

# Dorset Council's Plan

2022 - 2024



Updated: July 2022

## Welcome

Our bold and ambitious Council Plan sets out our key priorities for the next two years, to 2024. It is our commitment to you, our residents, and our partners.

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We have made huge progress since the council was created in 2019. Achievement of our initial objectives is something we are particularly proud of, at a time of huge challenge 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 and will continue to work hard 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 concerns 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

# Key Cabinet Commitments

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 registered providers (including housing associations), 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 accommodation.
- 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 we respond to increased demand at a stable and affordable cost.
- 5 Children's Services** – Continue to roll out our £37.5m Special Educational Needs and Disability (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 our disposal and repurposing programme and maximise the potential of the Dorset Centre of Excellence in Shaftesbury.
- 7 Shaping 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 Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (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 prosperity. 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 area 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 in Bridport and the east of Dorset in Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood. There is 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 concern. 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 an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); 7% of Dorset is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and Dorset has one of the largest areas of protected lowland heath in Europe. These 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 within tourism and agriculture which are 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 and 24% of Dorset with 'gigabit-capable' coverage.

## 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. Through this time, 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 helping 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 and support 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 have been keeping that energy and spirit of collaboration alive as we find ourselves in a 'new normal' and focus on delivering the priorities described below.

We cannot 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, Art Development Company, Homes England, Dorset Police, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Community Land Trusts, Public Health England, colleagues in the Integrated Care System, NHS Dorset, 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

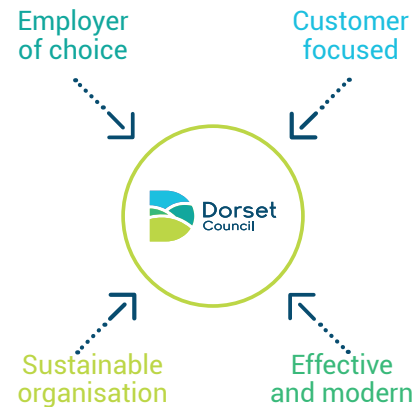
The delivery of our priorities will be undertaken in line with our core organisational values.

## Our values

At Dorset Council we:

- are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- we 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



## Our cultural and equality objectives

We will:

- foster good relations with and within the community
- develop a supporting and 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 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 do not 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

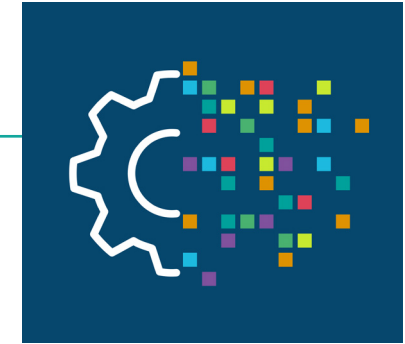
**Medium term** – Our priorities for 2024 to 2029

**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 health inequalities and all the things that affect 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 Working with 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:

