

# ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2020 – MARCH 2021



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## FOREWORD

Dorset is a great place to live, work and study and an excellent place to start, scale and internationalise a business; it has so many of the attributes that businesses seek when looking for great places to locate. I was delighted to have been appointed the Chair of Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in 2020, taking on this role at a hugely challenging time.

This year has been focused on delivering changes to transform our economy and improve our quality of life. We have extended our business support and skills initiatives and invested in innovative, job-boosting projects to help companies and individuals through a very uncertain time. Infrastructure improvements have also been prioritised, with investments in transport networks, digital connectivity and housing.

We have a strong governance structure which has enabled us to develop a robust, long-term strategy and deliver our programmes on time and on budget. We have forged ahead with the final year of our Local Growth Fund investment, delivering a programme worth £169m (including match funding) that will revitalise and strengthen a range of industry sectors and places across Dorset.

To date, our investments and initiatives have created 4,660 new jobs and apprenticeships, 2,444 new homes, supported over 1,200 businesses, assisted more than 5,953 new learners and facilitated the development of 216,231 sqm<sup>2</sup> of commercial space as well as 23,109 sqm<sup>2</sup> of floor space for learning.

People are at the root of any organisation's success and we are fortunate to be supported by a talented, hard-working and committed Board and team.

This year has been remarkable in many ways and we are pleased to have continued working effectively with our two unitary authorities for the greater economic benefit of Dorset. Collaboration is always at the heart of our work and we have worked with our local authorities, business, education and rural group partners for almost a year to create the Dorset Living Better Prospectus.



Cecilia Bufton, Chair and Lorna Carver, Director, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

The prospectus is an investment roadmap aimed at delivering a multi-billion-pound boost to Dorset's economy and thousands of jobs over the next 10 years; it presents an ambitious portfolio of investment opportunities across all that is best and unique about Dorset. It sets out how Dorset can embrace technology to be at the forefront of tackling some of humanity's biggest challenges while also growing the local economy – from an ageing population, to sustainable food production, to tackling climate change and cyber security. It details how key sectors in the Dorset economy including health, finance, defence and aquaculture can evolve and attract new investment, and why technology like 5G connectivity is a vital catalyst for innovation, social inclusion and wellbeing. It focuses on how some of Dorset's unique attributes, including an older population, one of the best integrated care systems in England, and an outstanding natural environment, can be harnessed for social and economic gain.

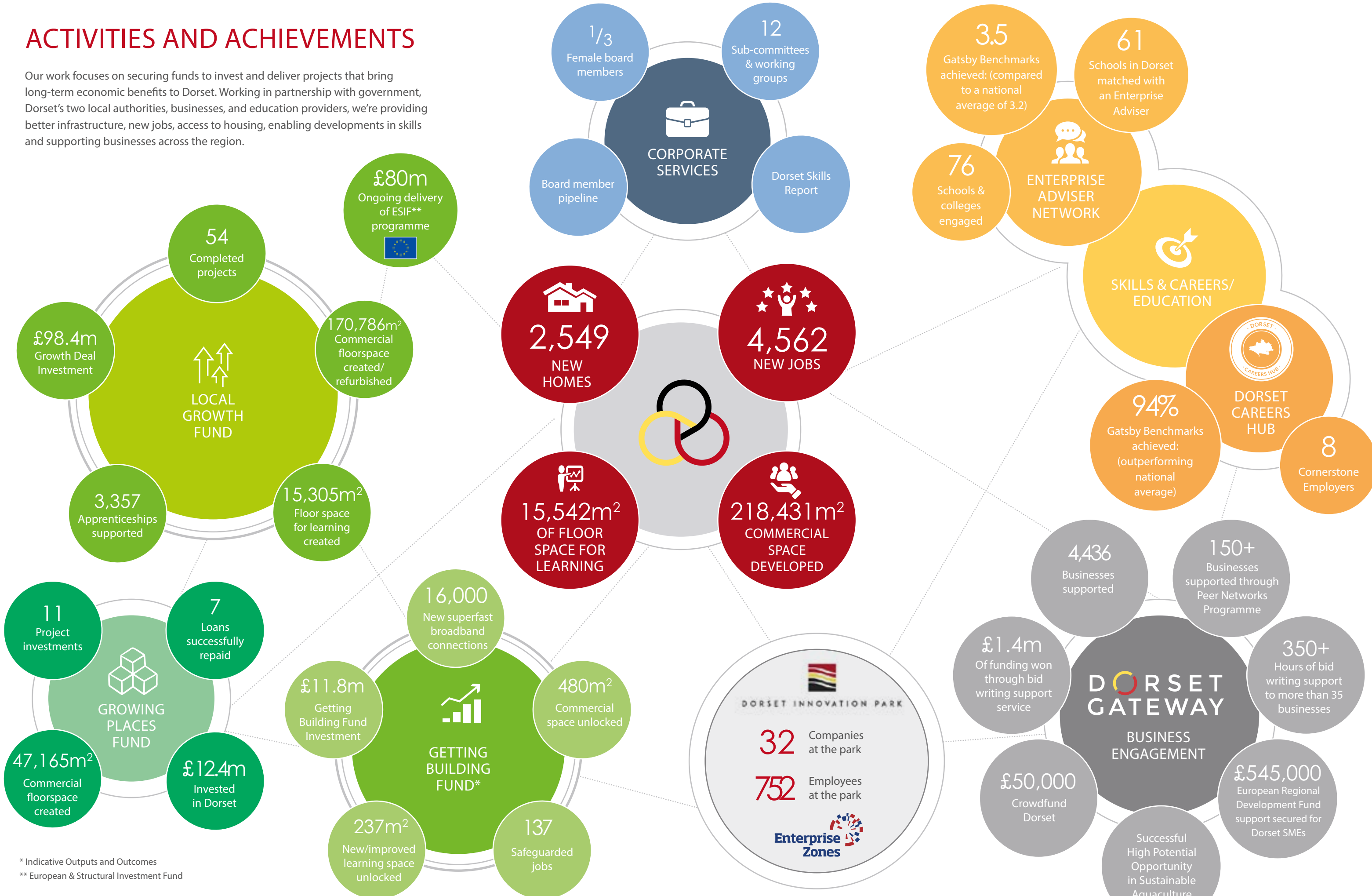
I would like to express my gratitude to our Board members and staff for their significant contributions which have made these achievements possible. Together we are making great advances and positive change for Dorset. We have seen this year especially how Local Enterprise Partnerships continue to play a vital role in supporting businesses across England, creating the strategic direction for local economies, and implementing effective, timely and results driven programmes.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with all of our stakeholders to deliver ongoing and meaningful results for our economy and maximising efforts to create jobs, long-term growth, and investment across the county. I hope you enjoy reading a snapshot of Dorset LEP's work and achievements.

