



Welcome

Our bold and ambitious Council Plan sets out our key priorities for the next two years, from 2022 to 2025, and is a summary of our Strategic Delivery Plan. It is our commitment to you, our residents, and our partners.

It isn't a list of the hundreds of services that the council provides, nor does it detail all the huge progress we have made since the council was created in 2019. Achievement of our initial objectives is something we are particularly proud of, at a time of huge challenges during the pandemic where we responded with compassion and resilience.

This has given us a renewed sense of determination and ambition and I am optimistic that we can look back with pride having delivered our commitments. Democracy is an important part of our society, and we will stand on our record of achievements. We have worked hard and been able to fulfil the needs and aspirations of our communities.

Ward councillors play a key role in supporting their communities and ensuring that local voices are heard, and issues, both individual and community-wide, are dealt with in an effective and timely manner. Do keep them informed about local issues which affect you and offer constructive challenge. By working together, we can continue to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

The same can be said about the strong and productive partnerships we have established with key stakeholders, helping to create bold and ambitious relationships which deliver the best outcomes for the people of Dorset.

Thank you,

Cllr Spencer Flower

Leader of Dorset Council

Leadership mission statement

Working on your behalf, we will ensure that we achieve the best outcomes, continuing to lobby Ministers and Dorset MPs on a regular basis to ensure a fairer deal for Dorset.

To achieve our vision for 2024 we will:

1. **Dorset Local Plan** – Take a different approach to Local Plan preparation by being far more strategic, including a two-year extension for having an approved plan. We will continue to work with Homes England and the New Communities Team to deliver a sustainable garden town in Dorset.
2. **Housing for local people**- Develop stronger relationships with developing registered providers, working together to deliver affordable housing to rent. We will build on our investment in council owned temporary accommodation to substantially reduce the dependance on bed and breakfast for those who are homeless and need short-term.
3. **Climate and Ecological Strategy** – Deliver on our agreed policy and commitments and attract government funding to enable us to meet our net zero target by 2040.
4. **Adult Social Care** – Change the way we deliver services to ensure that we are able to respond to increased demand at a stable and affordable cost.
5. **Children’s Services** – Continue to roll out our £37.5m SEND investment programme and undertake the objectives set out in our 2020-2023 Children’s Plan and the Strategic Alliance for Children & Young People
6. **Assets and Property** – Drive the disposal and repurposing programme and maximise the potential of the Dorset Centre of Excellence in Shaftesbury.
7. **Working with the Integrated Care System** – Get a better deal for the council in the partnership that will ensure the best outcomes for those who need our support and achieve affordable costs to the council and the NHS.
8. **Community Safety** – Work closely with Dorset Police to ensure we achieve the best outcomes when dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour. We will work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to make Dorset the safest county in the country.
9. **County Deal** – Work with BCP Council and Dorset LEP to bid for a County Deal agreement with the government which will enhance and drive economic development, the skills agenda, and attract additional government funding.
10. **Digital Innovation** – Continue to pioneer new technologies and create the foundations for long-term economic development. We will work to safeguard and encourage job retention and growth, working with the private sector.

Understanding Dorset

Population

Dorset Council area has a population of 380,000 residents, 29% of whom are aged 65 and older (compared to 19% in England and Wales).

Dorset is an attractive place, and many people choose to retire here. It has a large population of older people, and relatively low birth rates. Currently there are over 7,000 people in Dorset living with dementia, and the number is increasing. Younger people often move away from the area. The population continues to grow slowly, driven by people moving into the county and longer life expectancy. The greatest part of population growth is among over 65s. Dorset's working age population is expected to see a marginal decline over the next 25 years.

The Dorset rural idyll can conceal hidden deprivation. There are significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland) and also in Bridport and the east of Dorset in Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood and also some rural deprivation due to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services. Crime is generally low in Dorset, although anti-social behaviour and rural crime are an ongoing problem.

The population is predominantly white British, with 4.4% of our residents from ethnically diverse communities.

Natural, geological and historic environment

Dorset's natural environment is a great asset. 95 miles of coast in Dorset and Devon are classified as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site – the only one in England. Over half of Dorset (54%) is covered by the Area of outstanding national beauty; 7% of Dorset is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest; and Dorset has one of the largest areas of protected lowland heath in Europe.

These designations together mark Dorset as a special place but also present challenges in terms of available land for delivering housing and employment development.

