
- Chippenham to Bristol rail electrification
- Henbury rail line (Metrowest phase two)
- Strategic Interchange Hubs (Gloucester, Cheltenham & Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Rail Stations)
- Four-tracking Bristol Temple Meads - Parson Street
- Long distance coach connections (Lydney-Cheltenham-Bristol)
- Rail service enhancements to existing services (WEMCA)

## Strategic objective 2: vibrant places

Champion the creation of vibrant places where people and businesses want to be

### Why is this important?

Vibrant places are enticing, exciting and inclusive, encouraging creativity and welcoming innovation. Whilst the Pan Dorset area is one of the most desirable places to live in the UK (as evidenced by our house prices), this desirability is making it harder for people on lower incomes to be able to live here.

Our ageing population means that we need to attract and retain young people and families to the area. As well as a good job, people want:

- an affordable home
- an attractive place to live
- a vibrant community with a good quality of life (including leisure and cultural opportunities).

The presence of a skilled workforce, will, in turn make the area more attractive to businesses, who will create good jobs.

As well as some of the most desirable places to live in the UK, the area also has extremes of deprivation, with some of our neighbourhoods amongst the most deprived in the UK.





### Which sectors will we focus on?

Whilst this objective is primarily concerned with improvements to place, rather than 'supporting sectors' per se, it will have implications for the construction sector and the cultural and creative industries.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- We attract and retain more young people and families
- Young people and families can afford to rent or buy homes
- We have vibrant communities with a range of leisure and cultural opportunities
- We can reduce inequalities and deprivation
- Our communities benefit from transformational projects

### What are we building on?

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Planning and regeneration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing regeneration plans for Bournemouth, Poole and Weymouth</li> <li>• Local plans in development for both local authority areas</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Business community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Improvement Districts in Bournemouth Town Centre, Bournemouth Coastal, Poole, Dorchester, Weymouth and Ferndown</li> <li>• Dorset Ambassadors network</li> <li>• Presence of Rollalong, the largest offsite design and build contractor in the south of England</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Cultural Compact in BCP and Cultural Strategy in Dorset Council – with shared ambitions and priorities</li> <li>• A pan Dorset housing roundtable</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education and skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Centre of Excellence for construction skills @ Weymouth College and construction and built environment courses at Bournemouth and Poole College</li> <li>• Arts University Bournemouth - specialising in creativity</li> <li>• Bournemouth University, with relevant strengths in creative industries and cultural heritage</li> </ul>

## What activities will we focus on?

- **Homes** – identifying and trialling approaches to improving:
  - the supply of homes (e.g. new models for housing delivery, stalled sites, empty homes, planning, community builds etc.)
  - the affordability/accessibility of homes for key workers, graduates and homeless people
  - the energy efficiency and sustainability of new and existing homes
- **Town Centres** – investing in our town centres to create vibrant places, which respond to the needs of our communities
- **Culture** – supporting the implementation of our cultural strategies and other activities (such as festivals, performances and events) which cultivate a sense of vibrancy and vitality
- **Deprivation** – working with partners to tackle the underlying causes of deprivation in our most deprived communities; and
- **Community** – working with our voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to support the growth and development of community enterprises as well as building community wealth through procurement, fair pay and use of land/property assets.
- **Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster** – Ensuring potential community impacts are mitigated and benefits maximised

## What next?

We will:

- Through our Housing Roundtable identify public land and assets that are suitable for housing across the public sector estate
- Co-ordinate a developer and funders forum to identify long term private (and public) finance opportunities including the development of a housing and infrastructure revolving loans fund to address viability challenges
- Develop a housing retrofit strategy and investment programme

- Work with DCMS and our cultural partners to implement our cultural strategies
- Work with VCSE sector to develop proposals for Community Wealth Building approaches.
- Co-ordinate local action to maximise the community benefits and minimise the impacts of the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster.

And as part of our collaboration with partners in the GSW, we will:

- Work with Homes England and other industrial partners to recognise and promote housing as a means to unlock growth including exploring housing viability issues.

## Strategic Objective 3: natural

Objective: Maximise the potential for our natural resources

### Why is this important?

Our high-quality environment supports our economy and wider well-being; environmental degradation would be a risk to many sectors. Agricultural policy is shifting towards the provision of ecosystem services which is likely to drive the growth of alternative farming practices (e.g. regenerative farming) and new business models, with implications for our farmers and land managers. At the same time, there is a continued demand for food production, driven by a growing population and changing climate, meaning food security will become increasingly important. We must therefore work with farmers, food producers and land managers to pioneer sustainable development approaches.