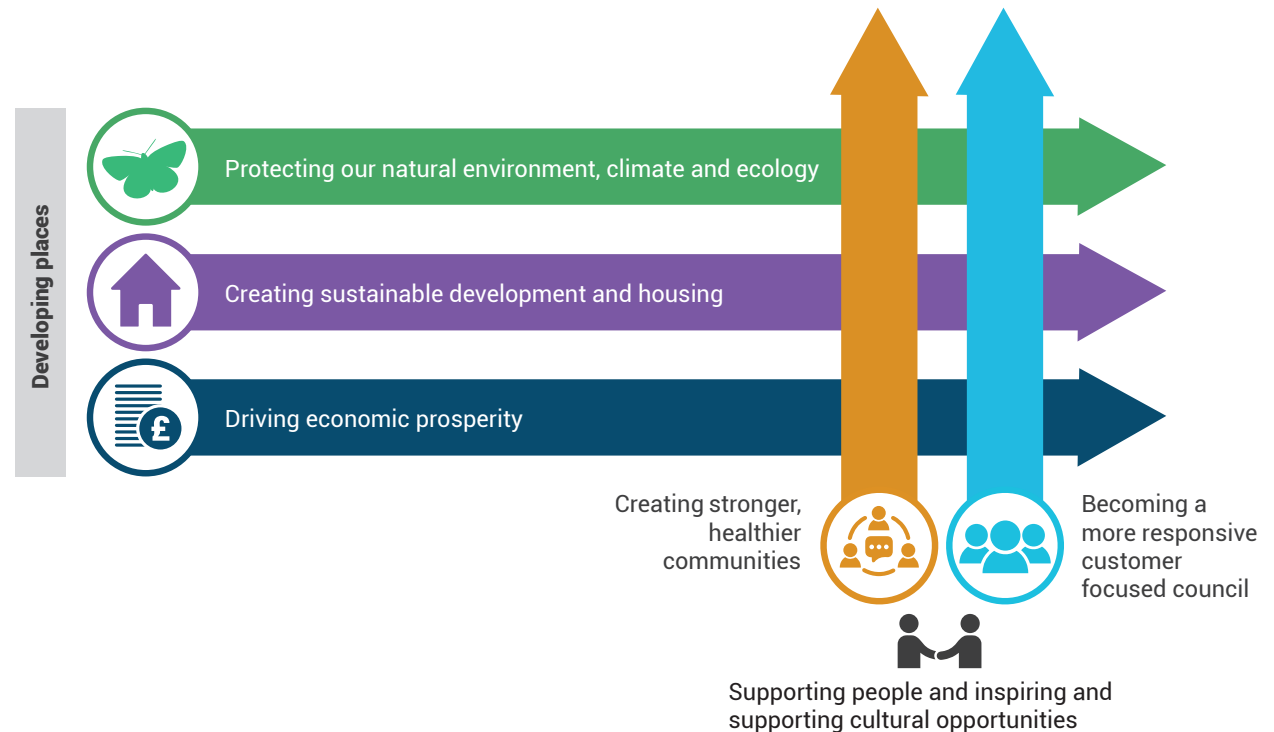
- The local political vision and manifesto
- Our transformation principles
- Planned improvement of our core services
- Response to legislative change or government initiatives

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

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

Dorset council refers to all the people we work with, support and work for as 'our customers'. This includes all individuals, families, groups and businesses that interact with the council or one of its partners.





# 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 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 commits us to taking direct action across our operations to become a carbon-neutral council by 2040, and through our wide-ranging services and partnerships, to facilitate the changes required for the whole of Dorset to become carbon-neutral by 2050, and to protect and enhance biodiversity across Dorset.

Our focus will be on the continued decarbonisation of our fleet, expanding electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, reducing the emissions from our estate and increasing renewable energy generation. We will continue to redefine and shape our policies in key areas to ensure that the council plays its part in accelerating change throughout Dorset, and will accelerate our engagement with residents, businesses and government, including sourcing additional external funds. Dorset Council will also work with others to help improve Dorset's natural environment, working towards a collective goal of 30% of land in positive management by 2030 in line with government targets.

This will involve developing a Local Nature Recovery strategy with partners, as well as taking action in areas such as reducing pollution, ensuring wildlife thrives and increasing conservation work to protect habitats.

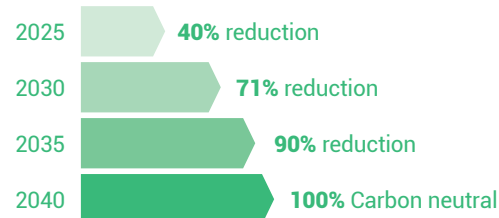
The council will also start to develop a better approach, with partners, to the issue of adaptation to climate change.

Dorset Council's focus in this priority is ensuring that the council meets its net-zero target by 2040 and continues to contribute towards its wider leadership role in delivering the 2050 carbon and 2030 nature ambitions.

