



The importance of local leadership: experience from Dorset

Steven Ford – Dorset Council

APSE Big Energy Summit | 24 February 2026

Climate Change | **Carbon Neutral Dorset**

Biodiversity Loss | **Nature Positive Dorset**

Adaptation | **Resilient Dorset**



Miliband's heat pump rollout costs taxpayers nearly £700m a year

Blair think tank says ditch Miliband's clean power plans now or risk higher bills

Labour's Net Zero mission tipped to ramp up tenants' bills as Ed Miliband launches £10billion energy efficiency crackdown on rental homes

m+ **£500 a YEAR:** That is how much rushing to Net Zero by 2050 could cost you

m+ **EXCLUSIVE** The staggering cost of Ed Miliband's Net Zero drive finally revealed: **£4.5 TRILLION...** that's more than the UK's entire GDP

m+ Wind farms are driving **YOUR** electricity bills up, admits Ofgem as prices go up by **DOUBLE** expected amount amid Ed Miliband's green drive

Miliband's net zero zealotry will be Labour's downfall

The Energy Secretary's clean power targets are total fantasy that will leave voters poorer

Extreme weather 'becoming the norm' - as minister warns UK's way of life 'under threat'

UK rail faces fight to stay on track as climate crisis erodes routes

Climate change causing Britain to shrink with some coastal communities condemned to be swallowed by the sea

Area burned by UK wildfires in 2025 already at annual record

Climate change hitting British farmers' bottom lines, survey finds

Homes flooded after months' worth of rain falls in two hours

UK farmers lost £1bn in arable income after extreme wet weather, data show

Climate change is already forcing millions of people to migrate - and it will only get worse

Food insecurity rising in UK because of climate breakdown, Defra report finds

Climate change poses growing threat to UK economy, says BoE official

UK farmers lose £800m after heat and drought cause one of worst harvests on record

Farmers suffer second-worst harvest on record

Climate change blamed as low output adds to sector's struggles with rising costs and tax changes

UK heatwave: Thousands suffer power cuts after equipment overheats

UK schools and offices not equipped for impact of global heating, report warns

Overheated homes: why UK housing is dangerously unprepared for impact of climate crisis

Nearly 10,000 care homes in extreme heat danger zones

New report reveals drought is now considered the biggest risk to UK nature reserves

Penguins and Clubs can no longer be called 'chocolate' - and McVitie's has had to change iconic slogan



If you like a lot of chocolate on your biscuit, there's bad news: biscuit makers have been turning to a "chocolate flavour coating" to dodge rising cocoa prices.

The likes of Club and Penguin reduced the amount of cocoa in their recipes earlier this year to the point that they can no longer be described as chocolate biscuits, it has now emerged.

Why have cocoa prices soared?

Cocoa prices have soared for several years now after poor harvests in West Africa, which accounts for approximately 70% of global cocoa production.

We should be clear and confident...

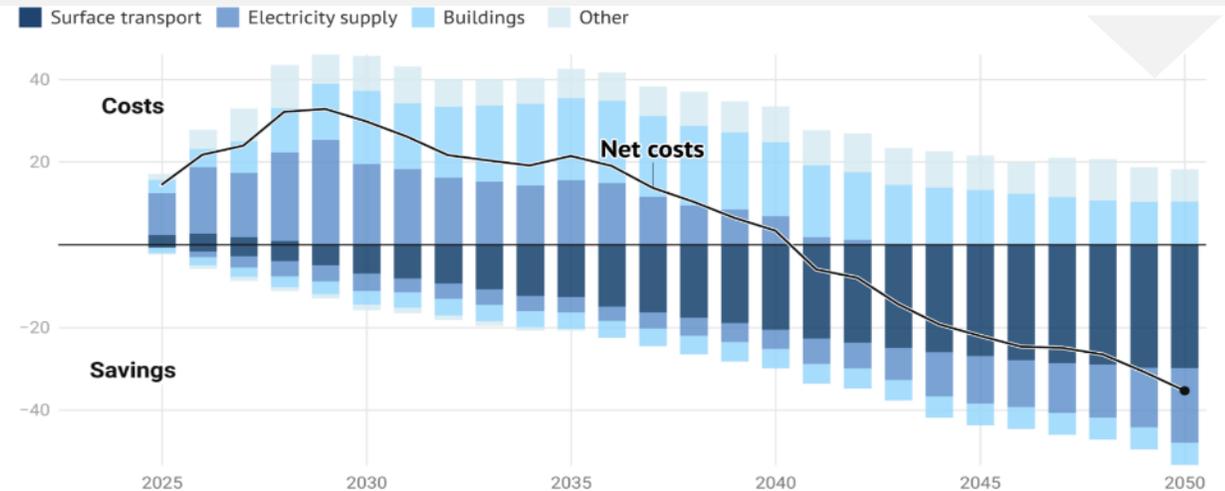
- Clean energy and electrification is a **strategy for getting bills down.**
- Clean energy and electrification is a **strategy for economic development:** driving new jobs, skills and investments, and – by cutting people's bills – giving them more money to spend locally, rather than chucking cash at foreign energy producers.