Cecilia Bufton - Chair, Dorset LEP

# ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our work focuses on securing funds to invest and deliver projects that bring long-term economic benefits to Dorset. Working in partnership with government, Dorset's two local authorities, businesses, and education providers, we're providing better infrastructure, new jobs, access to housing, enabling developments in skills and supporting businesses across the region.



\* Indicative Outputs and Outcomes  
 \*\* European & Structural Investment Fund

# INVESTING IN DORSET



Through our careful portfolio management of Dorset's £98.4 million Growth Deal allocation and associated match-funding from delivery partners, a total of £169 million has been committed to the region to date, with every penny allocated directly to a wide range of economy-boosting initiatives in Dorset. This scheme has been delivered on time and on budget with additional outputs secured.

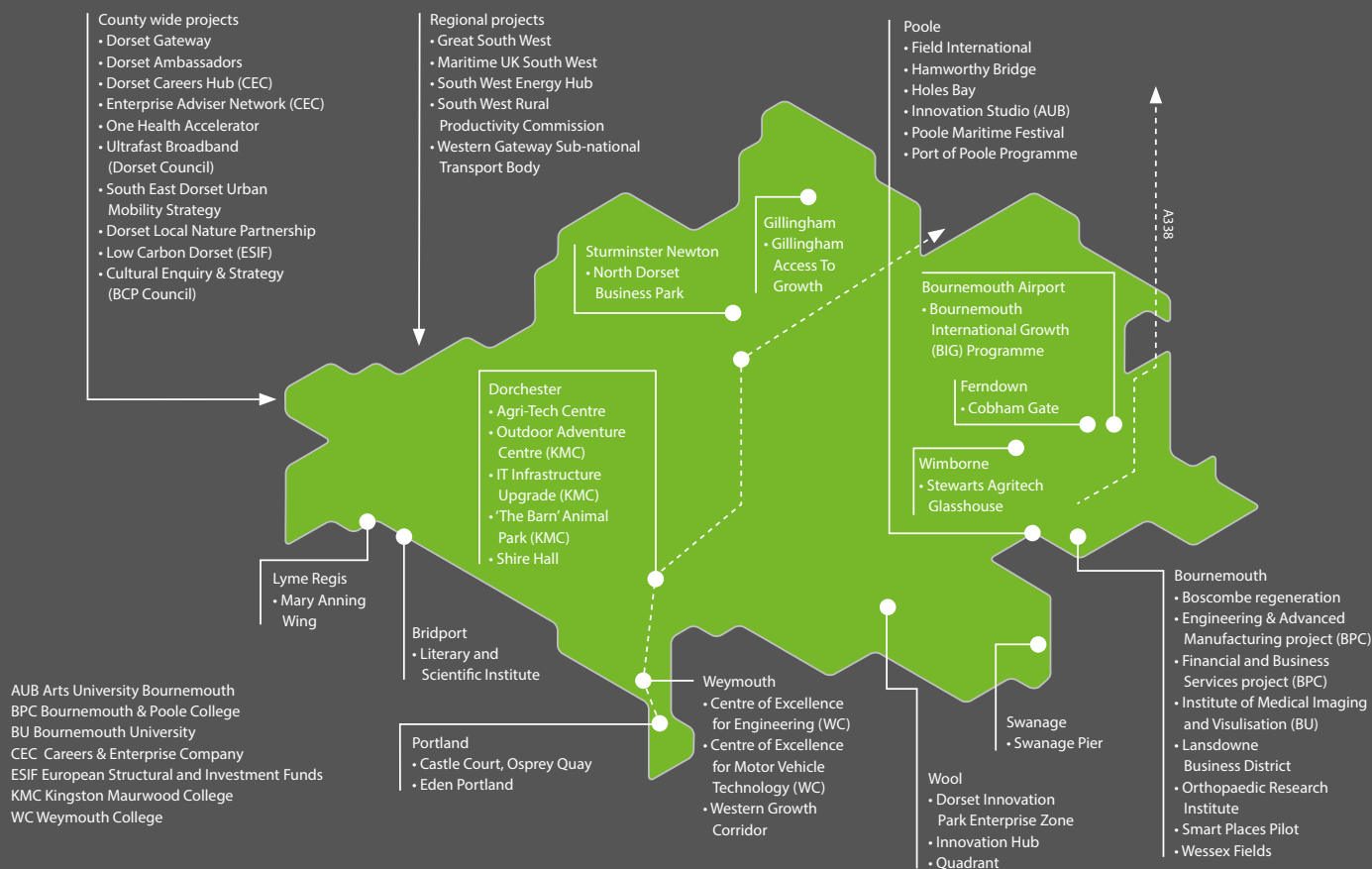
Our investment programme, financed through Local Growth, Getting Building and Growing Places funding, is at the heart of our delivery. We continued to invest in a range of projects to bring jobs, improved transport, skills, housing, productivity, and innovation to Dorset.

Through careful portfolio management we were able to make significant savings in the delivery programme along the way, enabling a series of new economic development projects to be fast-tracked and subsequently attracting additional associated match-funding and exceed our original anticipated outputs. Our project pipeline meant we were also ready for the Getting Building Fund call and were able to secure £11.8 million in Dorset for projects.

## Local Growth and Growing Places Funds

Investing in skills and innovation plays an intrinsic role in building our economy which has been critical as we have persevered through the COVID-19 pandemic and understood the implications of the EU transition on our region. We have been focused on capitalising on our productivity potential through innovation in key sectors including health, creative industries and advanced manufacturing - and by investing in skills we are creating an agile, productive workforce that meets the demands of current and future employers.

### A snapshot of projects benefiting from Dorset LEP investment



## Diagnostic Hub using Artificial Intelligence to improve patient outcomes and create healthcare jobs

In 2020 we awarded £2.28 million of Local Growth funding to Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to establish a Histopathology Diagnostic Hub in Dorset.

The Hub will:

- Place Dorset at the front-edge of histopathology diagnostic testing
- Improve the efficiency and sustainability of the Dorset NHS service
- By applying Artificial Intelligence, aim to improved quality and reduced times of diagnosis for illness such as cancers
- Secure 120 high-quality jobs

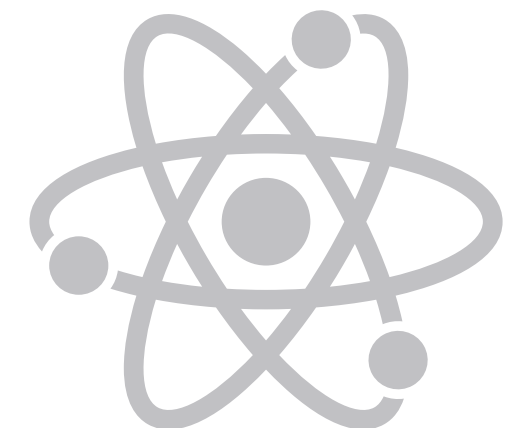
## Enhancing digital connectivity in rural Dorset

In 2020 we awarded £1.7 million through the Getting Building Fund - which was matched by £7.6 million - to enhance full fibre connectivity in rural Dorset. This project aims to improve economic activity and productivity by introducing both broadband coverage and infrastructure which ensure a fast-connected future for Dorset.

