

DORSET PERFORMANCE AND INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	2 March 2021		
Security Level:	Confidential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Commercially Sensitive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified <input type="checkbox"/>
Paper Title	Dorset LEP Programmes - Delivery Update		
Papers are provided for:	Decision <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY OF NOTES:

Local Growth Fund

- NOTE: The Committee notes the Local Growth Fund financial and programmatic update, including risks identified.

Getting Building Fund

- NOTE: The Committee notes the Getting Building Fund financial and programmatic update.

Growing Places Fund

- NOTE: The Committee notes the Growing Places Fund financial and programmatic update, including risks identified.

1. PURPOSE

This paper gives an overview of Dorset LEP programme delivery. It is accompanied by several annexes, which are all classified as confidential due to containing commercially sensitive information:

- Annex 1: January 2021 meeting minutes – confidential
- Annex 2: Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund – grant programme overview – confidential
- Annex 3: Growing Places Fund – loan programme overview - confidential
- Annex 4: Growing Places Fund – 5-year forecast – confidential

2. SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

A) GROWTH DEAL PROGRAMME

Annex 2 provides a high-level overview of all Local Growth Deal programmes and projects; outlining risks, including risks related to Covid-19.

DORSET GROWTH DEAL - CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS

The following information is up to date as of 22 February 2021.

	Previous reporting period (Dec 20 - Jan 21)	Current Reporting Period (Feb 21 - Mar 21)	Forecast for Next Reporting Period (up to 31 March 21)
Total no of LGF projects:	54	54	54
Total no of closed projects:	30	36	54
Total no of ongoing projects:	24	18	0
Change from last reporting period:	In this reporting period 6 projects have closed. The remainder of 18 projects will fully spend and contractually complete by 31 March 2021.		

DORSET GROWTH DEAL – PROGRAMMATIC AND FINANCIAL UPDATE

Dorset LEP is working very closely with all delivery partners ensuring that the LGF programme is fully spent by 31/3/21.

All £98.4m of Local Growth funding is fully allocated and due to be delivered by 31 March 2021. In Q3, as of 22 February 2021, Dorset LEP recorded a total spend of £5.3m across all partners. Forecasted spend for Q4 is £6.1m. Dorset LEP has currently 18 ongoing projects.

NOTE: The Committee notes the Local Growth Fund financial and programmatic update, including risks identified.

B) GETTING BUILDING FUND

Annex 2 provides a high-level overview of all Getting Building Fund projects.

NOTE: The Committee notes the Getting Building Fund financial and programmatic update.

C) DORSET GROWING PLACES FUND

Annexes 3 and 4 provide high level overview of Growing Places Fund projects. For more information on programmes/projects that have not had any significant change since the last report, are not high risk or require an approval/recommendation from the Committee, please see these annexes. Any projects that require the Committee's attention, are high risk or had significant change since the last report.

Growing Places Fund Financial Overview

To date, the Fund has invested into 11 projects, 10 of which are loans and 1 is a grant. As of today, 6 projects are complete with loans repaid. There are currently 4 outstanding loans and 1 grant (Ultrafast).

UPDATE ON ON-GOING PROJECTS

Ultrafast Broadband (grant) – Dorset Council

In 2017, Dorset LEP awarded £2m grant to Dorset Council for the delivery of the Ultrafast Broadband project.

A total of 3270 premises have now been fully delivered to Customer Ready for Service (CRFS). This is out of an overall contractual delivery of 3856 premises. Field work has not been affected by Covid-19 and the delivery for the initial contracted build of 2960 total homes passed (THP) are now complete.

Update on key Dorset LEP sites under this contract:

- Dorset Innovation Park - site is fully complete.
- Aviation Business Park - site is fully complete.

NOTE: The Committee notes the Growing Places Fund financial and programmatic update, including risks identified.