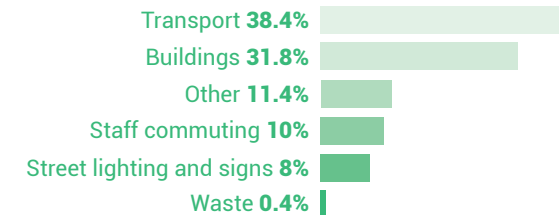
Our strategic delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

## Carbon neutral by 2040

To achieve this, Dorset Council will need to meet interim Carbon budgets of:



## Dorset Council baseline emissions profile, 2019-2020



## Our approach to change is threefold

### Direct

Take direct action to reduce our own carbon footprint in order to become carbon neutral by 2040

### Indirect

Take indirect action to facilitate change

### Influence and partnership

Work in partnership with others to drive change across the county and support other projects and programmes

## Action

Our key areas for action are:

**Renewable energy**

**Waste** Food & drink

**Water**

**Buildings**

**Transport**

**Economy**

**Natural assets**

## Temperature predictions

The MET office predicts that:

- Average temperatures will rise by between 1-7 degrees
- Average sea levels will rise by between 27-115cm in the southwest by 2100







# Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology

## Dorset environmental economy

(natural assets, agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, tourism)



...is valued at up to  
**15%** of the local economy  
and supports up to **61,000** jobs

## \*\*Living in Dorset



**Nine out of ten** Dorset residents said  
the environment was an  
important factor in their  
decision to live in Dorset

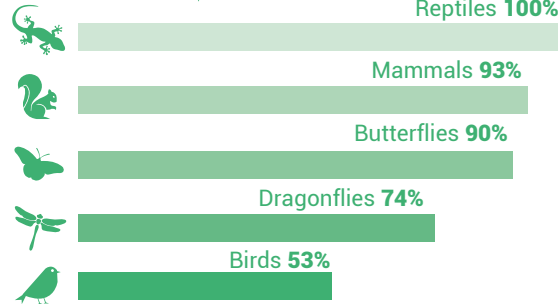
## Publicly available charging points in Dorset



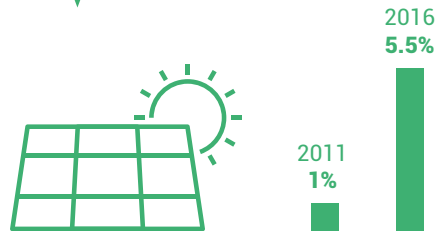
2011 1

April 2022 133

## Native species living in Dorset



## \*Renewable energy production in Dorset

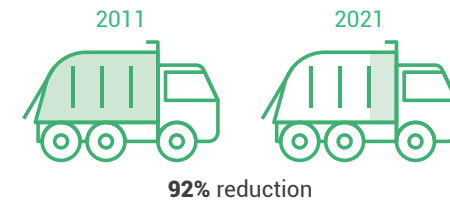


## Natural status



Dorset has England's only natural  
**World Heritage Site** and two  
**Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**  
covering **54%** of the Dorset Council area

## \*\*Amount of waste sent to landfill

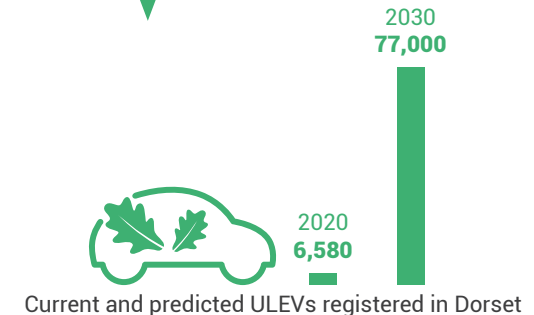


## Car and van emissions



**Government targets:**  
All new cars and vans should be  
"effectively zero emission" by **2035**

## Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)





# 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.

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.

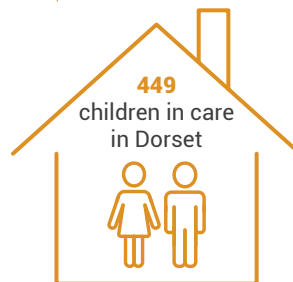
One of the most positive things to have emerged from the pandemic has been the speed and determination of communities, voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, local shops, and other organisations to support those who need it.

Government funding to local councils has 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.