Digital connectivity plays a key role in both improving productivity and addressing environmental challenges. The impact of COVID-19 has demonstrated the absolute necessity to have reliable, resilient and up-to-date digital infrastructure to support economic activity and provide community services.

“ Diagnostic testing has an ever-increasing role in healthcare, with pathology used by over 80% of patients to inform diagnoses and treatment plans. Every person in Dorset will use the service at some point in their life. Having the best available facilities will therefore benefit the majority of people in Dorset and allow our fantastic NHS staff to give the best possible care. ”

STEPHEN HARDING, HEAD OF SERVICE FOR ONE DORSET PATHOLOGY





### Supporting trade with the EU, creating and safeguarding jobs and attracting new funding to Dorset

Port of Poole benefited from £2.15 million Getting Building Fund investment towards a Public Trade Office and Border Control Post to more effectively manage and safeguard trade between the European Union (EU) and Poole for the future.

In order to be able to facilitate the flow of freight traffic between the EU and the port, there needs to be extensive freight clearance facilities. The Public Trade Office facility will enable efficient and effective

processing of this freight, a process provided by Poole Harbour Commissioners and to be operated by UK Border Force. A further portion of investment will fund the construction of offices and welfare facilities for 46 port staff replacing existing facilities which will be demolished to enable construction of a Border Control Post facility.

“ These two projects at Poole Harbour are vital works. Construction of the Public Trade Office will maintain the commercial viability of the port and establishing a Border Control Post will enable secure trade with the EU. ”

BOB CRIPPS, POOLE HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS CHAIR

## INVESTING IN SKILLS

We are passionate about equipping our young people - Dorset’s future workforce – with access to the facilities they need, developing their skills to find work locally. This year, we have continued to invest in our young people through the allocation of over £8 million of Local Growth and Getting Building Fund support into local further education institutions.

In 2020, we provided £2.7 million to AECC University College for the construction of a state-of-the-art Integrated Rehabilitation Centre. This enables delivery of a greater breadth and range of services to local people in a new, more integrated way.

We have invested £3.5 million in Kingston Maurward College to improve IT infrastructure and to create a University Centre and Rural Business Hub. The investment will address the significant deficiency in HE provision in rural Dorset, help to plug the productivity gap and provide valuable support to the rural business community. It will also help improve social mobility, opportunities for knowledge transfer both at a high level and sit at the centre of gravity of the new rural authority.

Dorset LEP have allocated more than £1 million to Weymouth College to establish a Centre of Excellence for Construction Skills and a Higher Education Centre and we invested in the Green Classroom, situated at Hengistbury Head. Funding was provided to improve remote access to support teaching as well as to create Digital and Enterprise Innovation Hubs at Bournemouth & Poole College. All of these investments help ensure students are work-ready and enter



Arts University Bournemouth Innovation Studio

industries as skilled employees.

Finally, we have provided £354,000 to Arts University Bournemouth which has created an Innovation Suite that will be used by local businesses, start-ups, CPD delivery and post graduate students working in the innovative creative, cultural, engineering and manufacturing sectors. Funding has also been allocated to provide students and Dorset businesses with free remote access to a suite of digital resources and physical fabrication. Access to these specialist resources addresses the challenge of supporting rural businesses in Dorset, those in deprived areas such as Weymouth and Portland, and the current challenge of supporting students and businesses virtually due to COVID-19.

### Digital Design

Bournemouth & Poole College student employability and local design sector employee productivity is increased thanks to £12,500 of Local Growth Fund investment to purchase graphic tablets. This will help address the local skills gap by improving design skills gained by students as they use industry standard equipment.



## GROWING PLACES FUND

Supporting the development of a £1.7m research & innovation centre

We allocated a £740,000 Growing Places Fund loan to Draper Ventilation Limited, who will increase the total investment to £1.7 million, for the purchase of land and development of an agri-tech research and innovation centre at Dorset Innovation Park, an Enterprise Zone in Wool.

This new research and innovation centre will further develop computerised climate control systems for the agricultural sector. The project will centralise the company’s existing workforce in Dorset and create an apprenticeship programme with local colleges to encourage young people into the agri-tech sector.

Building work includes renovation of an existing 470m2 building into a company HQ which will include office space, R&D testing areas and training facilities for existing and potential customers. Adjacent will be a new 1250m2 research and innovation centre, which will be used for product demonstrations, storage and product distribution.

By 2025, this is expected to safeguard 18 jobs, create 20 new jobs and increase group-wide company turnover to over £20 million.

“ Dorset was the perfect place to take draperVENT to the next level because of its drive and determination to see agri-tech businesses succeed. The Dorset Innovation Park plot provides us with an opportunity to develop, test, promote, store and distribute our products while we benefit from reduced business rates and the opportunity for collaboration with other technical on-site businesses. We are proud that our dedicated staff will now have an innovation hub and we are thankful to Dorset LEP. ”

PAUL DRAPER, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DRAPERGROUP



# AMBITIONS

Our ambitions for Dorset's economic growth go far beyond what we deliver through our excellent investment programme. This Annual Report outlines our 2020/21 Delivery Plan priorities and achievements across four core areas: strategic infrastructure, business growth & inward investment, skills and corporate services.

Dorset is proud of its £18 billion contribution to the UK economy and its robust employment and business survival rates. However, like other areas of the UK, Dorset's productivity rate lags behind the national average and we face renewed global competition. Despite this, Dorset's economy is resilient, growing, and has the potential to deliver greater prosperity for Dorset and beyond, for generations to come.

We are investing in people and places to create an environment where people want to live, work and visit.

This year has seen the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the EU transition. We have worked harder than ever to turn these into opportunities for Dorset.





# STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Boosting the economy through investment in infrastructure and digital connectivity is at the heart of our investment strategy for Dorset. We are a largely rural region made up of smaller communities, while closer to the coast there is a large, complex conurbation spanning Christchurch to Poole.

## Major Programmes

We have seen the conclusion of many major programmes in 2020/21 related to infrastructure. For example, December 2020 saw the conclusion of the South East Dorset Urban Mobility Strategy which considered all current and emerging policy, data, innovation and technological developments, emerging trends in transport and made use of the latest tools and best practice in the industry. It also saw the conclusion of the £1.3m FWP / A348-A3049 Corridor project which reduced congestion and improved connectivity to Bournemouth Airport, the Port of Poole, Bournemouth University and Ferndown, Bournemouth and Poole town centres.