Reducing emissions will get bills down, saving household bills £1,400/yr by 2040 alone

- The CCC (for CB7) puts the average annual net cost at £108bn over 25 years – or £4bn/yr (<0.2% of GDP), most of which will come from the private sector.
- They estimate it will cut household energy and motoring bills by **£1,400**
- This **excludes the cost of climate damages** – with the OBR describing unmitigated climate change as having ‘catastrophic economic and fiscal consequences’
- And it excludes wider benefits – and CCC estimates that the health benefits alone could be worth between **2-8bn/yr.**

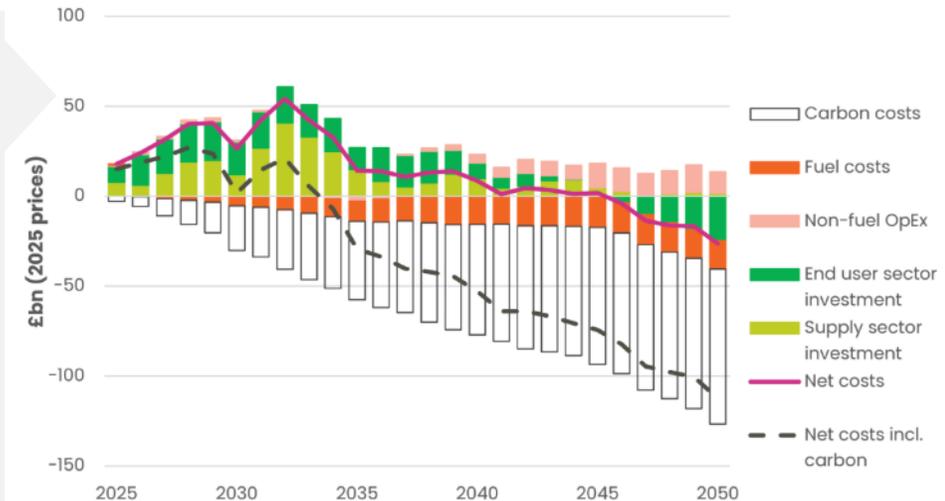
The investment yields significant savings due to the greater efficiency of clean energy, EVs and heat pumps.

Annual capital and operating expenditures 2025-2050, £bn
Source: CCC/CarbonBrief



NESO's preferred net zero pathway for the grid is ~36bn/yr cheaper than inaction

(Source: NESO)



Clean energy will get bills down by cutting our dependence on imported energy and cutting our vulnerability to global energy markets.

- Last year **under half** our electricity came from imports (cf. to 65% a decade earlier).
- **Wholesale prices** would have been **46% higher** without windfarms in 2025.
- Clean power in the latest auction (AR7) was about **half as cheap** as new gas.



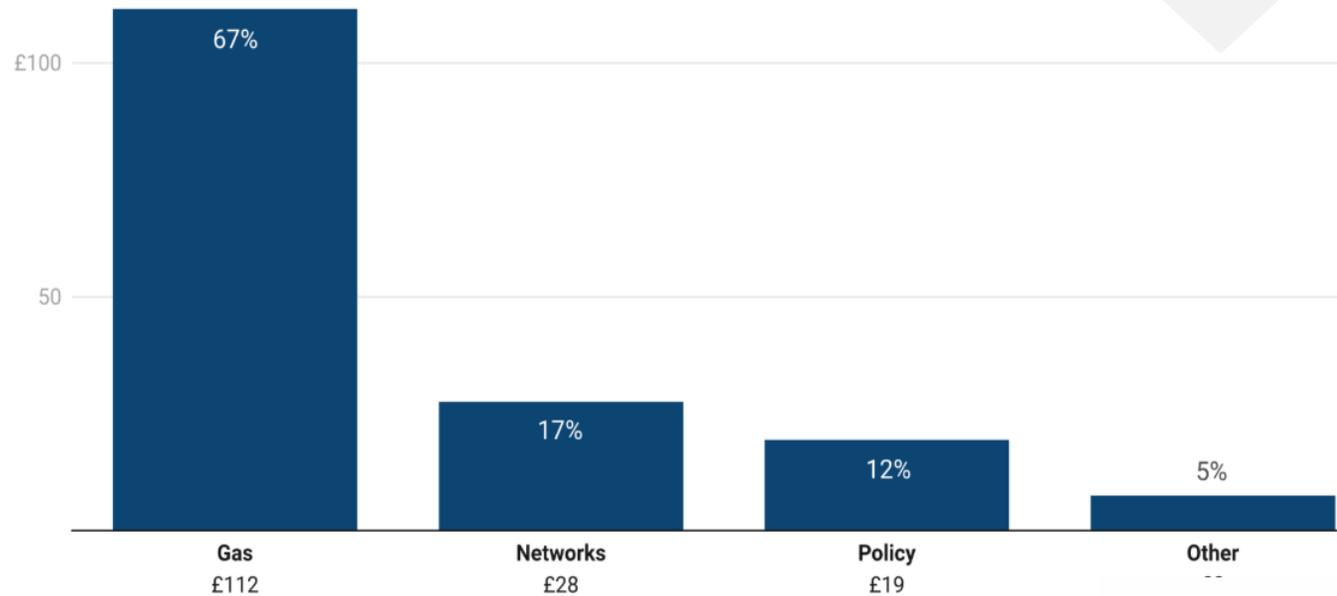
Grid upgrade costs to 2031 are **~£2.50 per month**



Government is cutting **£154/yr** from bills through levy changes

Expensive gas is the biggest driver of high electricity bills

Contributions to bill rises Apr/Sep 2011 to Apr/Sep 2025
Source: CarbonBrief/UKERC



Whilst offshore wind from AR7 is likely to cut consumer costs by £1bn by 2035

(Source: Aurora)



Household retrofit will get bills down – and the *Warm Homes Plan* will spread the benefits of clean energy to households less able to afford it.