Dorset also has a rich historic environment, with one in twenty of all the protected ancient monuments in England, a well preserved pre-historic landscape and around 10,000 listed buildings.

Economy and infrastructure

Employment in Dorset is high but, like the UK, our economy has a productivity gap. Manufacturing, health, retail, education and hospitality are all big employers in Dorset. 20,000 businesses are based in Dorset: 86% are micro firms (0-9 employees) and fewer than 1% are large firms. Dorset's economy is worth around £8.1 billion and provides 142,000 jobs. Dorset has an above average number of advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses, but there is also a continuing seasonal, low skill, low wage economy with tourism and agriculture significant industries. The area is rich in valuable minerals, including stone, sand/gravel and oil. Earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers.

Dorset has no motorway but over 2,500 miles of roads.

97% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to superfast broadband.

22% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to full-fibre broadband.

The pandemic in Dorset

Over 25,400 people in Dorset (approximately 7% of our population) had to shield. Sadly between 2020 and 2021 589 people in Dorset died within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test. The council and its partners provided a wide range of support, including:

- leading a complex health protection programme through Public Health
- handling 34,559 calls through our COVID-19 contact centre, coordinating food parcel and prescription deliveries, practical help with everyday tasks and befriending
- administering £250 million of government grants to support local businesses
- accommodating 49 rough sleepers and homeless households as part of the “everyone in” initiative
- delivering 2,025 food packages and helped local COVID-19 support groups
- working with partners to provide nearly 600,000 vaccines
- vaccinating 96% of care home staff including agency staff

Partners and partnerships

The pandemic has changed how we live, work and think, and one thing it has proved is just how much more we can achieve by working together, across sectors and organisations, to protect those in greatest need. Hundreds of organisations responded to the crisis, including voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, nurseries, schools and colleges, health and social care providers, registered housing providers and the police, not to mention residents. We need to keep that energy and spirit of collaboration alive as we move towards a ‘new normal’, and focus on delivering the priorities described below.

We can't do this in isolation. Key partners include organisations in the health and social care economy, voluntary and community organisations, education providers, the local business community, Dorset's Local Nature Partnership, digital infrastructure providers, the Jurassic Coast Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Natural England, Homes England, Dorset Police, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Community Land Trusts, Public Health England, colleagues in the Integrated Care System, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (and subsequent bodies), Dorset Healthcare Trust, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the ambulance service, transport providers, the Armed Forces and probation services

Our values, behaviours and principles

The delivery of our priorities will be undertaken in line with our core organisational values.

Our values

At Dorset Council we:

- are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- are open, accessible and accountable
- use time and money wisely
- value people and build on their strengths

Our principles

We want to be:

- an employer of choice
- customer focused
- effective and modern
- a sustainable organisation

Our cultural and equality objectives

We will:

- foster good relations with and within the community
- develop and supporting a diverse workforce
- develop, commission and deliver inclusive and responsive services
- employ a zero-tolerance approach to any form of modern slavery
- remain committed to acting ethically, with integrity and transparency in all that we do

Our behaviours

The Dorset Council behaviours form part of everything we do. Our colleagues will demonstrate them through our attitude and approach when we work with and for you, so that we can help you achieve what you need. Our behaviours are:

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Recognition
- Collaboration

Our long-term vision and transformation plan

While our priorities focus on key areas for 2022-24, our big plans don't end there. Our short-term vision is supported by medium and long-term plans to enable us to think 'bigger and bolder'.

- **Short term:** Our priorities for 2022 to 2024
- **Medium Term:** Our priorities for 2024 to 2029
- **Long-term:** Our aspirations for 2029 and beyond

Our long-term vision will see us strengthen our work with our health partners to deliver the integrated care system '[Our Dorset](#)'. We have joined up to tackle all the things that affect our health and wellbeing, to make real change, and improve things for our communities.

We have developed a transformation programme to improve services for residents. It focuses on:

- 1. Being more commercial**
Modernising the way we operate to ensure we are business friendly, to behave in a more business-like way and commission as one council.
- 2. Putting our customers first**
Working together to design and deliver modern, accessible services to our customers.
- 3. Delivering climate and ecological priorities**
Ensuring our change programme delivers in line with our climate and ecological strategy.
- 4. Making the best use of our assets and leading economic growth**
Reviewing the council buildings and properties to ensure best use and value of assets and help drive prosperity whilst adopting a focus on places and spaces.
- 5. Implementing a digital, intelligent, data led approach**
Using our data to help us predict demand and improve our prevention agenda.
- 6. Shaping the Integrated Care System**
Working with partners to transform our care services by removing traditional divisions between services, and ensure people and communities get the support and care that they need.

