



**BUSINESS GROWTH DORSET –  
Scale-Up Growth  
Invitation to Quote**

April 2025

## 1.0 Background

Dorset Council have been awarded funding from Department for Business & Trade to deliver the pan-Dorset Growth Hub for the financial year 2025 – 2026. The official, pan-Dorset Growth Hub is now branded as Business Growth Dorset.

Business Growth Dorset is part of the network of 41 Growth Hubs across England that exists to support and improve business performance, enabling businesses to build their capacity and capability. Business Growth Dorset is supported and managed by Dorset Council with core funding from Government and delivers services across the County including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Each Growth Hub sits at the centre of the local business support ecosystem, bringing together the best of public, private, third sector and university support, providing a single 'go to' contact point for businesses of any size or any sector to access advice and support.

Dorset Council's decision to provide business support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on a growth programme aimed at encouraging innovation and diversification aligns with several strategic objectives and broader goals. Here are the key reasons and how they meet Dorset Council's objectives:

### Economic Growth and Resilience

- **Boosting Local Economy:** SMEs are crucial to the local economy, contributing significantly to employment and economic output. By supporting their growth through innovation and diversification, Dorset Council can stimulate economic activity, create jobs, and enhance the overall economic resilience of the region.
- **Enhancing Resilience:** Encouraging SMEs to innovate and diversify helps them become more adaptable to market changes and economic fluctuations, ensuring they remain competitive and resilient in the face of challenges.

### Innovation and Competitiveness

- **Driving Innovation:** Innovation is a key driver of competitiveness. By providing support for R&D, new product development, and the adoption of advanced technologies, Dorset Council can help SMEs stay ahead of the curve, fostering a culture of innovation that benefits the entire region.
- **Improving Productivity:** Innovation often leads to improved processes and efficiencies. Supporting SMEs in adopting new technologies and innovative practices can enhance productivity, reduce costs, and increase profitability.

### Alignment with Government Initiatives

- **Growth Hub Funding:** The support aligns with the Department for Business & Trade's Growth Hub funding requirements, which emphasise effective business support services to drive local economic growth. By leveraging these funds, Dorset Council can maximise the impact of its support programmes.
- **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs):** Integrating LEP functions into local authorities underscores the importance of strategic economic planning and business representation. Providing support to SMEs aligns with these objectives and leverages available funding to maximise impact.



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### Sustainability and Environmental Goals

- **Promoting Sustainability:** Innovation and diversification can lead to more sustainable business practices. By encouraging SMEs to adopt green technologies and sustainable practices, Dorset Council can contribute to broader environmental objectives such as tackling climate change and reducing waste.
- **Supporting Council Plan Objectives:** The initiative aligns with the Council Plan's goals of promoting economic growth, innovation, and sustainability, ensuring that business support efforts contribute to the region's long-term strategic vision.

### Community and Social Impact

- **Strengthening Communities:** Thriving SMEs contribute to vibrant local communities by providing employment, supporting local supply chains, and fostering a sense of community pride and engagement.
- **Reducing Inequality:** Access to support can help level the playing field for smaller businesses, ensuring they have the resources needed to compete with larger firms and contribute to economic equality.

### Diversification into New Sectors and Supply Chains

- **Exploring New Markets:** Diversification helps SMEs explore new markets and opportunities, reducing dependency on a single sector and spreading risk. This can lead to increased revenue streams and business stability.
- **Supply Chain Development:** Supporting SMEs in integrating smart technologies into supply chain management can improve resilience, efficiency, and open new market opportunities, further enhancing their competitiveness.

By providing targeted business support to SMEs, Dorset Council can drive sustainable economic growth, foster innovation, and enhance the resilience and competitiveness of the local business ecosystem. This approach not only benefits the SMEs but also contributes to the broader economic and strategic objectives of the region.

## 2.0 Specification

Specific service deliverables to be provided by Scale-Up Growth contract for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026:

### Programme Overview

This **Scale-Up - Growth** strand will be responsive and adaptable to individual business needs, offering both **one-to-one support** and **one-to-many interventions**. The programme will incorporate the provision of information and guidance of the following to businesses:

- **Digital transformation**, including AI and automation, digital marketing, productivity tools, and data security.
- **Business innovation**, supporting development of new or improved products, services, systems, and processes.



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- **Diversification**, helping businesses identify opportunities in new sectors and supply chains.
- **Sustainability and ESG**, supporting environmentally and socially responsible growth through tech and innovation.

This programme targets business leaders and senior managers in SMEs across all growth sectors, equipping them with tools and strategic insights to drive growth and long-term success.

### Scope of Delivery

The successful provider will be expected to design and deliver a **comprehensive** and **engaging** programme, including:

#### 1. One-to-One Support and Advice

- Bespoke support tailored to individual business needs.
- Strategic guidance in digital transformation, innovation planning, and diversification into new markets.
- Support duration ranging from **1 to 12 hours** per business.
- Onward referrals, where appropriate for specialist advice on the following:
  - Mentoring
  - Skills & Training
  - Finance & Funding
  - Innovation/R&D
  - Export support
  - Import support
  - Investment support
  - Net Zero

#### 2. One-to-Many Interventions

- **Workshops, webinars, and training** on:
  - AI adoption and automation best practices
  - Business innovation strategies
  - Digital marketing, cybersecurity, and compliance
  - Diversification and supply chain development
- **Networking events, expert panels, and pop-up sessions** to promote collaboration.
- Support engagements ranging from **1 to 12 hours** per business.
- Onward **referrals**, where appropriate for specialist advice on the following:
  - Mentoring
  - Skills & Training
  - Finance & Funding
  - Innovation/R&D
  - Export support
  - Import support



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Invitation to Quote**

April 2025

- Investment support
- Net Zero

**3. Promotion and Outreach**

- Develop and execute a robust marketing strategy to raise awareness of the programme across all business sectors.
- Leverage partnerships with business networks, trade bodies, and local stakeholders to maximise engagement.
- Use diverse communication channels, including digital marketing, newsletters, and in-person outreach.