We have a wealth of clean energy investment opportunities which could form the basis of **nationally significant clean energy cluster in Dorset**. As well as supporting the Government's clean energy mission, these projects would create high value jobs and clean growth opportunities for our residents.

### Which sectors will we focus on?




Businesses in all sectors can take action to look after the natural environment and contribute to our net zero ambitions. However, activities within this priority will have particular relevance to businesses in the following sectors:

- Clean Energy
- Conservation and environmental services
- Agriculture and aquaculture
- Agri-tech.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- We secure investment and jobs in the Dorset clean energy supercluster and enable wider supply chain development
- We become a net exporter of low carbon, clean energy and support wider industrial decarbonisation
- Our energy and environmental sectors become larger
- Our residents can get closer to nature and enjoy the benefits
- Our natural environment is more resilient, diverse and abundant
- Our farmers/fish-farmers are able to produce food whilst protecting the environment and making a living.

### What are we building on?

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Natural Assets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our outstanding natural environment including renewable energy resources (including offshore wind with opportunities to catalyse port development)</li> <li>• Geology suitable for hydrogen storage and carbon capture and storage</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Partnerships and support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset Local Nature Partnership</li> <li>• Health and Nature Dorset (HAND)</li> <li>• Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy</li> <li>• SWAN – South West Aquaculture Network</li> <li>• South West Agri-tech</li> <li>• Future farming resilience fund</li> <li>• One Health Enterprise Network</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Research and education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of life and environmental science at Bournemouth University</li> <li>• Land based provision at Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College</li> <li>• Home of CEFAS</li> </ul>

What activities will we focus on?

- **Energy Security** – developing low carbon energy opportunities including solar, onshore and offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and storage and small-scale modular reactors
- **Food Security** – promoting the adoption of new/alternative farming practices and agricultural technologies to maintain food security whilst protecting the environment
- **Aquaculture** – developing the aquaculture opportunity
- **Green and blue infrastructure** – developing multi-functional green and blue infrastructure assets such as parks, woodlands, paths, streams and lakes which can deliver a wide range of benefits to people and the environment
- **Natural health** – developing nature-based activities to support health and well-being (linked to HAND) and pioneering a 'one health' approach
- **Nature based solutions** – Support opportunities for nature recovery and nature-based solutions, including the development of green finance opportunities and skills development.

## What next?

We will:

- Seek Government backing for the **Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster** in its Industrial Strategy centred on nationally significant energy infrastructure projects at Portland Port.
- Engage with The Crown Estate to accelerate the proposed Round 6 offshore wind leasing round and the inclusion of sites off the Dorset Coast
- Co-ordinate local action to enable the development of Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster and maximise social value and

minimise impacts. This will include key enabling activities relating to skills and labour, transport, housing etc.

- Secure investment in the delivery a multi-functional green infrastructure network, which weaves together and enriches the green and blue spaces across the region – the 'green net'<sup>26</sup>
- Continue to develop nature-based activities to support health and well-being through HAND as well as pioneering a 'One Health' approach to finding commercial solutions to global health challenges
- Work with Dorset Local Nature Partnership to maximise green finance opportunities and conservation skills

And as part of our collaboration with partners in the GSW, we will:

- Establish a new **Skills Investment Commission** (with Government) to develop a comprehensive workforce investment plan to meet the skills requirements of nationally significant clean energy projects in the area building on the national success of the Hinkley Point programme
- Establish a partnership between the national FLOW Taskforce and the Great South West to kick start the clean energy transition at scale
- Collaborate with Government to develop **a new, comprehensive investor offer** which maximises the global potential of the Great South West and in parallel, **pioneer a new model for green investment** that builds on the strengths of our natural capital
- Collaborate with the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology, the Department for Food & Rural Affairs and the UK Agri-tech Centre to establish **a new Agri-Tech Catapult**, located in the Great South West, reflecting the region's strategic importance to the UK's food security.

<sup>26</sup> BCP Green Infrastructure Strategy, May 2022





## Strategic objective 4: everyday businesses

Objective: Improve the productivity, resilience and sustainability of our everyday businesses

### Why is this important?

The foundation or everyday economy makes up over 50% of our employment and is essential to the functioning of all economies. However, pay, productivity and job security are often lower than average in these sectors, where a greater proportion of jobs are taken by women.

To improve our economic performance and improve the quality of life for our residents, we must also improve the productivity (and therefore wages) in our everyday economy.