£15bn of grants and loans for ≥5m households, including...

- £5bn of grants for low-income homes
- £2.7bn for Boiler Upgrade Scheme and loans for able-to-pay
- £1.1bn for heat networks



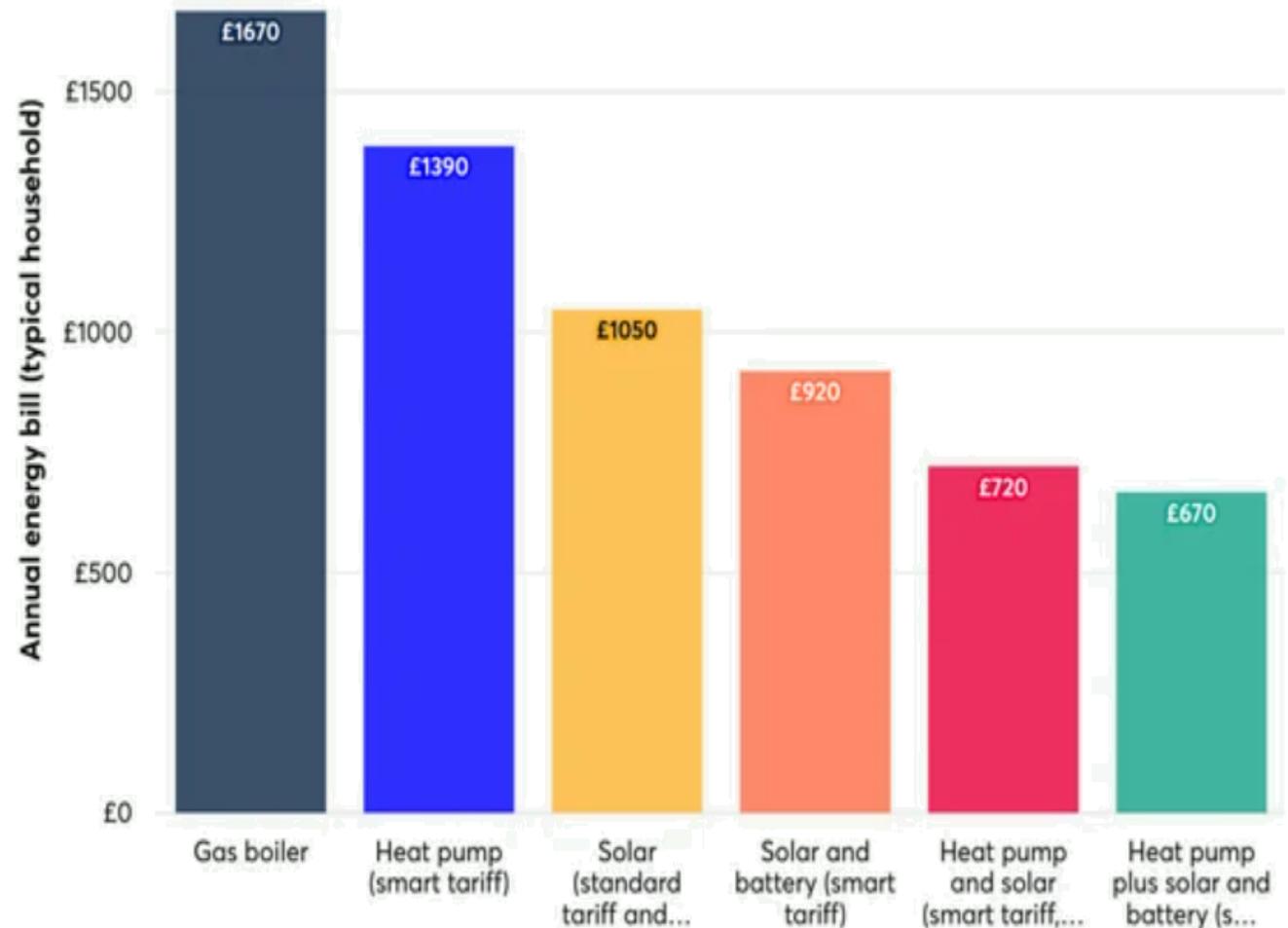
Triple rooftop solar to 4.6m homes by 2030