Our priorities for Dorset

Our vision is underpinned by five key priorities for 2022-24 that outline the steps we will take to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

We remain focused on improving the lives of **people** as well as protecting and enhancing our local **places**.

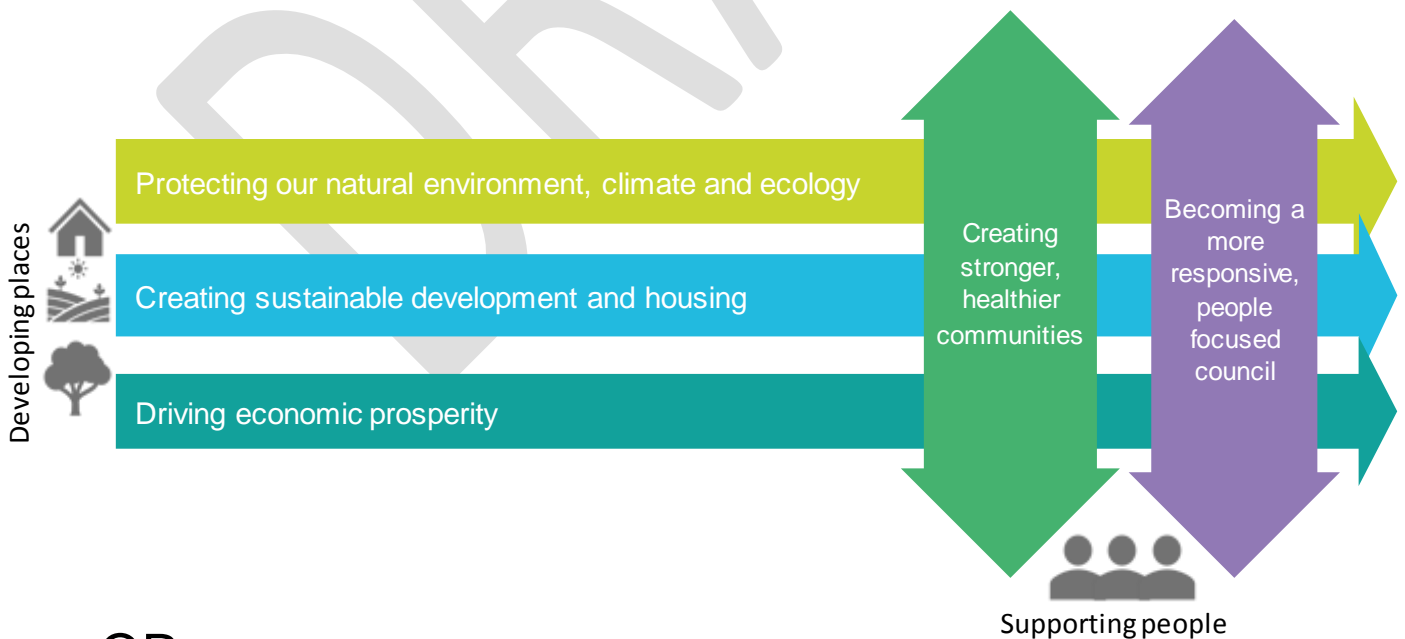
These reflect our key areas of focus over the next two years and are collectively established from the following:

- The local political vision and manifesto
- Our transformation principles
- Planned improvement of our core services
- Response to legislative change or government initiatives

In addition to these priorities, there will be times when we must respond quickly during times of emergency or crisis and will adapt our planning. For 2022-24 this includes, but is not limited to, leading a local response on the following:

- The covid-19 pandemic response and recovery
- The war in Ukraine and the provision of asylum to families
- The cost-of-living crisis and the impact of this on residents and businesses in Dorset

Our Strategic Delivery Plan sets out in detail how we will deliver these priorities over the next two years. Key actions for each priority are monitored and reported on quarterly to the our Cabinet and annually in a report prepared for all Councillors, residents, businesses, and partners.



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Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology

We will improve access to and use of Dorset’s environment in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations.