Many factors affect business level productivity, including the availability of skills, workforce well-being, energy costs, technology adoption, leadership, management skills and access to finance.

Our foundation economy is also under pressure to reduce its environmental impact, develop sustainable business models and adapt to climate change.

### Which sectors will we focus on?

Open to businesses in any sector, but with a focus on:

- Transport and logistics
- Retail
- Public services
- Health and social care
- Tourism, leisure and hospitality
- Farming and food production.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- Our foundation businesses become more productive and sustainable, offering staff better pay and more secure employment
- Our business-related carbon emissions fall, and our businesses become more resilient.

### What are we building on?

Businesses in the area can already access a range of business support initiatives including:

- Support provided by Dorset LEP's Growth Hub funding including support for bid writing, horizon scanning, funding accelerator, business growth groups and digital technology
- Support provided by the Local Authorities through the current UKSPF programme such as:
  - SME grant funding
  - Low carbon Dorset and Climate essentials
- Wider support including:
  - Dorset Growth Hub
  - Dorset Trading Standards
  - Dorset Business Mentoring
  - Primary Authority Partnerships
  - Dorset Business Angels
  - Barclays Eagle Labs
  - British Business Bank (including the South West Investment Fund)
  - Business Improvement Districts (including the recently agreed Accommodation BID in BCP which will allow a tourism tax to be applied to hotel rooms)

In addition, a range of business networking organisations exist, including the Chambers of Commerce, FSB and Visit Dorset.

## What activities will we focus on?

- **Technology adoption and innovation** – supporting businesses to become more productive through innovation, the use of new technologies (including digital) and agile thinking
- **Leadership and management skills** – supporting businesses and entrepreneurs with the skills needed to lead well-managed, productive and resilient businesses
- **Inclusive and healthy workplaces** – improving understanding of inclusive and healthy employment practices (including disability confident) to help address skills shortages and improve workplace productivity
- **Access finance** – supporting businesses to grow by helping them to find the right sources of finance and the skills to access it
- **Start-ups and scale-ups** – supporting potential entrepreneurs (including graduates and under-represented groups) with start-up support and supporting scale-ups to manage the growth process
- **Low carbon businesses** – providing businesses and community groups with advice to save energy, reduce emissions and improve their environmental sustainability.

## Our next steps

We will:

- Work with partners to secure an integrated settlement to fund local business support to develop, strengthen and align the business support offers across the area

## Strategic objective 5: empowered people

Objective: Empower our residents to access employment and better opportunities throughout our economy

### Why is this important?

People are the lifeblood of our economy and drive the success of every business and sector. Equally, work can give people a sense of purpose, which can be central to their happiness and well-being.

However, businesses and employers in the area are reporting skills shortages and gaps and these are expected to increase as our workforce ages. Furthermore, the development of the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster will create thousands of high-skilled job opportunities, which will add to demand.

At the same, approx. 25,000 people are unemployed or inactive and want to work. Similarly, a high proportion of people are working part-time (with associated lower wages) and in insecure/low paid employment, which is often detrimental to their health and well-being. There are many reasons why people do not work, or do not work more, including poor health, skills, confidence and caring responsibilities.

Poor health is one of the most significant reasons why people are not able to work and also affects the productivity of people in work. Our health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors and therefore, health and the economy are inextricably linked. A healthy population is essential to a healthy economy and vice-versa.

We also know that employment rates and earnings are lower amongst people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women and people with lower skills levels. For many people, the disadvantages start before school and continue through their life. Addressing the

barriers to inclusion can help us to address our skills shortages and improve individual life chances and opportunities.




### Which sectors will we focus on?

All

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- A significant uplift in the number of people in work, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups
- Dorset residents working in the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster
- Fewer businesses reporting skills shortages and gaps
- An uplift in the number of people earning above the living wage
- An improvement in the health of our population and reduction in health inequalities.