450k heat pumps (250k retrofitted) by 2030

Households could save £1k by switching to clean energy from gas boilers

Annual energy bill for a typical household, April 2026
Source: Nesta



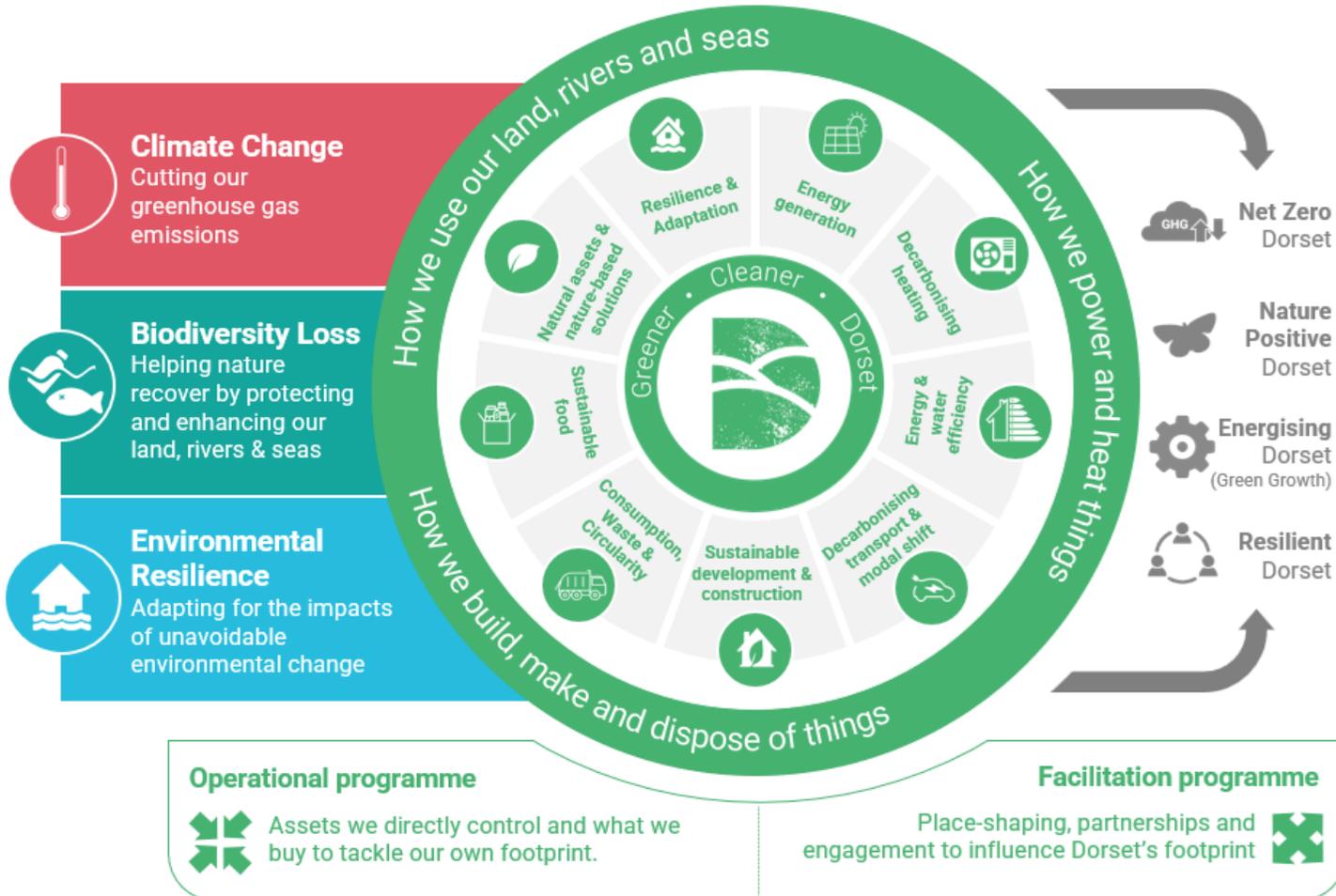
Our task is to **localise the benefits through climate leadership and demonstration – to show, not just tell** – through practical delivery rooted and anchored in our local communities.

To show that clean energy and electrification is a way of shifting from imported energy, and a chance to localise the benefits of homegrown energy.

Dorset's Climate Strategy (2023)

Council Plan targets (2024)

Our vision is for a **carbon neutral, nature positive and resilient Dorset** achieved through a **clean, green and fair transition**, and that generates prosperous, stronger and healthier communities.



Net Zero targets brought forward by 5 years: 2035 for council, 2045 for county



Transition all our small **vehicles** to electric by 2030, and all larger vehicles to low emission fuels by 2026



Add another 5MW of **solar PV** to our estate by 2030



Switch all council oil-fired **heating** to non-fossil fuel alternatives by 2028



Cut emissions from staff **business travel** by at least 25% by 2029



Develop **adaptation plans** for our services by March 2026



A 65% **recycling and composting** rate by 2035



Manage 80% of our **urban verges** for nature by 2030 (50% now)



70% of our **county farms** estate using sustainable farming practices by 2030

GHG Net Zero Dorset

Nature Positive Dorset

Energising Dorset (Green Growth)

Resilient Dorset

Supporting suite of strategies/plans



Dorset Council

Council Plan 2024-2029

Icons: Home, Growth, People, Environment



Energising Dorset
Economic Prospectus - Growth Strategy
2025 - 2030



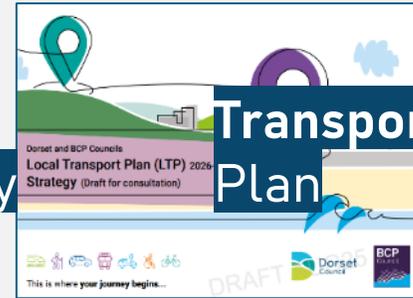
Workplace Travel Plan



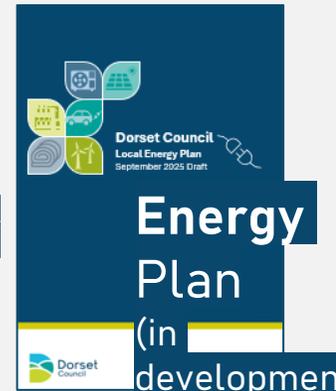
Waste Strategy



Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy 2025
Consultation draft



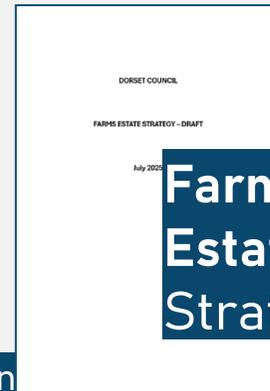
Dorset and BCP Councils Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2026 Strategy (Draft for consultation)