**4. Reporting and Evaluation**

- Maintain accurate and detailed records of support provided, outcomes achieved, and feedback collected.
- Submit reports in a **specified format**, demonstrating the programme's impact, including key performance metrics and qualitative insights.
- Highlight success stories through the provision of case studies and recommend areas for improvement.



**BUSINESS GROWTH DORSET –  
Scale-Up Growth  
Invitation to Quote**

April 2025

**3.0 Target Outputs and outcomes**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Target Output</b>	<b>Number / Measure</b>	<b>Target Outcome</b>	<b>Number / Measure</b>
<b>Business Growth Dorset</b>  <b>Scale-Up Growth</b>	Light touch (<1 hour)	N/A	Number of SMEs innovating a product or service	As appropriate, no minimum target
	Medium intensity (1-12 hours)	70	Number of SMEs adopting new digital technology	As appropriate, no minimum target
	High intensity (12+ hours)	30	Number of SMEs diversifying into a new sector / supply chain	As appropriate, no minimum target
			Number of case studies	4
			Number and type of onward referrals for each SME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Skills &amp; Training</li> <li>• Finance &amp; Funding</li> <li>• Innovation/R&amp;D</li> <li>• Export support</li> <li>• Import support</li> <li>• Investment support</li> <li>• Net Zero</li> </ul>	As appropriate, no minimum target



**BUSINESS GROWTH DORSET –  
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Invitation to Quote**

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## 4.0 Essential Skills and Experience

Organisations interested in tendering for this contract must demonstrate:

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- Successful service delivery of digital transformation, innovation and diversification support to SMEs.
- Subject-matter expertise across AI, automation, innovation management and supply chain development.
- The ability to provide high-quality advisory services tailored to SMEs.
- Strong promotional and communication capabilities to ensure the programme's reach.
- Capacity to deliver a high-impact programme across Dorset.

## 5.0 Budget

The total budget for this work is up to £30,000 to include all fees, associated costs and expenses. All rates charged shall be fully inclusive of all expenses including but not limited to travelling/subsistence, expenses and disbursements. This excludes VAT.

## 6.0 Quotation

Please complete the "proposed delivery" and "price" columns and return via email to [businessgrowth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrowth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by **5pm on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025**. Brief responses are encouraged. Please put "proposed delivery" information in a separate document if this is more appropriate.

Specification item	Proposed delivery	Price (£)
2.1	<p><b>Explain how you will deliver the following:</b></p> <p><b>One-to-One Support and Advice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bespoke support tailored to individual business needs.</li><li>• Strategic guidance in digital transformation, innovation planning, and diversification into new markets.</li><li>• Support duration ranging from 1 to 12 hours per business.</li><li>• Onward referrals, where appropriate for specialist advice</li></ul>	Specify a total price for the whole contract
2.2	<p><b>Explain how you will deliver the following:</b></p> <p><b>One-to-Many Interventions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshops, webinars, and training on:</li></ul>	Specify a total price for the whole contract

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AI adoption and automation best practices</li> <li>○ Business innovation strategies</li> <li>○ Digital marketing, cybersecurity, and compliance</li> <li>○ Diversification and supply chain development</li> <li>• Networking events, expert panels, and pop-up sessions to promote collaboration.</li> <li>• Support engagements ranging from <b>1 to 12 hours</b> per business.</li> <li>• Onward <b>referrals</b>, where appropriate for specialist advice</li> </ul>	
2.3	<p><b>Explain your approach to the following:</b></p> <p><b>Promotion and Outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and execute a robust marketing strategy to raise awareness of the programme across all business sectors.</li> <li>• Leverage partnerships with business networks, trade bodies, and local stakeholders to maximise engagement.</li> <li>• Use diverse communication channels, including digital marketing, newsletters, and in-person outreach.</li> </ul>	Specify a total price for the whole contract
2.4	<p><b>Explain your approach to the following:</b></p> <p><b>Reporting and Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain accurate and detailed records of support provided, outcomes achieved, and feedback collected.</li> <li>• Submit reports in a <b>specified format</b>, demonstrating the programme's impact, including key performance metrics and qualitative insights.</li> <li>• Highlight success stories through the provision of case studies and recommend areas for improvement.</li> </ul>	Specify a total price for the whole contract
4.0	<p><b>Outline how your organisation demonstrates the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful service delivery of digital transformation, innovation and diversification support to SMEs.</li> <li>• Subject-matter expertise across AI, automation, innovation management and supply chain development.</li> </ul>	Specify a total price for the whole contract



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ability to provide high-quality advisory services tailored to SMEs.</li><li>• Strong promotional and communication capabilities to ensure the programme's reach.</li><li>• Capacity to deliver a high-impact programme across Dorset.</li></ul>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Budget</b>	

### 7.0 Result

Dorset Council aims to notify the successful bidder by midday on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

### 8.0 Queries

For any queries please email [businessgrowth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrowth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025, any responses will be anonymised and sent to all parties invited to quote.