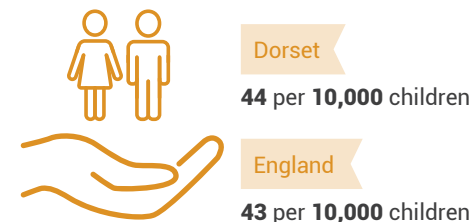
Whether by volunteering for a local group, standing for your local town or parish council, donating to a local food bank, offering your time and expertise to a local initiative, or simply learning more about your local community, everyone can do something. We will continue to support new community groups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

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

## Children in care



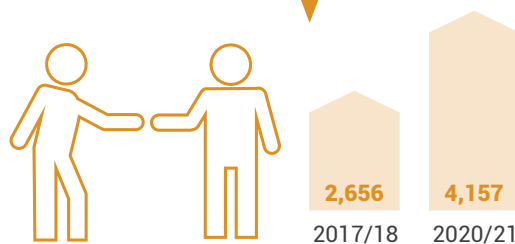
## Child protection rate



## Level of development

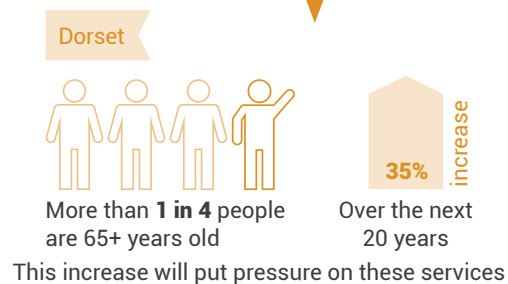


## Adult safeguarding concerns



This reflects an increased cultural awareness of adult safeguarding and more informed reporting

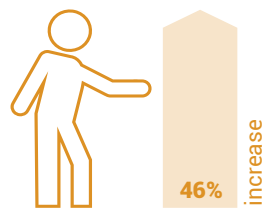
## Services for older people





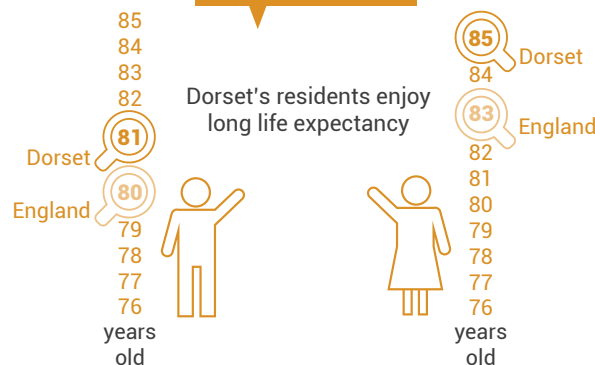
# Creating stronger, healthier communities

## 85+ year olds in Dorset

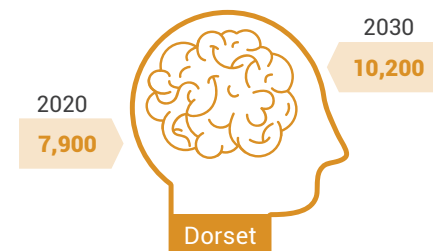


Over the next 10 years

## Life expectancy



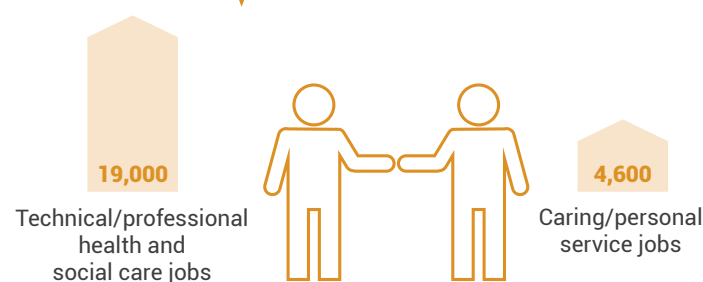
## 65+ year olds with dementia



## Social care services



## \*Social care jobs over the next 10 years





# Creating stronger, healthier communities

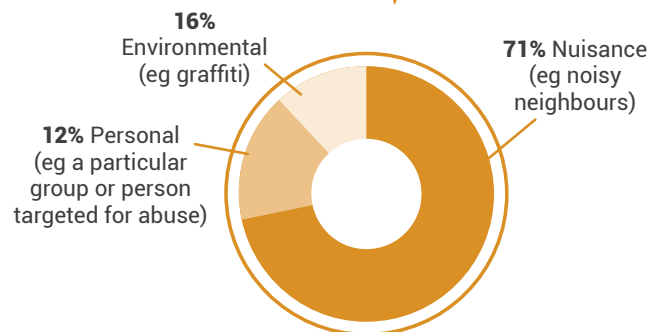
## Deprived areas

Dorset has few deprived areas in national terms, but... deprivation is concentrated in certain areas