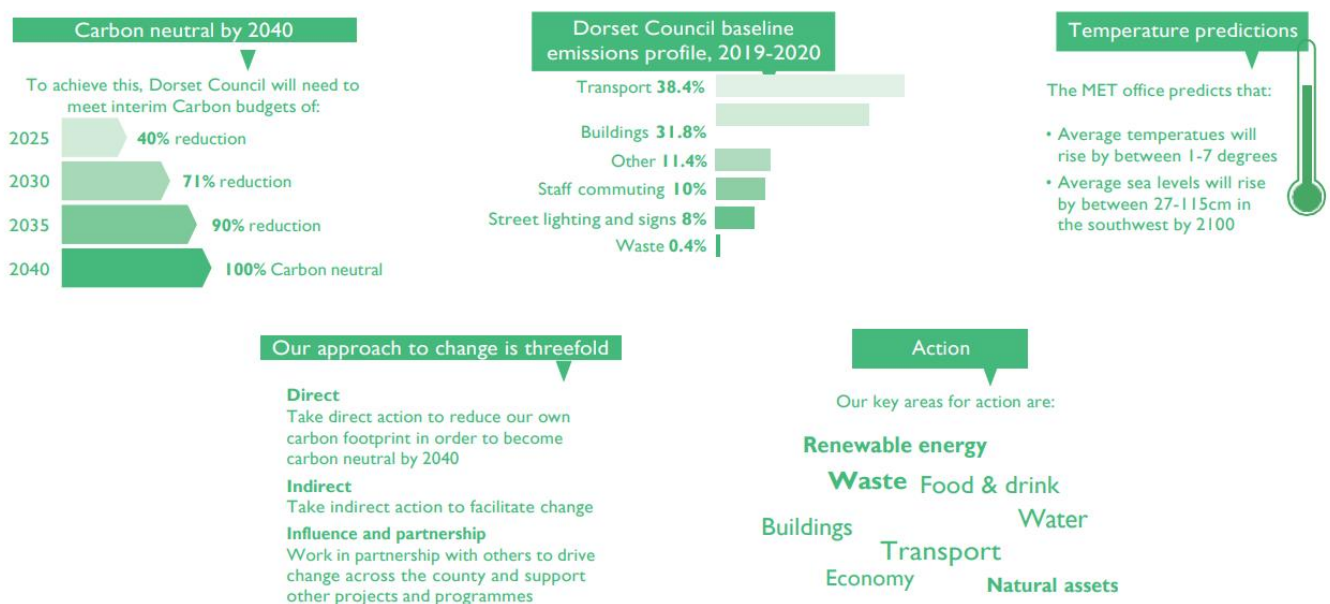
Dorset Council cares about our natural environment and will continue to protect it as buildings are built and developed. This will include working with partners and developers to provide more eco sustainable homes that will protect our climate and ecology.

We will continue to promote socially responsible travel that makes the most of our environment and support residents, businesses, and visitors with ways to best understand and protect our local environments and natural surroundings.

We will take the necessary decisions and actions to be carbon-neutral by 2040 and provide leadership to the whole of Dorset to become carbon-neutral including adaptation by 2050.

We will continue to reverse the decline of our natural places by taking action in areas such as reducing pollution, ensuring wildlife thrives, increasing conservation work to protect habitats.

Dorset Council’s focus in this priority is ensuring that the council meets its net zero target by 2040.



The council declared a climate and ecological emergency at its first Full Council meeting and in July 2021 adopted a strategy and action plan setting out how the council will respond.

This outlines the direct action we will take across our operations to become a carbon-neutral council by 2040. Through our wide ranging services and partnerships, we will facilitate the changes required for the whole of Dorset to become carbon-neutral by 2050, and protect and enhance biodiversity across Dorset.

Our climate and ecological strategy sets the direction of travel over nine areas: buildings and assets, waste, water, economy, transport, natural assets, food and drink, and renewable energy.

Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

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Creating stronger, healthier communities

We will enable our residents, working with partners, to develop strong networks of support and maintain strong communities. We will focus on the most vulnerable in our communities to improve wellbeing and reduce inequality through collaboration between public services, community leaders, residents and voluntary groups.



To add a new metric on food poverty including use of food banks and social supermarkets etc

The pandemic has intensified the challenges many vulnerable adults and our children and young people face, and there are widespread concerns about the impact on babies and the very youngest from lost learning, families facing job losses and diminished income, and the impact of social distancing and lockdowns on mental health and wellbeing.

One of the most positive things to have emerged from the pandemic has been the speed and determination of communities, voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, local shops, and other organisations to support those who need it.