### What are we building on?

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Governance</b></p> <p>Established Pan Dorset partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorset Skills Board</li> <li>• Dorset Skills Advisory Panel and Board</li> <li>• Dorset Local Skills Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Dorset Integrated Care Partnership – ‘Our Dorset’</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 universities and 2 colleges</li> <li>• Pan Dorset Adult Skills and Learning</li> <li>• 41 specialist SEND schools and post 16 providers</li> <li>• UKSPF provision</li> <li>• Dorset and Somerset Training provider network</li> <li>• Sector based work academies and skills bootcamps</li> <li>• Dorset Careers Hub and Enterprise advisor network</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Businesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A network of 16 Cornerstone Employers who work with the Careers Hub</li> <li>• Disability confident employers</li> </ul>

## What activities will we focus on?

- **Skills** – activities to:
  - attract and retain talent in the area (including careers advice)
  - boost skills to meet current and future demand (e.g. apprenticeships and skills bootcamps)
  - identify and develop the pipeline of skills required to support the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster
  - increase provision of in-work training.
- **Access to opportunity** - developing a fully integrated approach to helping people to re-engage with and progress within the labour market which:
  - addresses the underlying causes of inactivity (e.g. health, caring responsibilities, skills and confidence etc)
  - works with employers to promote inclusive, healthy and flexible working practices to support access to opportunities (e.g. through an Employer charter or Disability Confident Employer schemes)
  - pilots approaches to managing an aging workforce
  - provides access to training, an apprenticeship or help to find work for young people
- **Health** – working as an integrated partnership to develop a place-based preventative approach to health including the wider determinants of health (such as housing, environment, education, debt and money management etc.). This new approach recognises the impact that local economic development and planning policies can have on health and the opportunity to deliver more by working together. The approach will also focus on the causes of health-related inactivity (such as musculoskeletal conditions, mental health and cardio-vascular health) and the integration of employment advisors as part of treatment and care pathways.

## Our next steps

### We will:

- Conduct a granular analysis of the economic inactivity challenges in the area and work with our partners (including local authorities, the NHS, ICP, training providers, Job Centre Plus, the voluntary sector, employers and trade unions) to identify the actions that could be taken to get people back to work
- With our partners, develop a local '**Get Britain Working Plan**' which will:
  - shape a strong, joined-up and local work, health and skills offer
  - aim to reduce economic inactivity and take forward the Youth Guarantee within the area
  - inform and shape the development of our Connect to Work programme delivery
- From 2026/27 deliver the Connect to Work programme, a new supported employment programme for people who are economically inactive
- Deliver our 'Get Britain Working Plan' utilising funding from the new Get Britain Working Fund, alongside the UKSPF and active links with local employers
- Seek trailblazer status for the pan Dorset area to become a testbed to trial new ways to manage an ageing workforce. This would involve the establishment (and resourcing of) a joint taskforce (with cross departmental representation) to research, develop and trial potential solutions
- Work with our partners in the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster and local education providers to identify and develop the pipeline of skills required to support the development and operational phases of the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster.

## Strategic objective 6: growth driving sectors

Objective: To stimulate, promote and support our high value clusters

### Why is this important?

Our growth driving sectors have higher than average productivity, undertake more innovation and are more likely to export their products and services. They also employ more graduates and people with specialist skills and pay higher than average wages.

Their productivity is enhanced by being near each other and their supply chains. This 'agglomeration or cluster effect' boosts productivity by allowing easier transfer of knowledge, skills and innovation between firms. Growth in these high value sectors will create higher paid job opportunities for our residents and help to attract and retain graduates.

The Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster projects, provide an opportunity to catapult our emerging clean energy sector into the forefront of the UK clean energy sector, transforming our economy as it does so.

### Which sectors will we focus on?





Focusing on our existing and emerging high value clusters, as well as the application of technology across and between sectors.

- Advanced Manufacturing (in particular aerospace and marine and maritime)
- Defence
- Clean energy industries
- Financial services (including Fintech)
- Digital and creative
- Health and life sciences.

### What outcomes do we want to achieve?

- We become an international destination for inward investment
- Our growth driving sectors grow, creating good quality jobs for our residents
- Our universities and colleges play a stronger role in driving innovation, inward investment and technical skills.

### What are we building on?

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Businesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing and emerging high value clusters</li> <li>• Regional sectoral networks (e.g. Maritime UK South West, FinTech West, Silicon South, Dorset Engineering and Manufacturing Cluster, South West Regional Defence and Security Cluster)</li> <li>• International trade support through Dorset Chamber</li> <li>• Defence and Security Supply Chain Development programme</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Strengths in the development of key enabling technologies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big data and machine learning technologies (particularly in BCP)</li> <li>• Internet of Things technologies</li> <li>• Robotic technologies</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Research and education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 universities and 2 FE colleges with world class centres of expertise in creative and digital technologies, health, business and engineering</li> <li>• Marine and Maritime Launchpad</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development opportunities aligned to our Growth Driving Sectors at Dorset Innovation Park (Battlelab), Talbot Quarter, Bournemouth Airport, our ports and town centres</li> <li>• Freeports in Plymouth and Solent</li> </ul>