Dorset Council Local Energy Plan
September 2023 Draft



Planning for climate change
Interim guidance and position statement
Consultation April 2023



Farms Estate Strategy - Draft



Dorset Council Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2025-2027



Decision-making wheel

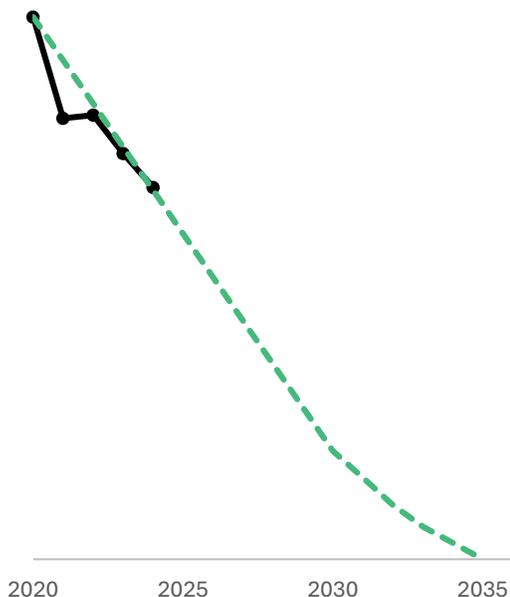
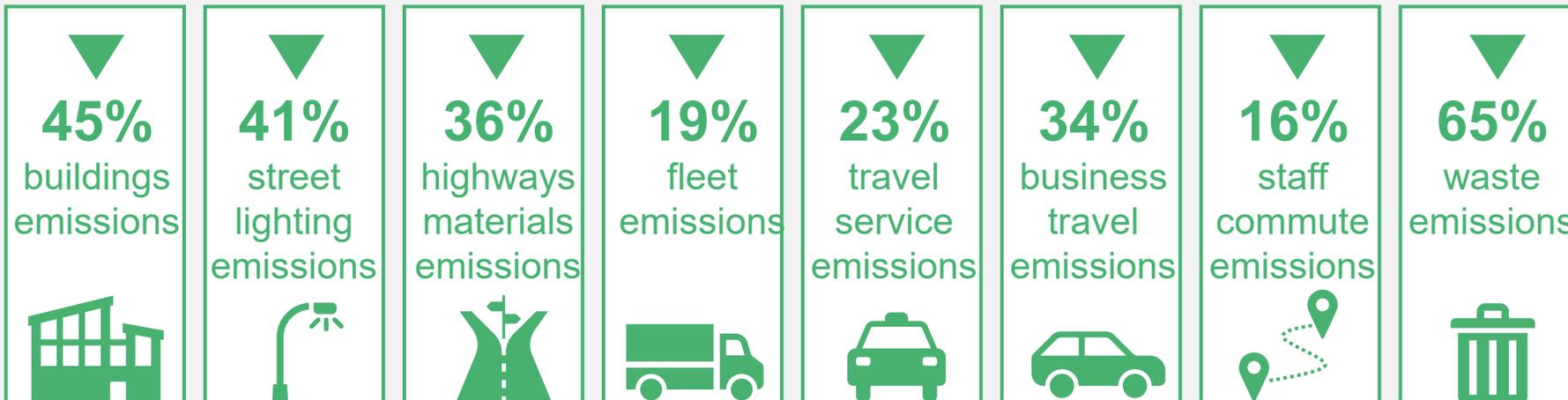
Operational Programme



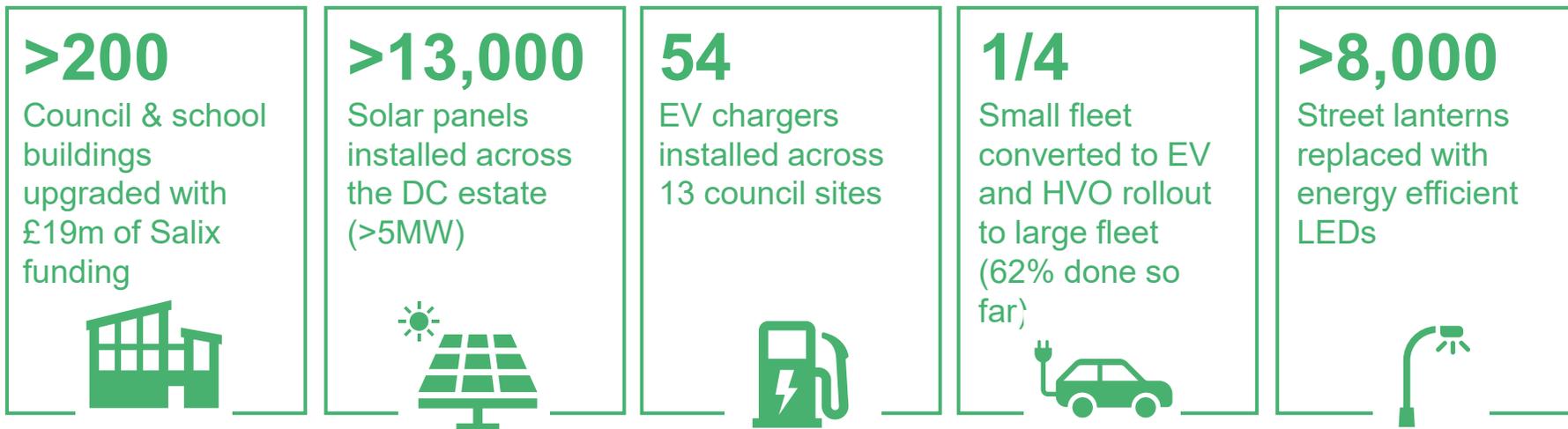
▼ **31%**

**Council emissions from
2019/20 to 2024/25**

(HVO should make this ~40% this year)