Local council budgets have reduced every year for over a decade now and the reality is that we cannot continue to provide everything residents, businesses and visitors want and need, so it is more important than ever that we find the best way of working together. We will do more to support and enable voluntary and charitable organisations who are providing valuable help and support and making a positive difference to our communities.

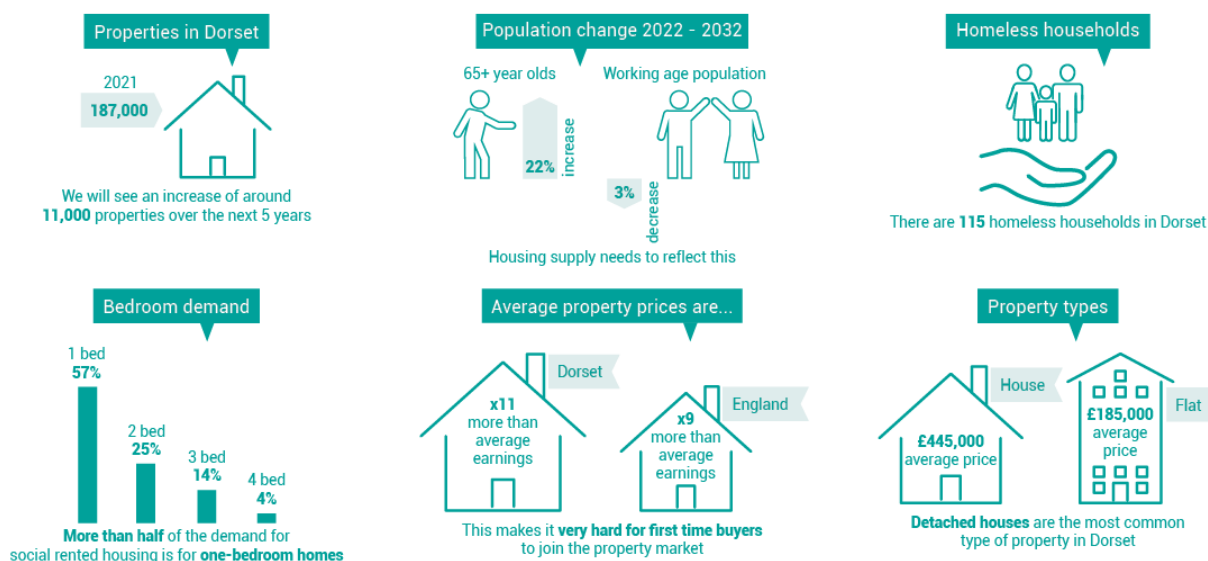
Whether by volunteering for a local group, standing for your local town or parish council, donating to a local food bank, offering your time and expertise to a local initiative or simply learning more about your local community, everyone can do something. We will continue to support new community groups and initiatives to help make this happen.

Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

Creating sustainable development and housing

We will work with government, registered housing providers, community land trusts and local housing partners to deliver affordable, suitable and decent housing. We will seek their support to help us promote our climate and ecological priorities by providing sustainable services such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels and other such approaches.

We will take a different approach to Local Plan preparation by being far more strategic, including a two-year extension for having an approved plan. We will continue to work with Homes England and the New Communities Team to deliver a sustainable new settlement within Dorset.



To add a new metric on monitoring responsiveness of housing providers to complaints and holding them to account on behalf of residents

The pandemic has put enormous pressure on housing services alongside the pre-existing shortage of suitable land for housing development and, problems with the supply chain in the construction industry.

As we see more people moving to Dorset, changing work practices is also putting additional pressure on the sales and rental housing market. Working with partners and private owners will be critical in coming months and years to prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on short term or poor quality temporary accommodation.

We are committed to supporting providers and private landlords in the increased provision of local rental properties in the same way we remain focussed on the provision of affordable homes for purchase.