These projects were part of our £49 million Bournemouth International Growth (BIG) Programme which formally ended in March 2021 and included a series of economy-building transport and infrastructure investments aimed at facilitating better access into and around Bournemouth Airport as well as unlocking employment land at Aviation Business Park and at Wessex Fields.



## Unlocking & Unblocking Physical Infrastructure

In addition to the BIG programme, we invested £5 million in the Holes Bay project which saw the unlocking of the largest brownfield regeneration site in the South West of England. The infrastructure works enabled the release of a major housing site in Poole, delivering 830 new homes and employment land.

The £4.8 million Lansdowne Business District also concluded in 2021; this formed part of a £200 million investment that created



hundreds of jobs, attracted new businesses and foreign investment. The Gillingham Growth project – a £3.5m investment – concluded in March 2021 and this package of transport improvement schemes has unlocked and delivered the development of up to 1800 houses and 2500 jobs.

More than £1.6 million was invested this year in upgrading a major Bournemouth-Poole commuter corridor, with emphasis on sustainable transport. This scheme aided the growth of two universities while helping to address the wider long-standing congestion and road safety issues, which currently present a significant cost to the local economy. Through Growing Places Loan, the works to Hamworthy Bridge also concluded in 2021; this bridge forms a vital part of a connected corridor from Hamworthy Park to new development sites in the Hamworthy regeneration area.



## Ensuring Trade Post-EU Transition

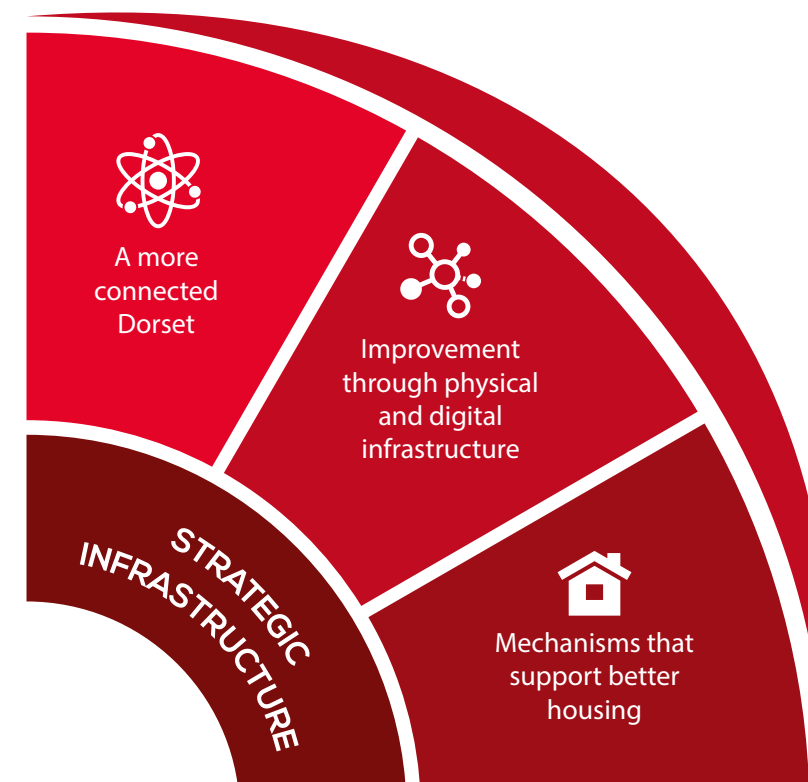
The major £22 million Port of Poole Programme drew to a close in 2021 and this consisted of six transport schemes to improve access into and around the port. This investment will help drive local economic growth and bring an anticipated £500 million of leveraged private investment into the area.

The Port of Poole is an important economic asset within the Dorset economy and therefore trade must continue between Poole and the European Union in light of the UK becoming a separate sovereign nation. Through the Getting Building Fund, we were able to invest a further £2.15 million to fund a Public Trade Office and a Border Control Post to more effectively manage and safeguard trade between the European Union and Poole for the future.

## Pioneering Digital Connectivity

Dorset is at the forefront of communications technology. The Superfast Dorset programme, supported by a £2 million Growing Places Fund loan allocation, concluded in 2020 and enabled thousands of homes and businesses to benefit from the fastest broadband speeds.

In 2020, we invested in creating a Dorset Smart Place Investment Plan; this will be used to attract significant inward investment for Dorset of up to £1 billion in new digital connectivity and technologies. We also awarded £1.7 million to deliver enhanced digital connectivity full fibre (gigabit) across the Dorset Council spatial area, with a particular focus on rural areas where current connectivity is poor.





## BUSINESS GROWTH & INWARD INVESTMENT

Home to well-known international businesses as well as a multitude of fast-growing local enterprises, Dorset is recognised as a hot spot for innovation and business. Dorset’s natural assets offer businesses the opportunity to capitalise on emerging capabilities in agritech and aquaculture. This is complemented by a well-established tourism sector, an increasing number of start-ups and an emerging city region with an expanding digital and creative sector and a large, established financial sector. Set against a beautiful backdrop, Dorset is able to provide the perfect work-life balance, however, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit our key sectors hard and a strong recovery is necessary.

This year has seen huge disruption and uncertainty for the UK business environment, and with uncertainty still surrounding the UK’s economic relationships, matters have been compounded by the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the ramifications of which we will see for many years to come. Dorset LEP’s growth hub, Dorset Gateway, has been integral in supporting businesses to navigate their way through these uncertain times.

Initiatives this year included:

- Business Advisor support: available to discuss business requirements and either provide immediate assistance or, where appropriate, research options in order to signpost to the most suitable support.
- Key Account Management: covering a range of enquiries from business growth, international trade and inward investment, through our Business Relationship Officers.
- Bid Writing Support: helping Dorset businesses to access Innovate UK and other government grant funding linked to growth.

- Support for scaling and high-growth SMEs: targeted funded programme of support helping businesses to realise their growth potential.
- EU/UK transition support: including access to time-limited programmes of support on areas relating to tax, finance, HR and other areas.
- Peer Networks: Coordinating the delivery of the national Peer Networks programme in Dorset.



