



Purbeck District Council Economic Development Strategy 2013 – 2027

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Introduction and context

Introduction

1. The overall aim of this strategy is to improve the local economy and infrastructure and to do this in a way which is consistent with the unique environment of Purbeck. The Council will have little impact on the wider economic conditions but can seek to maximise Purbeck's potential through attracting resources and investment to the area. The Council cannot work in isolation and it is important that we seek to listen, inform and influence others and create, where possible, the right conditions for growth. The focus for working in partnership will be through the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which is business led and takes the strategic lead on promoting economic growth for the Dorset area.
2. This strategy seeks to clarify the Council's role within the LEP to influence direction, priorities and investment in Purbeck. The strategy will also influence the partial review of the Purbeck Local Plan due to be completed by 2017 identifying the land use implications and business support requirements as appropriate and guide the completion of the employment land review.

Purbeck business sectors

3. Purbeck has a number of successful businesses and thriving sectors in particular:
 - Marine (Norco, Kemp Sails, Sunseeker – distribution centre)
 - Defence/security (MOD, Chemring, Atlas Elektronik)
 - Advanced engineering (Westwind Air Bearings, Aero Tech)
 - Mining and quarrying (Perenco - Oil, Imerys - Ball Clay)
 - Environmental Businesses (Heatric, Bio track)
 - IT (Via sat, Test Link)
 - Tourism sectors (accommodation, food and attractions, cultural businesses)
 - Agriculture and local food (Large estates, Purbeck producers)

Economic development issues in Purbeck

4. Purbeck has a wealth of natural, historic and cultural assets which makes it a very attractive place to live and to operate a business. The District has been successful in attracting a number of manufacturing businesses to relocate or expand in Purbeck aided by a shortage of employment land in the Poole/Bournemouth conurbation. Purbeck now has the highest rate of manufacturing employment in Dorset at 14 per cent of the workforce (compared to 10.3% in 1991).
5. Purbeck has the second highest rate of tourist related employment at 17 per cent which generates £140 million spend in the local economy. The Council's objective has been to increase visitor spend and the number of staying trips through improved occupancy in out-of-peak seasons.
6. Purbeck's unemployment levels are below the national and county wide average (1.6% unemployed claimants in Dec 2012 compared to UK 3.7% and Dorset 2.0%)
7. Purbeck benefits from its proximity to the conurbation, not only job opportunities but also proximity to colleges and universities, ports and airports. Bournemouth University and the Arts Institute have international reputations in the creative industries sector. Bournemouth and Poole College is well attuned to the local economy with innovative initiatives such as

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Marine Technology, Digital design and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) centres.

8. Workplace based wage levels in Purbeck are the second highest in Dorset marginally below Poole but below the GB average
9. Research shows that there are however issues to address in Purbeck in particular:
 - New business creation is low compared to Dorset and the national average.
 - Purbeck is one of the least affordable places in the country to live and is popular for retirement and second home owners which creates a low economic activity rate and problems for staff recruitment as well as an outmigration of young people from Purbeck.
 - In common with the rest of Dorset, Purbeck has a large number of small firms; 84 per cent employ fewer than 10 people.
 - Increasing numbers of people work from home but rely on good broadband connectivity which is poor in large parts of Purbeck particularly the more isolated rural parts but including much of Lytchett Matravers, Winfrith Newburgh, Chaldon Herring, Church Knowle, Kimmeridge and Organford.
 - Within knowledge driven high tech manufacturing Purbeck at 38% lag behind the rest of LEP Dorset (49%) and the UK (52%).”
 - Traffic congestion is a particular issue for much of Purbeck. The A351 route is heavily congested at peak periods through Wareham, Sandford, and Corfe Castle, which causes community severance issues and affects the businesses operating within the settlements and at the associated industrial estates of the area.
 - Productivity levels measured as gross value added are poor at £17,000 per resident compared to UK £20,472 but better than the Dorset average of £15,266 per resident.
 - There is a high level of out commuting to jobs elsewhere 47 per cent of residents commuting to jobs outside of Purbeck.
 - Purbeck has the highest rate of manufacturing employment in Dorset at 14 per cent of the workforce and the second highest rate of tourist related employment (food and accommodation) at 17per cent.
 - There is a high public sector jobs dependence (24 per cent of employees the third highest in Dorset).
 - Businesses have identified lack of available vocational skills (e.g. engineering) as a constraint to business growth and employment of local people.
 - Employment numbers at Dorset Green have fallen from 1200 to 650 in the last 5 years reflecting a lack of investment and a focus on residential rather than employment use of much of the site.