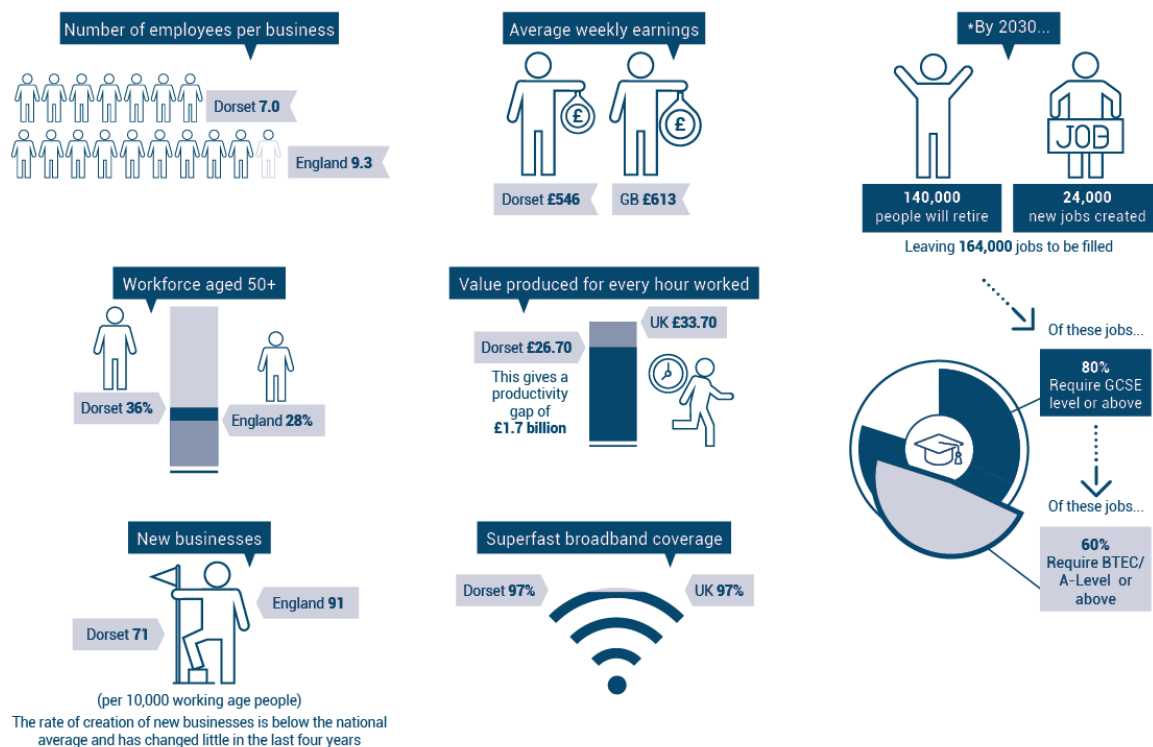
We will continue to monitor the impact of local housing being used for tourism such as holiday home rentals. This is in addition to our response to the use of local housing for second homes and the impact this has on the local economy.

Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

Driving economic prosperity

We will enable sustainable economic growth across the county, increasing productivity and the number of high-quality jobs in Dorset, creating great places to live, work and visit. We will drive forward a plan whereby Dorset Council is a catalyst for prosperity and growth, working with and supporting local businesses and partners.

We will also create the right conditions to create a highly skilled workforce matched to high-quality jobs, helping businesses stay, start, grow, and be attracted to Dorset.



To add new metric(s) reflecting transport provision and usage

The pandemic has had a significant impact on Dorset's economy, though precisely what those impacts are, and how long they will last, will take years to fully understand. The council has worked hard to ensure local businesses have received government grants, distributing over £250m in just 12 months.

The pandemic has also accelerated flexible and remote working for many people, and this has the potential of supporting Dorset's low-carbon economy and promoting digital skills in future. We will work together to build on these opportunities, driving the roll out of full fibre technology and 5G to enable people to travel less and access opportunities online so that Dorset's economy can become stronger and more environmentally sustainable

Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

Becoming a more responsive, people focused council

We will continue to be responsive to residents, businesses, partners and visitors in the right way at the right time. We will strive to constantly improve with an emphasis on innovation and working with residents and businesses in a collaborative, co-production approach.

To add metrics and infographics for this priority by end June. This will include using:

- *the residents survey to understand the needs of residents*
- *the stronger neighbourhoods project to identify and deliver palpable improvements to the quality of life of Dorset's residents*
- *customer contact data cross-council*
- *data to show how the organisation is focused on evidence and insight to target our resources effectively*

We will modernise the way we operate to ensure we are efficient, accessible for residents and achieve the best value for money. We will improve the way we respond to residents, businesses, partners and visitors by simplifying and joining up the ways we work as much as we can.

We will ensure residents, businesses, partners and visitors are able to access the information and support they need quickly and easily, using new technology to provide a better online experience.

Equally, we want to attract the most skilled people to work with us and will use opportunities that remote working has provided during the pandemic to do this.

We will work closely with our communities to engage and involve them in decisions that impact them.

Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.