D) DORSET GATEWAY

Enquiry management

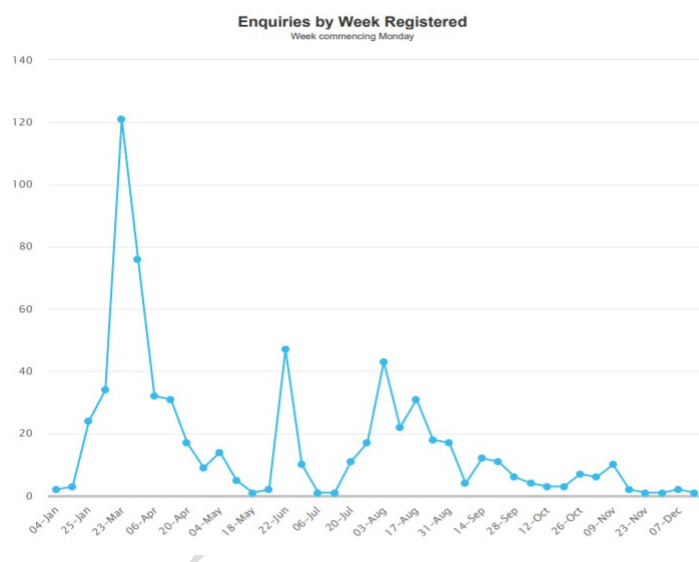
An overview of business engagements recorded for the period between 1 April 2018 and 31 January 2021 is presented below in **figure 1**.

Engagement Level	2018/19			2019/20			2020/21 (year to 31 January)		
	No. Businesses Engaged	Target	No. Businesses Engaged	Target	Progress against target	No. Businesses Engaged	No. Businesses Engaged	Target	Progress against target
Light touch	679	600	113%	1,099	900	122%	903	800	113%
Medium intensity	219	120	190%	483	180	268%	285	150	190%
High intensity	55	60	92%	85	90	94%	64	50	128%

Figure 1: Business engagements by intensity for period 01/04/18 – 31/01/21.

COVID-19 enquiries

Since the start of the first lockdown on 23 March 2020, there have been just under 660 individual COVID-19 specific enquiries made into the Dorset Gateway. These figures represent individual contacts and do not include any subsequent calls that businesses might have made.



Enquiries regarding COVID-19 continue to focus on access to short-term finance and general advice and support. We have noticed that, unlike the previous lockdowns, businesses seem to be going direct to the two local authorities to access the business disruption related loans, who are administering the scheme on behalf of the government.

Social Media/Website Activity

Page	Unique Page Views			
	Q1 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q3 20/21	Q4 20/21
Dorset Gateway Landing Page	118	167	64	-
Finance and Funding	105	178	149	-
Skills and Training	31	46	25	-
Bid Writing	39	42	17	-
Support Services	7	17	8	-
Misc. (testimonials and articles)	4	21	-	-

Figure 4: Website – unique page views.

During Q3 there were 170 LinkedIn posts, attracting 29,548 impressions. There were also 39,367 Twitter impressions from 88 posts.

COVID-19 Business Support

Crowdfund Dorset Business

Still open for applications is [Crowdfund Dorset Business](#) which provides businesses in need of a cash injection with up to £5,000 of match-funding. This campaign was established in response to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative offers micro, small and social enterprise businesses up to £5,000 of match-funding, provided they can raise an equivalent amount from 10 or more supporters.

Developed as part of Crowdfunder UK's pay-it-forward campaign and with support from Enterprise Nation, the scheme has so far awarded £37,000 in match funding to 9 businesses and projects across Dorset. Among them is Weymouth's Nothe Fort, which raised £5,000 through crowdfunding which was matched by Dorset LEP. They used the money to make the heritage attraction COVID-19 safe, enabling over 35,000 visitors to safely enjoy the attraction throughout the summer of 2020.

James Farquharson, Chairman of Nothe Fort said, "Nothe Fort costs a lot to run, even when it is closed. When COVID-19 struck, we were faced with a choice: either shut the fort and use our reserves – enough for about a year – in the hope we could ride-out the pandemic, or invest in adaptations to enable the fort to open. We applied to Dorset LEPs crowdfund campaign and managed to secure the full match-funding of £5,000, which gave us the confidence to make the changes needed to open safely."

Other projects that have received funding include [Christchurch Seagulls Swimming Club](#), [Chaplin's Bar](#), [Coda Music Trust](#) and the Dorset Artists Emergency Fund.