Purbeck District Council role

10. The Council has limited resources in terms of both staff time (0.5 full time equivalent) and money but does recognise economic development as a priority in its corporate strategy. The Council’s role is therefore one of influencing, facilitating and making links rather than a wide range of resource intensive projects. To maximise opportunity and focus effort the Council will work collaboratively with landowners on appropriate activities and projects. The Council will work in partnership with other agencies in particular the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership, independently of administrative boundaries to address the shared priorities and opportunities in the wider economy of Dorset.

Corporate strategy priorities

11. One of the Council's corporate priorities is "Improving the Local Economy and Infrastructure." five year targets that support that priority are as follows:
 - Support the provision of high speed broadband across the District.
 - Support the development of knowledge based businesses in the District.
 - Support effective mentoring schemes for new businesses.
 - Support the development of additional work space in the District
 - Implement the Purbeck Transport Strategy to improve the road and rail network.
12. The action plan at the end of this document sets out the specific actions that the Council will take to achieve these targets. The following section provides a brief summary.

Supporting high speed (or superfast) broadband

13. The Council has committed £350,000 to support the implementation of superfast broadband in the District. A county wide project aims to deliver an infrastructure that is capable of providing access to broadband with speeds of at least 24Mbps to 95 per cent of properties in Dorset and broadband speeds of at least 2Mbps to the remaining 5 per cent of properties by 2016. This should help businesses to stay and grow in Purbeck as well as facilitating more home working in the exceptional natural environment of Purbeck.

Supporting knowledge based businesses

14. The Council's main role in supporting knowledge based businesses is to ensure the strategic planning environment helps rather than hinders. This includes working to make sure the policies in the local plan and the Council's community infrastructure levy (CIL) facilitate appropriate business development. There is also a need to ensure that processes are in place to prioritise applications for appropriate employment use. The Council will ensure that it supports businesses quickly and pragmatically through planning enquiries and applications as well as through all of the Council's other regulatory functions such as licencing, environmental health and business rates.
15. A LEP priority is to create a culture of enterprise and improving employability skills working with schools, colleges and employers to develop an enterprise friendly curriculum. This priority will help to address the reported problem of skill shortages and help to reduce the out migration of young people from Purbeck.
16. Protection and enhancement of the environment is a corporate strategy priority for what is reputedly the most bio diverse local authority area in England. The quality of the environment is a significant reason for businesses being based in Purbeck and working through the local Enterprise Partnership and local nature partnership there may be a number of opportunities of developing further environmental business opportunities whilst enhancing the environment.

Supporting mentoring

17. The Council provides £1000 per year to support Dormen, a Dorset based business mentoring service. Dormen recruits experienced business and professional people as volunteers to help small developing businesses by providing a mentoring service to them. Dormen currently supports 167 businesses across Dorset, 10 in Purbeck. There are 85 volunteer mentors. Purbeck District Council's financial contribution supports the organisation's administration and expenses.

Supporting development of workspace

18. Through the local planning process, the Council will encourage a diverse range of employment sites and workspace across the District. The Council will seek to ensure the

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availability of workspace across all the distinctive spatial areas identified in the adopted Purbeck Local Plan (shown in appendix 1 alongside proposed growth and investment priorities for Purbeck). This aims to create economic growth, safeguard and create jobs and increase the range and type of local employment, across Purbeck. The Council also provides information to local businesses and inward investors about workspace available locally including council owned property.