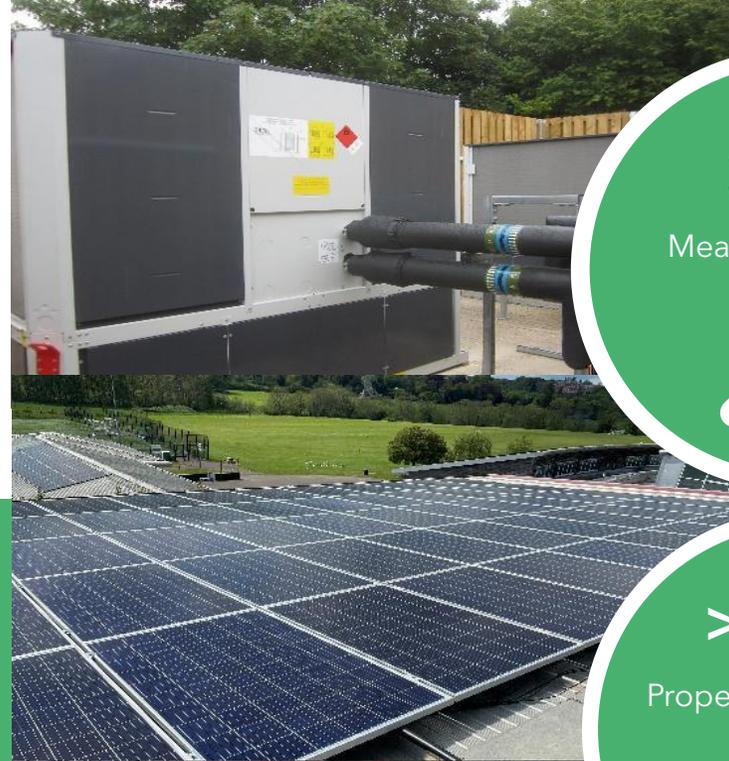
Key projects & programmes



Public sector Retrofit programme



An £18.2m Salix/PSDS programme from 2021 to retrofit our public sector estate



Next steps...

46 further solar PV schemes developed to outline design stage and **42** assessed as deliverable (**2.2MW**)

~**£2.5m** estimated total cost

36 have secured grid connections so far

£700k approved in January to procure the next phase



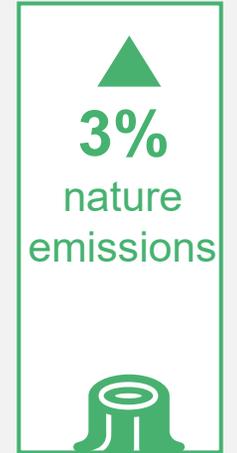
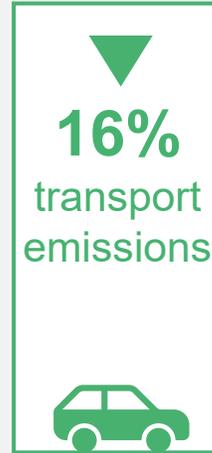
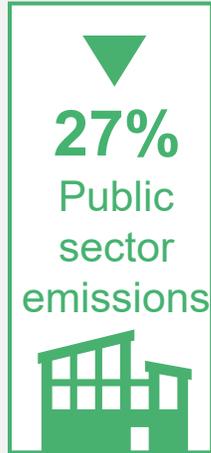
...plus £2m invested in electrical infrastructure

Facilitation Programme

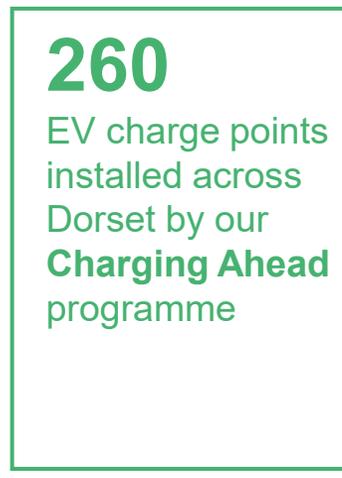
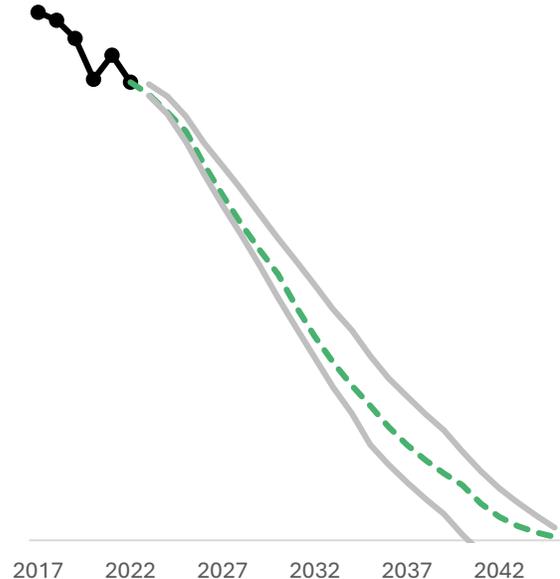


▼ **19%**

County emissions from
2017 to 2023



Key projects & programmes



Low Carbon DORSET



Helping reduce Dorset's footprint

Supporting local business and
community organisations with...