### Key achievements over the last year have included:

- Extending support to respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19 in the form of additional business advisers to share news, engage and handle business enquiries.
- Completing a successful Peer Networks Programme which saw us receive additional funding for additional cohorts and enabled us to support over 150 businesses. Our success led to us being invited to share our approach as part of a national event with other growth hubs and to receive one of the highest allocations for the scheme for 2021/22.
- Providing more than 350 hours of bid writing support to more than 35 businesses and project consortia/collaborators and winning just over £850k of funding for Dorset business; this takes our total to £1.4m since launching the service in the summer of 2018.
- Success in Innovate UK funding - COVID-19 Response Grants as Dorset Gateway’s Bid Writing Support Service helped four companies to secure grant funding and scheme had just a 10% success rate.
- Launching Crowdfund Dorset which gives existing micro and small businesses the opportunity to receive grant funding to help them recover from the pandemic. The funds committed to date will help to protect over 45 existing jobs and create 5 new jobs.
- Providing a fully-funded customs declaration support service and customs training support to Dorset businesses.
- Launching the Business Resilience Programme; partnering with a financial and professional services firm to offer Dorset-based businesses access to free expert advice and support to help them recover from impacts of COVID-19.
- Kickstarting tourism and SME Recovery Grants; helping to secure £545,000 of ERDF funding to be awarded as small grants to eligible Dorset-based SME’s via Dorset Growth Hub.
- Offering tailored package of support for scaling and high growth potential businesses in partnership with Smith & Williamson.
- Recruiting additional face-to-face business support, and delivering additional programmes of support such as the Business Resilience Programme. In total, the funding has been used to directly employ five new staff who are involved in direct delivery/supporting delivery of growth hub programmes.
- Commissioning more than 40 one-to-one business health checks through three local accountancy and growth advisory firms.
- Commissioning a supply chain resilience study which aims to better understand which sectors are likely to be affected by potential supply chain disruptions. This will help to inform local policymaking and drive deeper engagement with businesses.
- Signposting over 1,200 local businesses to a range of support on offer across the full spectrum of providers in Dorset.
- Working with the Department for International Trade to support opportunities for more Dorset businesses to export goods and services.
- Held our third national One Health conference bringing together 100 businesses, government agencies, international partners and academics to discuss commercial solutions to some of the big challenges facing human, animal and environmental health.
- Generating 15 investment enquiries and securing investment in the High Potential Opportunity (HPO) in Sustainable Aquaculture. As a result, this has formed the basis of a short internal case study for the Department for International Trade.
- Working as part of a successful multi-LEP HPO bid in round 2, around Marine Autonomy. This is connected to our continued support around the marine and maritime sector in Dorset and ongoing support of Maritime UK South West.





## Sector strengths

Dorset's industry strengths are many and varied, including defence, advanced engineering & manufacturing, digital and creative industries, financial services, healthcare and agritech.

### Defence

Dorset Innovation Park, Dorset's only economic development site with Enterprise Zone status, is developing to be an advanced engineering cluster of excellence for the south west, building on the region's strengths in marine, defence, energy and cyber-security.

Dorset boasts of a particularly strong defence sector and is home to many Ministry of Defence establishments, such as the Army's Armoured Trial and Development Unit in Bovington, the Royal Corps of Signals training centre in Blandford, and the training area at Lulworth Cove which is used by all elements of the UK's Armed Forces. Defence was furthered this year via a £1.5 million investment in a state-of-the-art innovation centre delivered in partnership with Ministry of



Mark Firth at Hooke Springs Trout Farm

Defence and Dorset Council which has national and international significance at the site.

The new Defence Innovation Centre has been matched funded by £4.2 million and will provide 1100m2 new office space and 450m2 new workshop space for Ministry of Defence innovation, collaboration and conferences. It aims to create 90 new jobs and achieve a direct GVA of £4 million in its first ten years. The centre will incorporate the Army Battle Lab and will enable the Ministry of Defence to work in collaboration with academic institutions, corporates and SMEs to develop new products and technologies with the potential to be commercialised.



“The Army BattleLab offers an unparalleled opportunity for the Army to engage directly and persistently with industry, small and medium enterprises and institutions who can help us think about our challenges differently. Early engagement between end users – our soldiers – and those who have the expertise to develop technology, combining our requirements and experience, will change how we develop and procure unique and technical capabilities going forward.

MAJOR GENERAL JEZ BENNETT, DIRECTOR OF CAPABILITY (ARMY)

## One Health

The One Health agenda - the interrelation between plant, animal and human health – is a key focus of Dorset's Local Industrial Strategy and remained a priority focus for 2020/21. We are proud to have secured investment via our Aquaculture HPO and to have received so many enquiries that we have been seen as a national exemplar.

Dorset LEP hosted the third national One Health Conference in March 2021, themed as Big ideas in One Health. This brought together human, animal and environmental health focused UK and overseas technology businesses; government support organisations with an interest in sustainable innovation; investors interested in collaborating with green tech companies; and universities and strategic

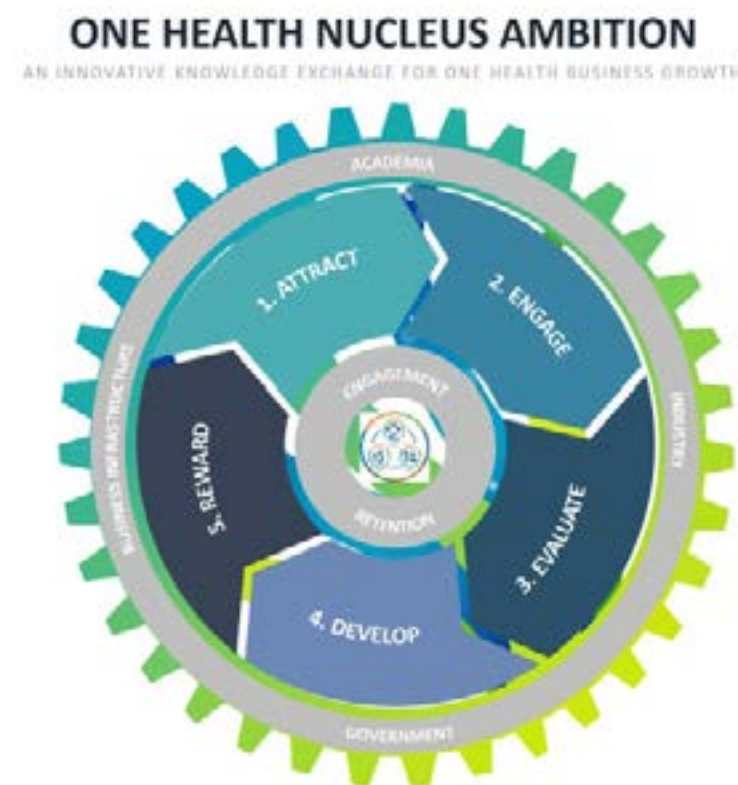
bodies looking to collaborate with industry and investors. Keynote speakers included Innovate UK, National Biofilms Innovation Centre and the Department for International Trade.

During the event, Dorset LEP announced the ambition of the One Health Nucleus; that is to be established as a knowledge exchange and support network for one health innovators, supporting start-ups to large companies to establish, stabilise and grow. These companies will be carbon-neutral or carbon-reducing, contributing to the fight against climate change.

One Health therefore remains a solid focus of our strategy going into 2021/22; more of which can be found in our delivery plan and on our Dorset Investment Prospectus webpages.