Businesses and organisations interested in finding out more should visit: www.dorsetlep.co.uk/crowdfunder

Support for small businesses

In addition to Dorset LEPs continuing Crowdfund Dorset Business Campaign, we ran a campaign prior to Christmas to help promote and support local, small independent businesses that were still operating during the second national lockdown. The #StillOpen campaign, which is still running, aims to encourage local residents to shop locally and help Dorset businesses adversely impacted by COVID-19 by publicising those businesses that are still trading, albeit in a limited capacity.

With the continuing restrictions and with non-essential retail and personal services being forced to close as part of the third national lockdown, Dorset LEP is funding a trial of the e-commerce platform, **ShopAppy** in five town areas across Dorset. Delivered in partnership with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Chambers of Commerce in Bridport, Wimborne, Sherborne, and Gillingham as well as a number of businesses in Bournemouth, this trial is now open to retailers and service providers to register.

Shops and businesses based in these towns are being urged to come forward immediately to take advantage of the free opportunity to secure more local trade and shoppers are encouraged to use the platform to support their local high street outlets.

Through this scheme, shops and businesses are given their own "online shop" within their location. When restrictions ease the platform acts as a digital shop window to influence local footfall, ensuring people can see all of the things they can do and see locally in one place online. Interested businesses don't require membership of the business communities partnering with Dorset LEP – they just need to be trading in one of the five Dorset town areas mentioned above.

Find out more at: <https://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/help-to-trade-online>.

Peer Network Programme

Dorset Gateway's successful roll-out of the [Peer Network Programme](#) in Dorset has already reached 150 Dorset business leaders. Additional funding back in August saw us secure funding for 120 businesses but because of the success we have demonstrated, we were able to secure additional funding to support a further 66 new participants in January. Benefits of the programme include guidance on business strategies, developing strong support networks, sharing working practices, ways to stay motivated and building workforce resilience.

Feedback from those business leaders participating in the programme has been extremely positive as illustrated below:

Managing Director of a digital marketing agency

"The biggest positive for me is the accountability. Having to report back to our group every two weeks to feedback on what you've actioned and achieved since the last session. That accountability makes you think, and really DO that stuff. I guess from the personal, mental and emotional side, it's just nice to have eight other people around you who are going through similar issues. That's been really, really useful. For me, it's the only ZOOM call that I genuinely look forward to!"

General Manager of a hotel & spa

"To be honest, when I signed up for Peer Networks, I was quite sure it wasn't for me. How wrong could I be!!! I've really enjoyed the bi-weekly sessions and really look forward to them. And when the sessions are over and I have challenges down the line, I think, 'What would my peer group say?' Actually realising we are all in the same boat, but in different businesses and listening to the discussions and suggestions, you see how you can use them in your own business to turn things around. The 1:1 support and coaching has been phenomenal! It's been a week on week learning process. When I get back to recruiting 40 new staff, I look forward to cascading what I've learnt down the line and bringing them all onboard with that better knowledge. That's what I'm going to take from this and yes, I'll be sad when the diary doesn't have a Peer Network meeting in it."

Managing Director, of a digital agency

"I also didn't think this was for me. I joined thinking, I'm not the sort of guy who signs up for this. But, it's been great! The best thing I could get out is to be able to press reset for myself. And, it has really, really has helped me do my critical thinking so much better."

On the emotional side, I don't ever ask myself how I am. I've never spent any time on that, not ever in 30 years in business. So, that has been a really important part of it as well. The whole thing, the whole experience has been a positive one for me."

Managing Director of an engineering business

"I would just say, it's a stimulating, inspirational 3 hours that flashes by in a moment. I just find it really, really stimulating, it makes me think and it makes me analyse my own thinking and try to improve it. It's difficult to put my finger on one particular benefit, it's just been a really enriching experience. Having our 1:1 sessions on top has been fantastic. It's really honed my thoughts, my focus and realise what truly is important."

Operations Director of a small technology business

"I've been on a roller coaster journey, with a new role and promotion and just a mass of overwhelming tasks. I know the industry and the processes well, but it's the other, the important people and team aspects that nobody teaches you. The 1:1 session is just amazing and the open honest sharing of the group has been just incredible."