Implementing the Purbeck transport strategy

- 19.** Dorset County Council is responsible for implementing the schemes set out in the Purbeck transport strategy. Officers and councillors need to continue to work with colleagues in Dorset County Council to prioritise spending on projects that will deliver the most benefit locally.

Dorset LEP

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- 20.** Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are new partnership organisations across natural economic areas, led by the private sector and including the public sector, making them better placed to identify the needs of the local economy and, vitally, to speed up their recovery and growth.
- 21.** The fundamental difference to earlier partnerships is the involvement of the private sector and the devolution of power and funding from regional agencies to local partnerships that have a key role in the Government's ambition to stimulate growth in the economy.
- 22.** The Dorset LEP was set up on 8 May 2012 and has already attracted more than £45 million of Government funding to kick-start Dorset's economy, to create new jobs, boost local businesses and to improve broadband connectivity across the county.

The need to work in partnership with the Dorset LEP

- 23.** The Government's budget statement on 5th Dec 2012 confirmed the role and growing importance of LEPs as the lead on the development of strategic plans for local growth. It also confirmed that funding will increasingly be devolved to LEPs based on the quality of the strategic plans with a single pot being created by April 2015. It is vital therefore that Purbeck interacts with and plays a full part in the development of the strategic direction of the LEP and the delivery of resultant projects and activities.
- 24.** It is clear that Purbeck District Council cannot have much influence over the economic issues listed above on its own with very limited capital and staff resources to call upon. Purbeck will need to work in partnership with the LEP to influence its strategic direction and to deliver joint priorities. The Council's role will be to help to create the right environment in which businesses can thrive. This will principally be one of facilitation, co-ordination and enabling.

Key objectives and targets of the LEP

- 25.** The Dorset LEP's overall aim is to deliver growth through business enterprise whilst safeguarding the environment. Its fundamental objective is to improve the performance of existing businesses in Dorset, whilst also encouraging the creation and growth of new ones. It will support a strongly performing, productive and sustainable economy, characterised by boosting higher paid and better skilled jobs. It will do this in three key ways:
 - Enhancing the skills of Dorset's current and future workforce;
 - Improving digital and physical connectivity, particularly via high-speed broadband; and

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- Creating the right conditions for enterprise, driving forward integrated spatial and infrastructure planning across the county, providing more affordable housing, and emphasising the need to be 'open for business'.

The Dorset LEP summarises its aims under the following four themes:

- **Talented Dorset** – Enhancing the skills of our current and future work force.
- **Connected Dorset** – Improving the electronic and physical connectivity, particularly through high speed broadband.
- **Responsive Dorset** – Creating the conditions for enterprise to flourish including a responsive planning and development framework and a dynamic housing market.
- **Competitive Dorset** – Improving the performance of existing businesses and to encourage the creation and growth of new ones.

26. The Dorset LEP has identified a number of priority actions to achieve its objectives and boost business in Dorset:

- Creating a global hub for international trade and business, focussing on Bournemouth Airport and the Ports of Poole and Portland.
- Achieving excellent high-speed broadband.
- Advancing integrated spatial and infrastructure planning across the whole conurbation.
- Planning positively for sustainable economic growth, emphasising the need to be "open for business".
- Capturing the Olympic legacy across the entire LEP area.
- Creating a culture of enterprise and improving employability skills, working with schools, colleges and employers to develop an enterprise friendly curriculum.
- Reviewing and implementation of the Dorset Employment and Skills Strategy.
- Positively embracing the role of older people within the economy of Dorset.
- Encouraging businesses to "go global".
- Encouraging the work of, or development of, sector-specific advisory bodies.

Sector engagement groups

27. The Dorset LEP started a programme of business sector engagement in Summer 2012, in order to raise the profile of the recently launched partnership, and to gauge the mood of the business community in Dorset, some 18-24 months after the previous round of engagement. This activity was undertaken on a sector basis, led by a Board 'champion' supported by a local authority economic development officer. The forms of engagement differed from sector to sector, sometimes utilising using groups, or initiating new ones. The seven sectors the Dorset LEP is focusing on are: advanced engineering, creative industries, environmental technology, financial services, tourism and hospitality, food and drink and health and social care.