“ I see the One Health Nucleus as a national resource, and in time an international resource, that leverages Dorset and its partners' abundant strategic, academic and industrial know-how. ”

LORNA CARVER, DORSET LEP DIRECTOR





## Dorset Innovation Park – Enterprise Zone

Dorset Innovation Park is developing as an advanced engineering cluster of excellence for the South West, building on its strengths in marine, aerospace, defence, energy and cyber-security. The park offers office space, workshop facilities and fully serviced commercial employment land with Enterprise Zone status benefits such as business rate relief, simplified planning and full fibre accessibility.

It offers a secure facility and the presence of world leaders in defence technology and this year our £1.5 million investment to create the Army Battlelab at the Park further cements this.



“ The Army’s BattleLab in Dorset will build close industry relationships, whilst exploiting cutting-edge technologies to keep our Armed Forces sharp in the face of new and changing threats. This initiative will foster talent and innovation and will drive future success. ”

JEREMY QUIN, DEFENCE MINISTER



## Dorset Ambassadors

Dorset is home to a wealth of sector-leading, national and international businesses, many of whom are headquartered here. There is a strong culture of enterprise and innovation within the area and employers have access to a skilled and well-qualified workforce with labour rates below the national average.

Over 50 local business volunteers work with Dorset LEP to promote Dorset, support young people, seek opportunities with government for regional investment and advocate business opportunities in Dorset.

## SKILLS

We have continued to make significant progress in laying the foundations that will bring to life our vision for a highly-skilled workforce to ensure Dorset’s priority sectors thrive with home-grown talent and deliver future growth ambitions, which has been even more important in light of the pandemic.

### Skills Advisory Panel and Board

This group works to create a lifelong learning skills ecosystem for Dorset, with employers, educational providers, communities and policy makers working together to, ultimately narrow the Dorset productivity gap, by:

- Proposing evidence-based interventions
- Addressing supply and demand for people and skills
- Tackling issues of social disadvantage and firm productivity
- Stimulating investment and innovation.

### Skills Strategy

In 2020/2021 we created the Dorset Skills Action Plan and Dorset Skills Report, in collaboration with partners. These provide a useful evidence base for any institution or organisation developing skills strategies in our county. These strategies draw on our region’s strengths, prospects and challenges to ensure Dorset continues to deliver employment and skills opportunities that will enable its people, businesses, and communities to not only recover from the effects of a global pandemic, but also to aspire, thrive and prosper.

The draft Dorset Skills Report was well received by the Department for Education and we were asked to share chapters with other LEPs to share best practice.



### Skills Analysis

Throughout 2020/21 we have strengthened our analytical capability and embarked on an analytical deep dive to understand the changing employment landscape and the provision of skills through our educational system in Dorset in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This intelligence has continued to influence our strategic responses and enabled us to plan for emerging skills needs and to aid recovery. We have delivered Labour Market Insight information to partners and delivered training on this to Dorset job centres and work coaches.





Our delivery of the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) programme has successfully connected a range of employers in key sectors with Dorset's further education institutions through Dorset Careers Hub and a wider Enterprise Adviser Network, providing careers education and opportunities to an increasing number of our region's young people.

### Dorset Careers Hub

Dorset Careers Hub plays a lead role in ensuring excellent careers education for young people. Working in collaboration with local schools, colleges, universities, training providers, career professionals and employers, Dorset Careers Hub aims to improve career support for young people and prepare them for the world of work.

We operated the Dorset Careers Hub with such success that we were awarded additional funding by the Careers & Enterprise Company to expand activity to cover almost double the number of schools and colleges. Dorset Careers Hub now offers more than 70 schools and colleges across Dorset:

- Training for 'careers leaders'
- Access to support and funding
- Staff to coordinate activity and build networks
- A central fund for employer engagement including funds ring-fenced for Weymouth and Portland, one of Dorset's most deprived areas.



### Enterprise Adviser Network

Our Enterprise Adviser Network has continued to grow, helping students across 72 institutions build positive work skills and experiences. The network matches schools and colleges with business volunteers, inspiring and motivating young people about career options and helping them make informed choices about their future.

### At the cornerstone of careers education

Dorset Careers Hub is backed by a network of Cornerstone Employers, representatives from local organisations who work collaboratively to drive enterprise and business engagement ensuring all young people have the opportunities they need to be prepared for the world of work.

Dorset's Cornerstone Employers include:



### Skills project delivery and support

Projects we have led or supported include the following:

- Mid-life MOT: we won funding to support an innovative mid-life MOT for employees aged 50+, aimed to support older workers remain in relevant employment, giving greater quality of health and prosperity in retirement.
- Skills Boot Camps: we secured places on these training opportunities for Dorset residents. These are digital and technical skills courses designed to enable a change of skill set and each participant is guaranteed a job interview at the end of the course.
- Apprenticeship myth busting: we secured funding to complete a programme of work to increase the number of apprenticeships offered in Dorset and support decision making in schools around apprenticeships.
- T level support: Ferndown Upper School will offer Dorset's first T level qualification in Sept 2022, and we are supporting the school as they move to this target date.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### STRATEGY

Our ambition is to make Dorset the best place in the UK to do business, building the right foundations to drive productivity.

### A Local Industrial Strategy for Dorset: Living better, high performing and naturally collaborative.

Dorset LEP is leading the strategic economic direction for the county, acting as a business champion for Dorset. We raise important issues with government, secure investment and identify sector strengths and opportunities to grow Dorset's economy.

In December 2019 a draft Local Industrial Strategy for Dorset was submitted to government. The product of 18 months' collaboration with BCP Council, Dorset Council, local businesses, higher and further education institutions, communities and organisations, it outlines future plans to deliver economic growth, prosperity and productivity across Dorset.

### Dorset vision

By 2030 Dorset will be:

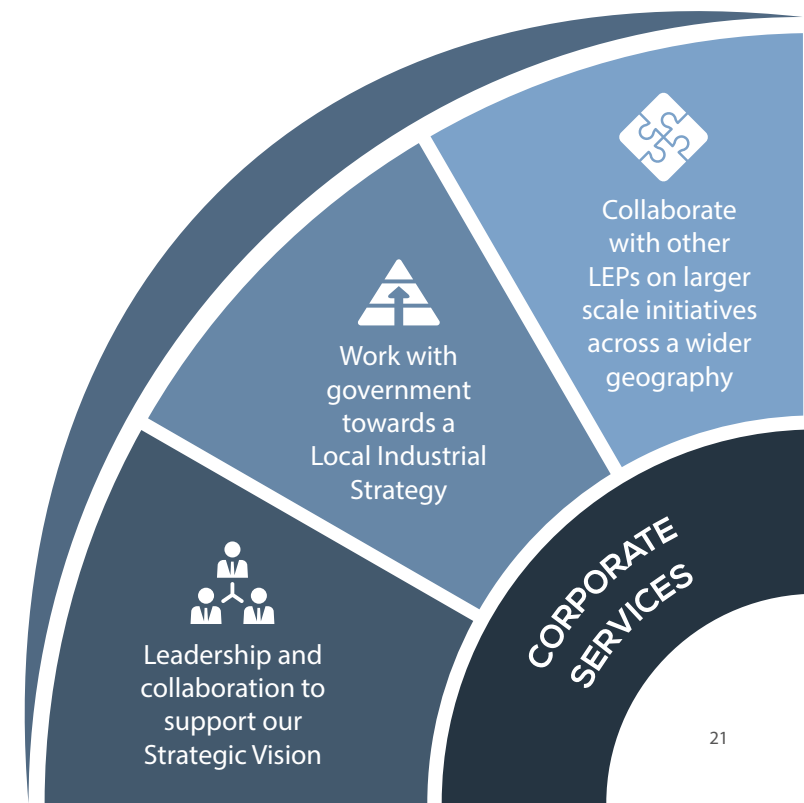
-  A national leader for One Health and aquaculture, adopting a holistic approach that ensures our population ages well and lives sensitively in the environment.
-  A key defence hub for the UK, and a leader in defence technology and commercialisation.
-  Leading a digital and cultural transformation across all communities.