**Free technical
advice**



Grants



**Sharing best
practice**

 **Visit**

lowcarbondorset.org.uk



Since 2017...

10,000
Tonnes of
CO₂e/yr saved



1,153
EOIs received



814
Organisations
supported



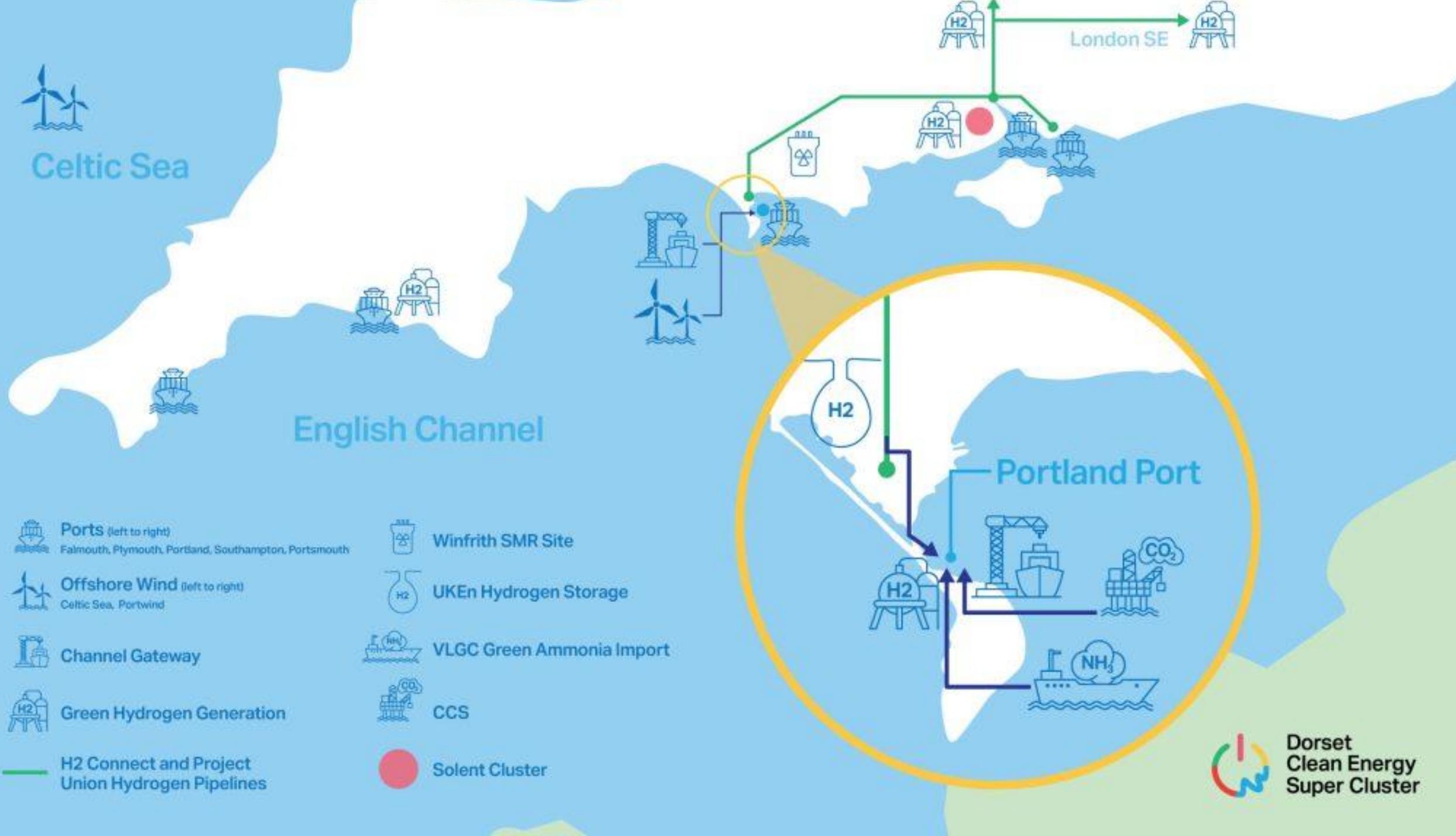
£22.1m
Total
investment
including
match

16.5MW
of renewable energy
already installed



£8.8M
in grants
awarded





Healthy Homes Dorset

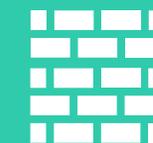
Making homes healthier, cheaper to run, and lower carbon



>1,100
Properties insulated

>£1m
saved on energy bills

>4,200
tonnes of CO₂ saved over the lifetime of measures installed in 2023-24 alone