For more information about the programme, visit: www.dorsetlep.co.uk/peernetworks

UK/EU Transition support

In December, we successfully secured £136,050 of funding from BEIS to deliver support for businesses as the transition arrangements for businesses came to end. In the run-up to the end of the Transition Period, we were advising businesses to take action and get ready for the new trading rules that would start on 1 January. Whilst some took up the advice, there are clearly still a number of areas where businesses require additional support as issues relating to trade outside of the EU materialise. To assist Dorset businesses through these changes, challenges and opportunities, we have introduced a number of additional areas of support. these include:

- A funded Customs Declarations service for up to 200 Dorset-based SME businesses.
- A specialist legal advice helpline offering up to two hours of fully funded specialist, one-to-one business support to Dorset businesses with complex legal questions regarding post-EU transition.
- A Specialist business VAT/Customs Advice Line offering a funded advisory service for Dorset businesses on matters such as place of supply, proof of origin, VAT registration in other countries duty advice on quotas and tariffs and custom warehousing.
- Running a Home Office event on the changes to the points based immigration system.
- Working alongside the Department for International Trade (DIT) to connect local businesses with Export academy and SME internationalisation fund.

There are further programmes being developed and a full update on these and their impact will be reported at the next meeting.

Bid Writing Support Service

We have reported previously regarding the continued positive impact that the bid writing support service has had on those businesses seeking Innovate UK grant funding. Having supported Dorset-based companies secure over £500,000 of grant funding already, we have been advised that another business we have supported has been awarded £274,000, taking the current total for the financial year to just under £800,000.

E) DORSET INNOVATION PARK

The MOD and Dorset Council grant agreement for the Defence Innovation Centre was agreed and signed on 24 August 2020 and the Enterprise Zone has a strong programme until the end of July 2021.

The Dorset Enterprise Zone Committee acts as a 'strategic board' for the Dorset Enterprise Zone. The Enterprise Zone Committee has the primary aim of unlocking opportunities for additional investment and growth of Enterprise Zone sites (and concurrent generate business rates growth return). The Committee facilitates realising the potential of the site which includes retained business rates alongside the ability to support business relocation, growth and expansion. This includes job creation and ensuring Dorset remains an attractive proposition for business.

The Committee is concerned with overseeing the strategic direction of the Enterprise Zone as well as the overall management of the Enterprise Zone programme. It receives regular reports for each meeting from the landowner with regards to progress.

Future areas of work which the Enterprise Zone Committee will cover include: ensuring delivery of the project, establishing measures of success, alignment with the Local Industrial Strategy and Investment Prospectus, strategic ambition and the inward investment pipeline.

F) CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY – CAREERS HUB

The Dorset Careers Hub has had a largely successful first term of the academic year. Progress has been made on all 5 major projects, including;

- Delivering CPD to network on use of LMI and on strategic careers planning.
- Joining 9 partner project to deliver online careers fair covering Dorset, Hampshire and Surrey.
- Contracting with national online work experience provider to offer up to 3,000 virtual work experience placements this year.
- Approving 23 Activation fund bids from schools across the county.

In December, 85% of our Hub schools completed a new Compass assessment with our support. Progress towards our key Gatsby Benchmark targets is as follows;

Wave 2 Schools

	Target	Dorset	National
BM 1	75%	88%	44
BM 5	75%	78%	66
BM 6	65%	55%	42
Total Achieved	6.0	6.3	4.2

	Target	Dorset	National
BM 1	75%	49%	31
BM 5	75%	57%	57
BM 6	65%	26%	44
Total Achieved	4.0	4.1	3.8

The Hub is clearly performing above both targets and national averages in many respects, and plans are in place to continue improving our performance. The new Wave 3 schools have further to travel, but good progress has been made this term. The main area for concern is in Benchmarks 5 and 6, which are affected by the pandemic. Two of our major projects are designed to mitigate this impact.

In the coming months we will review data, targets, and project performance, and reallocate available funds to new priorities. We expect to communicate new funding opportunities to schools by February half-term.

We are also developing a new project to recruit employers to support our various initiatives, and this will involve support from the DLEP comms team, and the Dorset Chamber.

Skills Programme

In January 2021 we were required to complete the Department for Education Local Skills Report, with full data analysis and reporting on the DLEP Skills Actions Plan and activities across the county. The report forms the complete guide to skills strategy and actions for Dorset, and aims to be the 'go to' document for skills providers and employers. The SAPB contribution has been critical to the success of skills across Dorset, and this report is our demonstration to the DfE of the vital work being undertaken by public and private providers to be the benefit of the population of Dorset. The final report will be published on the 31st March 2021 in line with DfE requirements.