We re-tested the Local Industrial Strategy in light of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure its assumptions and therefore direction of travel were still accurate. This economic analysis of the impact of the pandemic in Dorset provided the evidence base needed to inform the type of investments required to support the Dorset economy.

With assumptions confirmed as still being accurate and an indication of recovery action needed, work began on creating the Dorset Living Better Prospectus which focuses on how the ambition of the Local Industrial Strategy will be achieved.

“ Dorset has all the advantages of a self-contained location with a simplified governance and includes the newest emerging City Region in the UK alongside vibrant, largely rural surrounds ”

EXTRACT: DORSET LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY





## Dorset Living Better Prospectus

Working with our partners over the last year we developed an investment prospectus for Dorset - an investment portfolio that will enable investors to easily discover the unique opportunities Dorset has to offer based on tangible assets and investment. In the next decade the Dorset Investment Prospectus aims to deliver:

- a £24 billion uplift to the local economy
- 48,000 jobs
- 480,000 sq m of new commercial floorspace
- and 8,600 new homes
- while protecting and enhancing Dorset's world-class environment.



“ There is a real opportunity for Dorset to live better in the wake of the pandemic and emerge stronger and more resilient. This prospectus focuses on how we can bring those benefits to all our communities and be at the centre of a global recovery. ”

DREW MELLOR, BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH & POOLE COUNCIL LEADER



Dorset's Living Better Prospectus sets out an investment portfolio over the next two to ten years to inspire confidence and growth in our economy, particularly from private investors. Our attention focuses on both immediate responses to COVID-19 as well as longer term economic recovery, set in the context of an economic landscape shaped by the UK's new global position, to secure a prosperous future for all with solutions that meet the challenges of climate change and our future health, head on.

From our growing city region to our globally-recognised coastal and rural landscapes, we have untapped potential to inspire, excite and lead in equal measure. It has been a challenging time, but we can turn that challenge into opportunity and accelerate a better recovery for Dorset - one that reaches all our communities and puts us at the centre of a global recovery.

The Dorset Living Better Prospectus builds on four areas of existing portfolio strengths – Living, Natural, Smart and Wellbeing, each with a strong background of investments made in these areas to date. It sets out how Dorset can embrace technology to be at the forefront of confronting some of humanity's biggest challenges – from an ageing population, to sustainable food production, to tackling climate change and cyber security - while also growing the local economy.

The Dorset Living Better Prospectus details how key sectors in the Dorset economy including health, finance, defence and aquaculture can evolve and attract new investment, and why 5G connectivity is a vital catalyst for innovation, social inclusion and wellbeing and it focuses on why some of Dorset's unique attributes, including an older population, one of the best integrated care systems in England, and an outstanding natural environment, can be harnessed for social good and economic gain.

“ Some of the biggest challenges of our age – from an ageing population to climate change to sustainable food production – come together in Dorset as opportunities to grow knowledge, investment and wellbeing. We must grasp that opportunity. ”

SPENCER FLOWER, DORSET COUNCIL LEADER

## Strategic Partnership

Our impressive record of joint working across multiple sectors including energy, science and innovation, transport, aerospace, marine, tourism and health spans Dorset and beyond. Working in partnership throughout different geographies allows us opportunities to deliver improved value for money, including shared infrastructure.

We have continued our work regionally with the following to win funding, investment opportunities and to take a leadership approach to issues of strategic importance to Dorset:

- Great South West
- Maritime UK South West
- South West Energy Hub
- Made Smarter South West
- South West Growth Hub Cluster

- South West AgriTech Network
- South West Aquaculture Network
- Great South West Growth Hub Cluster
- Continuous Modular Strategic Planning for Rail.
- Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body
- Great South West All-Party Parliamentary Group.
- South West Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport Board

In addition, we have been involved in a number of local MP meetings, national ministerial briefings in support of places and business and various England-wide activity through the LEP Network.

# GOVERNANCE

Dorset LEP is committed to exceptional standards of governance, working to the highest standards of transparency, accountability and regulation to ensure our decision-making offers value for money and tangible economic benefits.

To ensure our decision-making is sound, thorough and fair, we have a robust governance structure in place. Our Board is supported by 12 committees, working groups and advisory panels with members of the Dorset LEP Board and industry professionals meeting at least once per quarter to drive forward Dorset LEP's strategic goals, advising and making recommendations to the Board. Each council in Dorset has two representatives on our Board to ensure a strong local partnership. We are mindful of our public responsibility when working with public money and operate strictly within the government's National Assurance Framework and we have committees such as Overview & Scrutiny, Performance & Investment and Finance, Audit & Corporate Risk to oversee governance activity.

This year we undertook a Board review and a full round of Chair, Board member and Committee

Member recruitment which has helped us achieve a stronger gender balance and robust pipeline of future members which will help close any future skills gaps.

Our Local Assurance Framework demonstrates our commitment to transparency, accountability and stewardship of public resources, and sets out our approach to appraise, deliver, monitor and evaluate schemes to deliver maximum economic and financial value for Dorset. As a Community Interest Company, all our agreements, funds, finances and processes, such as due diligence, are overseen by our accountable body, Dorset Council. We are also subject to regular review by the government through the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and voluntarily take part in Peer Reviews with other LEPs.

## Introducing a new governance structure



Dorset LEP Board (and Accountable Body)



## Equality & diversity

We are committed to having a Board which embraces diversity and promotes equality and are proud that more than third of our members are female, including the Chair and Deputy Chair, putting us on track to meet the national target of 50% by 2023.

Deputy chair, Sara Uzzell, is our equality and diversity champion, ensuring our work is representative of Dorset's businesses and communities. Sophia Story is our representative for SMEs and ensuring their voice is heard throughout our work.