**10 out of 11** deprived areas are in **Weymouth & Portland**

## Anti-social behaviour in Dorset



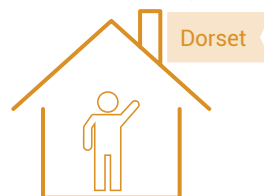
## Social Supermarkets

100% increase over the last year in the need to use The Nest Social Supermarket from 2021 to 2022



325 to 650 users

## Workless households



**12,100** households  
**11.3%** (working age) households

## Regular physical activity (adults)





# 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 ask for 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.

The council will receive and consider an annual report of performance in Dorset from all registered provider housing associations that manage more than 250 homes so residents can access suitable homes.

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 are putting additional pressure on the sales and rental housing market. Working with partners and private owners will be critical in the 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 delivery plan sets out how we will deliver these priorities.

## Properties in Dorset

2021  
187,000



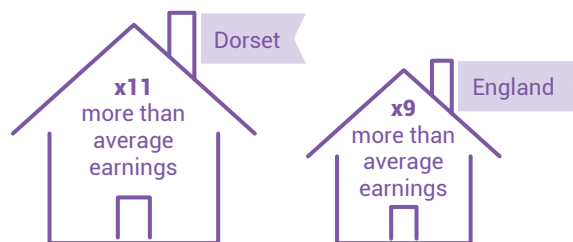
We will see an increase of around **11,000** properties over the next 5 years

## Homeless households



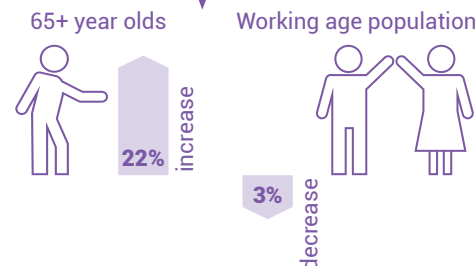
There are **115** homeless households in Dorset

## Average property prices are...



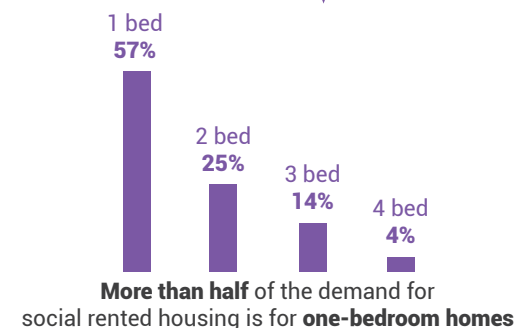
This makes it **very hard for first time buyers** to join the property market

## Population change 2022 - 2032

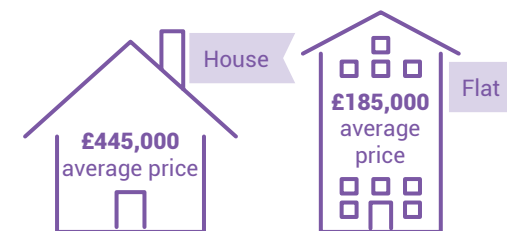


Housing supply needs to reflect this

## Bedroom demand



## Property types



**Detached houses** are the most common type of property in Dorset





## Driving economic prosperity

We will support sustainable economic growth across the county, enabling high-quality jobs through improvements to productivity, sustainability, and accessibility, 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 focus on supporting social mobility and protection of the environment. We will address Dorset's particular challenges related to its demographics and will be aware of Dorset's unique landscapes. We will also challenge low productivity and lower than average skills.

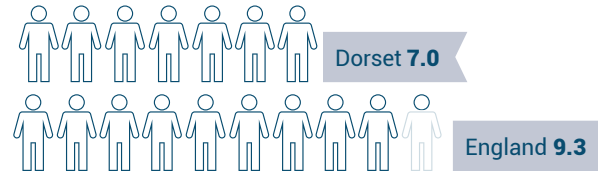
We will create the right conditions to grow a highly skilled workforce matched to high-quality jobs, helping businesses stay, start, grow, and move to Dorset.