In addition to delivering this report, the skills team are delivering:

Skills Boot Camps

We have been part of the wave 2 national tender to deliver Skills Boot Camps across England, working with Cornwall LEP, Heart of the South West and Somerset LEP to provide a wide range of digital and technical Skills Boot Camps for Dorset residents. Skills Boot Camps have been successful in trial areas in northern England, offering retraining into a different skill set with a job interview guaranteed at the end of the 12-16 week course. Dorset LEP have also secured access to the wave 1 digital skills boot camps for Dorset residents.

DLEP partnership bids

The DLEP skills team are contributing to the following partnership bids, recognising the wider Dorset LEP team are working on delivery of projects under the Getting Building fund:

- BCP Town bid – focus on Skills provision in Boscombe
- University Hospitals Trust – Health Foundation Adopting Innovation Programme
- Integrated Care System/CCG/DC – Health foundation economic development policy

Mid-Life MOT

The skills team have secured funding from the DWP, Fuller Working Lives team for a Mid-life MOT virtual event to work with employers and employees 45yrs+. The aim of the 10 week project is to ensure older employees remain in gainful, skilled employment enabling them to maximise their pension and helping to keep healthy for longer. Statistics show that employees in this category can be vulnerable to long term unemployment and this vital work is to ensure Dorset employees are supported in their development and employment going forward.

Labour Market Information

We have released the [latest labour market insights dashboard](#) , [an extended final report for 2020](#) and updated [key industries dashboards](#) with latest vacancies and job trends. Some of our key findings are included below.

- **Recruitment activity resilience: Dorset's vacancies bouncing back better from lockdowns than the UK average.**

Dorset's vacancy figures indicate recruitment activity recovered well after crashing by half with the first lockdown. There were 57,433 vacancies advertised in Dorset in 2020, closing the year at 92% of their 2019 levels. Demand declined for service roles, but it considerably increased for nurses and carers, accountants, lawyers, web developers and cleaners.

- **Top employers in Dorset throughout 2020**

The National Health Service was by far the largest individual employer. J.P.Morgan, Bournemouth University and the Councils joined the top the chart as individual employers, while residential care firms saw continued increase in recruitment activity, jointly forming the second largest chunk of demand after healthcare.

Engineering firms recruitment held up, but saw mixed demand with RNLI, Siemens, Curtis Wright and Holt Engineering being more tentative, while Cobham, Ultra Electronics and Gattaca increasing their vacancies.

In December, Bourne Leisure represented tourism at the top employers chart.

- **Industries with high demand continued recruiting**

While labour demand **fell** by a half in accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment, and recreation, it was **largely maintained** in financial services, utilities and professional, scientific and technical activities while it **actually grew** by a quarter in the health and social care sector.

- **Sharp increase in available workforce**

There were 4.6 claimants for each advertised vacancy in November - a ratio three times as high as the pre-crisis levels, but showing improvement from the 7.5 peak in May.

Claimant count grew almost threefold in Dorset in April and remained high, accounting for 5% of the 16+ residents and 7% of 18- 24 year olds in November.

Furloughed workers significantly dropped from 25% in July to 5% in November without causing further increase in claimants, and indicating movements back to work.

- **Support measures and homeworking are changing the recession trajectory**

Significant rise in unemployment has thus far been avoided and unlike previous recessions, with many jobs and businesses protected by the support schemes, vacancies bounced back relatively quickly. Homeworking is another mitigating factor, rising steeply to almost half of employees in April and very few have returned to the office since. Amongst concerns on homeworker's health and happiness, homeworking is here to stay.

- **EU workers going home?**

In September 2020 there were almost a quarter fewer employed from A8 and A2 EU countries in the UK labour market compared to an year earlier,

- **A skills mismatch between vacancies and those looking for work**

As the pandemic hit sectors of the economy differently, low-skilled workers and young people are disproportionately affected with almost half of the 18-24-year olds working in Dorset employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants.

While there are sectors with vacancies, skills mismatch could slow down movement across sectors and cause unemployment lagging for longer, while skills gaps remain a challenge for employers.