

Scale of the challenge...

The commercial and industrial sector is a significant contributor to climate change and accounts for just under a quarter of the county's emissions.

In order to transition to net-zero we will need to create a **zero-carbon economy** here in Dorset. This means that emissions from the county's commercial & industrial sector, which in 2017 amounted to **433 kilotons of CO₂e**, will need to be eliminated whilst making sure the county's economy still thrives.

To do this Dorset businesses will need to reduce their energy consumption and increase their self-supply of renewable energy. All commercial buildings will need to become net-zero, all water use will need to be reduced, and all emissions from travel will need to decrease.





Businesses will also have their role to play in the development of a [circular economy in Dorset](#), by making products and materials more efficiently. This will also require making sure that waste is designed out and re-use is designed in.

Support and growth for Dorset's low-carbon sector will be essential. It is predicted that the low carbon economy has the potential to grow by 11% a year in the lead up to 2030, four times faster than the rest of the economy. The national drive to reduce emissions offers a significant economic opportunity for the development of low-carbon goods and services, and Dorset will need to take full advantage of it.

Furthermore, whilst economic activities have an impact on climate change, it also works the other way around. Climate change poses a

significant threat to the economy, particularly through flooding and disruption of supply chains and infrastructure. Businesses in Dorset will need to be fully supported to become more resilient to these risks.

Dorset's progress so far...

-  Dorset's commercial and industrial emissions decreased by 46% between 2005 and 2017, mostly due to grid decarbonisation
-  Since 2017 Dorset Council's **Low Carbon Dorset** programme has supported 80 businesses to invest over £4.8m in low-carbon projects, saving 3,719 tCO₂e a year & increasing renewable energy capacity by 3.4 MW_p.
-  Dorset LEP's vision for economy already outlines objectives to deliver the UK Government's 'Clean Growth Grand Challenge'
-  Dorset Innovation Park developments offers local firms the chance to expand and relocate in Dorset









Hear more about Dorset's economy and the challenges and opportunities we are facing from [Dorset Council's Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager...](#)







Get a full overview of Dorset's economy and the businesses operating within it in Dorset Council's **Local Economic Assessment...**

Key Issues...











Nationally

-  **Low carbon & renewable energy economy (LCREE) is growing slowly** and has been affected over recent years by changing legislation and incentive schemes
-  **Business investment models often seek short term return on investment** making many carbon-reduction activities cost prohibitive due to long ROIs
-  **Lack of understanding and awareness of low-carbon options and technologies** amongst businesses & they often don't have resource to investigate and implement them
-  **Additional Business Rates levy introduced by government increases business rate for those that install renewable energy on their premises** – this acts as a significant barrier to investment
-  **Circular economy at early stages of development** and is heavily influenced by national policy and regulation
-  **Many businesses operate from leased buildings**, where there is often not a benefit to landlords to invest in building fabric or renewable energy technologies

In Dorset

-  **Low Carbon Dorset (DC's current business support programme) set to finish in 2021** if additional funds are not secured
-  **Dorset's lack of transport infrastructure, location, and protected high quality landscape** lends itself to high value low-volume manufacture and service industries
-  **Dorset's protected landscape designations** add to the regulatory issues involved in installing renewable energy
-  **Dorset's predominantly rural nature leads to extensive reliance on private transport** mainly cars

Key Opportunities...

-  **Increase in jobs & skill development opportunities within Low Carbon Renewable Energy Economy (LCREE)** needed to respond to the scale of action required
-  **Responding to climate emergency will open up / expand markets for Dorset businesses in the low carbon economy** and offer major opportunities for green economy growth
-  **Opportunity to scale up the successful Low Carbon Dorset programme** and use proven case studies of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to accelerate replication across county
-  **Opportunity to encourage low-carbon builds and renewable energy infrastructure at Dorset Innovation Park** as Dorset Council is both land owner of site and planning authority
-  **Dorset has a strong high-tech sector which can take advantage of clean growth** through diversification and skills
-  **Potential to attract more skilled, higher paid jobs and tackle social deprivation** through low-carbon sector growth
-  **Dorset Council can use its procurement function to prioritise social and environmental wellbeing** as well as economic value
-  **Dorset Broadband programme can help to strengthen Dorset's digital infrastructure** & enable development of innovative ICT solutions to reduce travel
-  **Opportunity to make sure tourism facilities are developed in areas accessible without the need for a car** through DC's planning function
-  **COVID 19 recovery programmes could lead to injections of finance, these could be invested in low-carbon technologies** for long-term business cost reduction and to support key sectors in Dorset

Areas for Action...

Dorset Council cannot singlehandedly eliminate the emissions from the county's economic activities, but it can work with partners, influence services, and develop existing programmes to drive the step-change needed to transition to a zero-carbon-economy in Dorset.

Direct

- Ensure Dorset Council procurement supports sustainable development by prioritising social & environmental wellbeing as well as economic value
- Build renewable energy infrastructure at Dorset Innovation Park

Indirect (through services)

- Support the expansion of the Dorset Innovation Park to become a centre of excellence in clean growth
- Support greater deployment and strengthen high-speed broadband and ICT infrastructure in the county through Dorset's Broadband programme. And enable businesses to increase home working and reduce travel
- Promote the low-carbon economy and encourage investment in green jobs and businesses in Dorset
- Support businesses to become more energy and resource efficient and to install renewable energy by working with partners to expand Low Carbon Dorset programme

Influence & Partnership

- Maximise opportunities for clean growth in Dorset by working with businesses & partners to put at centre of local economic development plans
- Support Dorset's strong high-tech sector to diversify & take advantage of growth in low carbon sector
- Work with partners to attract green sector businesses with highly skilled workforces to Dorset
- Help businesses be more resilient to climate change through our planning & flood risk management functions
- Work with the tourism sector to develop specific programmes of support for sustainable tourism & make Dorset a low-carbon tourism destination
- Use potential COVID-19 recovery funds to provide investment in low-carbon technologies for key sectors



Read full discussion paper on Economy

View detailed action plan

Case Study: Low Carbon Dorset

Low Carbon Dorset is a three-year programme of activities to help stimulate growth in Dorset's low carbon economy and reduce its carbon footprint. The programme offers free technical support and grant funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to businesses, public-sector and community organisations in Dorset.



The programme is led by Dorset Council and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Since its launch in 2019 the programme has given out 91 grants worth over £2m. And has provided free advice to over 100 Dorset based organisations. This support has helped save just under 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

The programme has recently submitted a bid for an additional £4.26m of funding from the ERDF which, if awarded, will bring Low Carbon Dorset's value to £14.9m. If successful in this bid the programme will be extended until June 2023.

Read more on the [Low Carbon Dorset website](#).

Case Study: English Oak Vineyard

In 2019, **English Oak Vineyard** were crowned Dorset Environmental Business Of The Year. This award recognises businesses who are leading the way to improve their environmental performance and value Dorset's natural assets in their operations.

English Oak Vineyard won the award as a result of their sustainable approach to winemaking. This was demonstrated through their efforts to drastically reduce their carbon footprint and their focus on environmental protection.



As an organisation they actively market to local businesses in order to reduce the miles their products travel. Their electricity is generated by on-site solar panels which also charge their 100% electric vehicle fleet. The vineyard also uses

'recycle spraying' equipment and sources organic feeds to ensure responsible vineyard management. In addition all their water is sourced from an on-site well.

Care of wildlife is also a key focus for the vineyard with beehives dotted around the site, and their minimal fencing allows wildlife to roam freely amongst the rows of vines.