## What activities will we focus on?

- **Strategic Inward Investment** – Securing public and private sector investment to support our portfolio of nationally significant infrastructure projects
- **Business Inward investment** – attracting inward investment from the UK or overseas into our growth driving sectors and their supply chains as well as into our universities, colleges and schools
- **Exporting** – helping business to access expert guidance, tools and services to export more products and services
- **Collaboration and supply chains** – developing opportunities to maximise collaboration and growth through resilient local supply chains. A particular focus will be on the development of supply chains to support the Dorset Clean Energy Supercluster
- **Research and innovation** – supporting R&D both within these firms, as well as the wider research base. Capitalising on research and expertise within our higher education sector to drive growth through spin-outs and knowledge transfer. A particular focus will be on **health innovation** to help tackle local health priorities to reduce inactivity due to ill-health
- **Student and graduate attraction and retention** – encouraging the brightest and the best to study and stay on here after graduation or return early in their career
- **Technical skills development** – developing bespoke programmes aligned to the skills needs of our growth driving sectors.

## Our next steps

We will:

- Continue to inform and influence the Government's Industrial Strategy and sector plans
- Promote Pan Dorset opportunities through Invest in Dorset, the Dorset Ambassador Network and relevant industry events (including UK REiiF)

- With our partners, develop a clear process for attracting and landing inward investment enquiries
- Collaborate with the private sector to drive forward the energy cluster at pace
- Work with key businesses and sector leaders to develop sector-based plans to drive forward growth in these sectors, aligned with national sector plans
- Bring together a task force to understand issues relating to graduate retention, explore best practice and develop an action plan to encourage the brightest and the best to stay here
- Through our Dorset Skills Board, identify the technical skills required to support the growth of our growth driving sectors and develop bespoke skills development programmes.

And as part of our collaboration with partners in the GSW, we will:

- Collaborate with Government to develop **a new, comprehensive investor offer** which maximises the global potential of the Great South West
- Develop a new place-based model of collaboration with UKRI through an ambitious **Joint Investment Plan to scale up investment into the region's research and innovation ecosystem**, to turbo charge development and adoption of world leading science and technologies across the area
- Strengthen collaboration between the South West Defence & Security Cluster, Ministry of Defence and Department for Business & Trade through **a new concordat to accelerate technology investment**, workforce planning, and market growth. This would be a key building block of the Strategic Defence Review, cementing GSW as the UK's defence spine
- Work with Make UK, industry leaders and the Department of Business & Trade to shape **a new Joint Manufacturing Investment Plan for the Great South West**, recognising its national importance to trade and exports and anchoring the region at the heart of the Government's new Industrial Strategy for the UK.

## Appendix 1: Measures of success

	Ambitions (over the life of the framework)	Key indicator	Source
<b>Output &amp; productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the gap in the rate of output growth between Dorset and the UK average</li> <li>Improve productivity so that the area moves from the 'falling behind' group to the 'catching up group' of local authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total economic output (GVA)</li> <li>GVA per hour worked</li> </ul>	ONS
<b>Economic activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the economic activity rate to 80%</li> <li>Maintain/increase the total size of the workforce in the area in the face of ageing population pressures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic activity rate for people aged 16-64</li> <li>Total number economically active people aged 16+</li> </ul>	ONS
<b>Wages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the pay gap between workers in the area and workers in the rest of the UK</li> <li>Reduce the number of people earning less than the Living Wage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gross weekly pay for full time employees (workplace)</li> <li>The proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the Living Wage</li> </ul>	ONS ONS
<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close the gap in the proportion of people with higher level skills between the Dorset area and the rest of the UK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of the residents (aged 16-64) with Level 4+ qualifications</li> </ul>	ONS
<b>Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the gap in housing affordability between the Pan Dorset area and the rest of the South West</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace earnings</li> <li>Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile annual workplace earnings</li> <li>Median monthly rents</li> </ul>	ONS
<b>Inequality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce levels of deprivation in our most deprived areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of LSOAs in the 10% most deprived areas in England</li> </ul>	ONS MHCLG
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the health of our population</li> <li>Reduce health inequalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under 75 mortality rate from all causes</li> <li>Inequality in life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived areas</li> </ul>	Fingertips public health data
<b>Climate Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve net zero by 2050 (2045 in the DC area)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Greenhouse gas emissions</li> </ul>	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
<b>Bio-diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30% of land in positive management for nature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of land in positive management for nature</li> </ul>	