## Policy & public engagement

Our agendas and papers are published ahead of Board and Committee meetings and the minutes made available after the meetings. The occasional decision taken under the written procedure (due to urgency) is reported at the next relevant Board meeting to ensure they are part of the public record. Attendance at our Board's annual meeting is open to the public.

It is essential that our strategies and reports are informed by the business interests across the county, and we work closely with businesses and business representatives, such as Dorset Chamber, in order to ensure each programme we support is soundly grounded within the needs of both our business and resident communities. The support of our local authorities and education partners is particularly important in providing routes to a clear understanding of issues that will lead to the future success of Dorset.

We have worked hard to increase the volume of our communications and our reach. We have more than doubled the number of pieces of press coverage than that achieved by March 2019 and we have increased engagement with rural Dorset-based and specialist business news outlets, resulting in increased news coverage in these areas. February 2021 saw a record number of users, new users and page views on our website and in the same month we achieved one of the highest ever recorded numbers of Dorset LEP Twitter impressions.





# MEET OUR BOARD

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

We are fortunate to have 19 Board members whose energy, commitment and wisdom lead the development of our strategic priorities and oversee all our decisions and activities. Over a third of our Board is female and 78% of our Board members are from private sector businesses and higher or further education establishments, while the remainder work in the public sector.

This year we welcomed our new Chair, Cecilia Bufton and developed a pipeline of future Board members.



Cecilia Bufton  
Chair, Dorset LEP



Sara Uzzell  
Manager, National Trust  
Former hotel owner and hospitality  
& tour operator  
Deputy Chair, Dorset LEP



Jim Andrews  
Chief Operating  
Officer, Bournemouth  
University



Councillor  
John Beesley  
Councillor, BCP  
Council



Councillor  
Tony Ferrari  
Councillor, Dorset  
Council



Councillor  
Spencer Flower  
Leader, Dorset  
Council



Nick Gaines  
Director, Phoenix  
Nuclear



Ian Girling  
Chief Executive,  
Dorset Chamber of  
Commerce & Industry



Dianne Grannel  
Principal &  
Chief Executive,  
Bournemouth &  
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Professor  
Emma Hunt  
Deputy  
Vice-Chancellor,  
Arts University  
Bournemouth



Arabella  
Lewis-Smith  
Founder, Salad



Councillor  
Drew Mellor  
Leader, BCP Council



Nicola Newman  
Chief Executive,  
Ansbury Guidance



Luke Rake  
Principal and Chief  
Executive, Kingston  
Maurward College



Paul Read  
Head of Development  
and Sales, Magna  
Housing



Sophia Storey  
Director,  
3 Sided Cube



John Sutcliffe  
Director,  
SMI Consulting



Jim Stewart  
Chief Executive,  
Poole Harbour  
Commissioners



Andrew Wickham  
Managing Director,  
Go South Coast



# FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial information for the 2020/21 finance year ending on 31 March 2021

Dorset LEP receives funding from central government through the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy as well as local partners to support its day to day activities and delivery. The below table documents forecasted income and expenditure for the 2020/21 year – these figures were audited and signed off by the Board in summer 2021.

Funding stream	Forecast 2020/21 Income	Forecast 2020/21 Expenditure	2019/20 Expenditure
Core, partner match, capacity funding and interest	729,228	1,118,243	1,057,592
Local Growth Deal	15,841,255	31,308,146	16,403,736
Getting Building Fund	5,900,000	5,900,000	-
Growing Places Fund	722,500	1,323,163	218,018
Dorset Gateway	863,051	863,051	316,302
Skills (including CEC and DfE)	360,060	331,870	219,459

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We have a long-term vision of what we believe is needed to underpin future local economic growth, increase productivity and build long-term business resilience in the region.

Dorset is evolving, innovating and accelerating its economy. An economy worth £18.5 billion, a population approaching 800,000, a business community of over 32,000, a location of choice for Financial Services market leaders and a top area for high growth digital business – there is much to build on. However, with a persistent productivity gap and the oldest population in the UK leading to a potential vacancy replacement of over a third of our workforce by 2027, there is much to do, particularly in a climate emergency, the impact of COVID-19 and establishing a new trade environment after the UK's exit from the EU.

Our 2021/22 Delivery Plan sets out our ambition and priorities for the year ahead, building on our excellent track record of delivery and our outstanding work across stakeholders in effecting meaningful

impact. Plans align to our recently completed Dorset Investment Prospectus and our Local Industrial Strategy and a wider suite of detailed economic reports that have helped us to better understand where Dorset LEP can really make a difference to our economy and business community. With strong leadership, clear plans in place, a co-ordinated capacity and shared set of ambitions for Dorset, the business year will be an important one in making progress to our overall ambition of cutting our productivity output gap. We aim to become stronger, adaptable and more resilient in Dorset than before the pandemic.

# COVID-19 RECOVERY AND ACTION

The pandemic has had an impact on the lives of those living in Dorset in every way imaginable. We have a huge tourism and hospitality sector, which is a trade that has been one of the hardest hit in the pandemic; COVID -19 will therefore cause significant employment and productivity issues for Dorset and impact deeply for a considerable duration on our region, more so than in most other places of the UK.

The pandemic has exposed the fragility that this type of crisis can present to business resilience and stability in some of our key sectors but it has also created opportunity, and the ability to find solutions with new investment such as skills development or businesses repurposing their offering to new markets.

In summer 2020, we re-tested the Local Industrial Strategy evidence base to ensure our Dorset Investment Prospectus work would provide a roadmap of recovery needed and we also created a brochure of activity we had undertaken in response to COVID-19 which included asks to government.

Other activity undertaken this year includes:

-  Created the Dorset Living Better Prospectus which maps a road to recovery.
-  Invested in shovel ready projects as an important first step in supporting Dorset's recovery, and developed opportunities for our businesses and young people.
-  Invested in additional resource to support businesses through our growth hub, Dorset Gateway including bid writing support, Peer Networks and Crowdfund Dorset Business.
-  Provided on-going support to young people, schools and colleges through Dorset Careers Hub and the Enterprise Adviser Network, by developing a bank of online resources for remote and home learning and virtual work experience.
-  Provided a roadmap and resources for adults who need to reskill as a result of losing their jobs during the pandemic through the Dorset Skills Report and Mid-life MOT programme.

We are also providing a coordinated voice, informing and influencing government decision making, made possible by working with and listening to our local stakeholders, and maintaining regular contact with government departments and MPs to highlight the needs of Dorset's businesses and communities.

We are committed to:

-  Offering enhanced business support
-  Driving the development of a more resilient, adaptable and skilled workforce
-  Creating more dynamic and resilient supply chains
-  Ensuring evidence-based decision-making.

We aim to become stronger, adaptable and more resilient in Dorset than before the COVID-19 pandemic and our 2021/22 Delivery Plan sets out our programme of work to help achieve this.

# MEET THE TEAM



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Keep up to date with Dorset LEP's activities and news:

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