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.

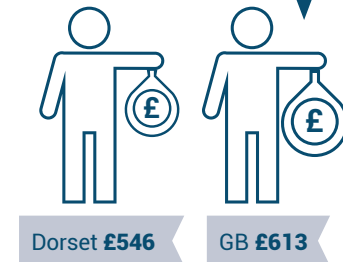
The pandemic has also accelerated flexible and remote working for many people, and this has the potential of supporting Dorset's low-carbon economy and promoting digital skills in future. We will work together to build on these opportunities, driving the roll out of 'gigabit-capable' coverage and 5G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

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

### Number of employees per business



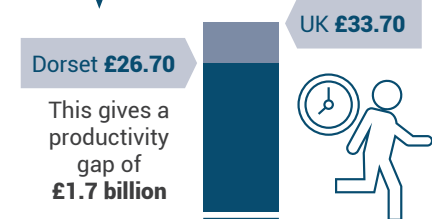
### Average weekly earnings



### Workforce aged 50+



### Value produced for every hour worked





# Driving economic prosperity

## New businesses



(per 10,000 working age people)

The rate of creation of new businesses is below the national average and has changed little in the last four years

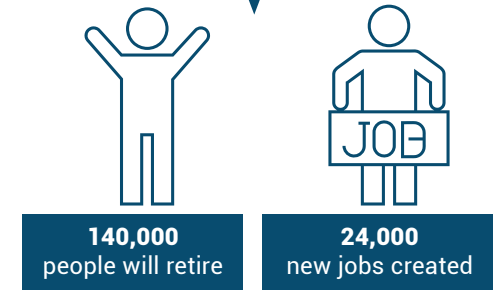
## Superfast broadband coverage

Dorset 97%



UK 97%

## \*By 2030...



Leaving 164,000 jobs to be filled

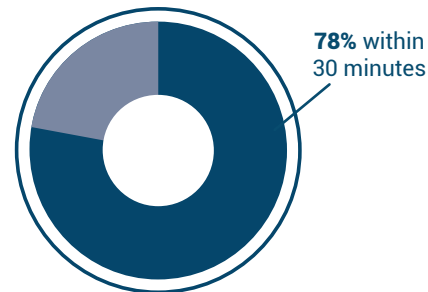
Of these jobs...

80% Require GCSE level or above

Of these jobs...

60% Require BTEC/A-Level or above

## Households within 30 minutes of Dorset's towns by public transport





## Becoming a more responsive, customer focused council

We will continue to be responsive, fair, and efficient in how we deliver services to our customers by listening and learning from their experiences. We will strive to constantly improve with an emphasis on innovation and working with you in a collaborative approach.

We refer to all the people we work with, support and work for as 'our customers'. This includes all individuals, families, groups, and businesses that interact with the council or one of its partners.

We will continue to 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, using data to help us make decisions.

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 and join up their dealings with the council.

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. We will pilot a place-based, community-led approach to improve social mobility and other outcomes in Weymouth & Portland through the Stronger Neighbourhoods project.

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

**65%** of Dorset's residents are satisfied with the way Dorset Council run things

65%

**94%** of businesses satisfied with the service they received from traded standards

94%

**40%** of residents agree that the council "acts on residents' concerns"

40%

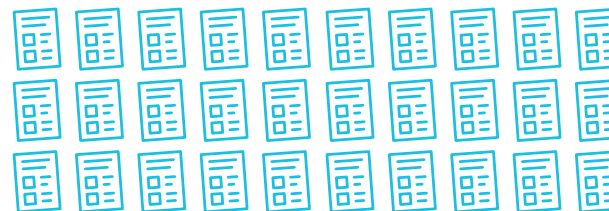
**65%** of residents believe that we keep them well informed about the services and benefits Dorset Council provides.

65%

**56%** of residents say that they trust the Council a great deal or a fair amount

56%

**30** significant consultations have been undertaken over the last 12 months



**4,400** customers

**4,400** customers have accessed help and support from our **40** community volunteers and **323** employee digital champions to use digital tools where they want to



**40** community volunteers



**323** employee digital champions



Making Dorset a great place to  
**Live, work and visit**

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