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Purbeck District Council action plan

What	Who	When	Link to LEP priority?
Supporting broadband			
Represent Purbeck District Council at County wide meetings to progress the project and coordinate any actions the Council needs to progress	Phil McStraw	On-going	High speed broadband
Encourage local people to register an interest in the new broadband offering.			
Provide timely planning advice to help deliver necessary infrastructure in line with Dorset wide protocol	Alan Davies	As requested by the provider	Open for business
Supporting knowledge based businesses			
Investigate reducing BREEAM requirements as part of the partial review of the Local Plan	Richard Wilson / Steve Dring	By adoption in 2017	Open for business
Work with colleagues from other councils across Dorset and LEP board members to develop a planning charter to provide and facilitate, timely and supportive response to businesses using the planning service	Bridget Downton	By end 2013	
Ensure CIL levels accurately reflect what commercial development can sustain	Steve Dring	By April 2014	Infrastructure planning
Maintain regular contact with key local businesses to understand their requirements.	Richard Wilson	On-going	Open for business
Support the LEP with its work with schools, colleges and businesses to promote apprenticeships and awareness of job opportunities.	Alex Clothier /Richard Wilson	By end 2014	Employment and skills strategy
Provide fast track support to appropriate business enquiries supporting them through the pre-application and planning process and providing any necessary support for issues relating to environmental health, licencing and business rates.	Richard Wilson/ Development Management / Environmental Health officers	Ongoing	Open for business
Investigate and signpost business support and funding	Alex Clothier / Richard Wilson	On-going	Open for business
Work with Wild Purbeck and the LNP to build up business opportunities which enhance environmental quality.	Subject to new resource		
Supporting mentoring			
Using local contacts, encourage local business people to volunteer as Dornen mentors	Richard Wilson	On-going	Open for business
Raise awareness of Dornen with local businesses that may benefit			

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What	Who	When	Link to LEP priority?
Supporting development of workspace			
Work with Homes and Communities Agency to progress growing places fund bid to deliver incubation space at Dorset Green	Richard Wilson	July 2013	Infrastructure planning
Consider intervention to ensure that the employment potential of the Dorset Green site is realised in the light of reducing employment numbers and the blighting resulting from landowner aspirations for residential use of the majority of the site	Subject to new resource	By end 2017	
Continue to market vacant plots at Prospect Business Park and complete existing transactions	Richard Wilson / John Hart	By end Mar 2016	
Investigate options to relocate Swanage Depot to Prospect Business Park	Richard Wilson	By end Mar 2014	
Review employment allocation to ensure sufficient employment land allocated in the partial review of the Local Plan to include adequate rural workspace	Richard Wilson / Keith Childs	By end of 2013	
Work with Dorset Councils to establish employment needs and develop policies to improve provision in Purbeck through the Partial Review to the local plan	Steve Dring	By end 2017	
Maintain database of available business premises in Purbeck (jointly with Dorset County Council) and provide information from it to inward investors and other enquiries.	Richard Wilson	On-going	Open for business
Provide support to inward investors in relocating to Purbeck working jointly with UK Trade and Investment and the LEP	Alex Clothier /Richard Wilson	On-going	Open for business
Implementing Purbeck transport strategy			
Keep infrastructure plan up to date and ensure priority transport projects are implemented from CIL contributions	Steve Dring	On-going	Infrastructure planning
Prioritise junction improvements at Bakers Arms roundabout to relieve congestion and open up opportunities at Holton Heath for significant employment growth, Work with landowners and the LEP to secure additional funding recognising limitations on funding availability post CIL.	Subject to new resource	By end 2017	Infrastructure planning
Working jointly with the LEP			
Work with LEP to develop a destination management plan for a county wide Destination Management Organisation to manage tourism in a collaborative and cost effective way	Holly Lagden	By end 2014	Sector specific collaboration

Economic Development Strategy 2013 – 2027 – key economic priorities

