

Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) – right time, right place.

Our preferred geography for devolution is the area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, which best recognises the urban nature of our economic geography, and provides the opportunity for the businesses, people and places within it to achieve their enormous potential.

The BCP area is home to 404,100 people, but over 500,000 live in the immediate urban hinterland and are dependent on the BCP economy. The area has significant economic assets rivalling many much larger city regions, including:

- 3 universities & 1 FE college
- Bournemouth International Airport
- Port of Poole (commercial and leisure operations)
- 14 miles of south-facing beach and seafront
- 19% of the area is in a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- AFC Bournemouth, a Premier League football club
- Bournemouth International Convention Centre
- 6 Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations.

There are over 15,375 businesses, providing 189,175 jobs, contributing £12.35bn in GVA, focussing on a range of strong key sectors including:

- Advanced engineering & manufacturing (aeronautics and marine),
- Culture, creative and digital technology
- Financial services, fintech & insurance
- Health, wellbeing & social care and
- Tourism, retail & hospitality.

This depth and variation ensure economic resilience as well as future growth potential.

BCP Council, formed in 2019 following the most complex local government reorganisation in four decades, provides a single focus that directly reflects the economic geography of the area and the opportunities ahead.

We are fortunate that BCP is already a place where people want to live, work, study, and visit, however it faces challenges that impact productivity levels and the ability to grow. We chose this geography because it will enable us to focus powers and investment to:

- Ensure businesses have access to the skilled talent they need to grow
- Ensure our communities have access to good employment opportunities
- Address our housing pressures
- Improve local and regional transport
- Meet our net-zero ambitions and transition to a green economy
- Deliver investment, drive productivity
- Create an even more inclusive, vibrant, and sustainable economy.

To achieve these objectives, we will need to work with others; with Dorset and Wiltshire Councils on road improvements to and from the M4 and M5, with Hampshire and Surrey Councils to improve rail times and road links to and from London and with the Great South West to improve regional links to the west. Devolution on a BCP basis will enable us to work smarter and faster across these regions and partners.

We are extremely ambitious for the future of our area and recognise that it is the right time to grasp this opportunity. The BCP area is blessed with economic assets within a clearly defined economic area. With devolved powers we can work even more closely with our communities to improve productivity and seize the enormous potential to grow.