>1,300
Insulation measures installed since 2021



4,900
Requests for advice by phone or online for HHD and LEAP in 2023-24 alone



3,000
Initial HHD & LEAP home visits since 2021



Free impartial expert advice for all residents



Eligibility-based insulation funding



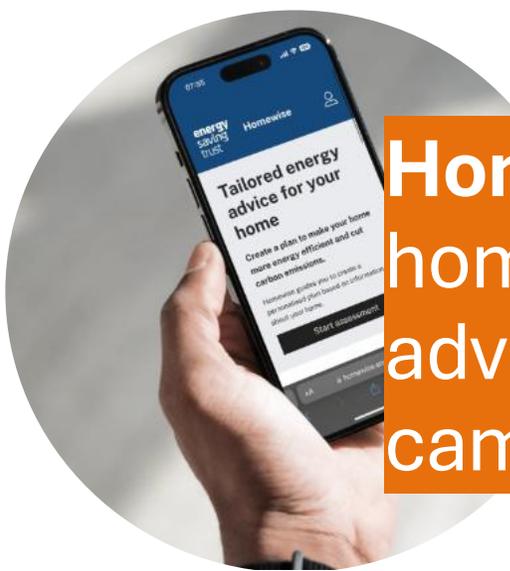
HUG2 off-gas, low-income EPC D-G delivery



Plus **Home Improvement and Energy Efficiency Loans** in Dorset in partnership with...



Visit healthyhomesdorset.org.uk or dorset-hug.co.uk



Homewise home energy advice tool and campaign



We were aiming for 1000 interactions over full year, but already since launch in Jan...



15,000

Viewed campaign videos



1,000

Visited our webpage



917

People have used the tool



544

Have done a full plan



Visit

dorset.homewise.energy



Access to free retrofit advice



Tailored recommendations



Bespoke calls to action



Insight and evaluation metrics



switch together.



Group buying low carbon tech at a reduced price with trusted installers.



Reverse auction to get the best price and avoid residents effort researching and negotiating.



Vetted suppliers and agreement on fair terms upfront to provide quality assurance and no hidden fees.



Expert support, with a personalised detailed offer based on your home.



Dorset is participating in Scheme 4 (Autumn 2025 registration, mid 2026 installation).

We've had a very good response rate from residents so far...



1,609 EOIs

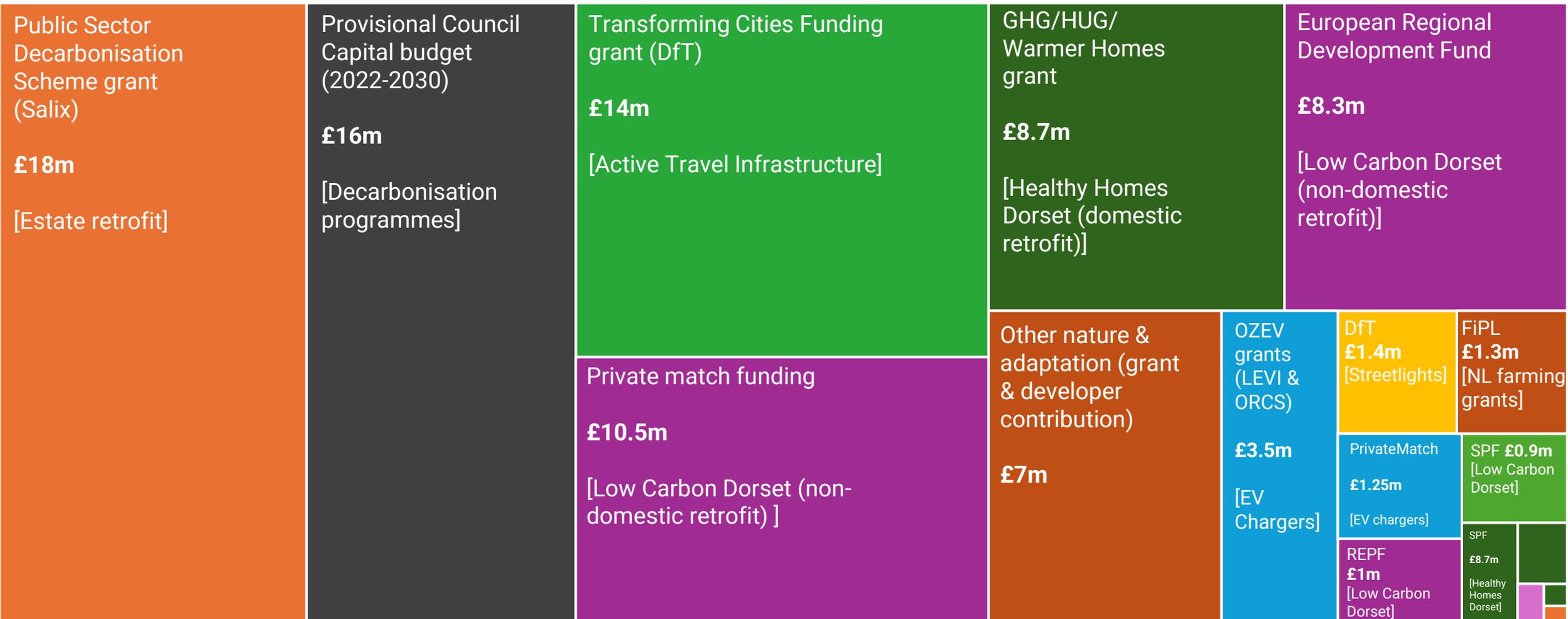


321 signups



36 installations completed so far (all due May/June)

Funding (~£93m)



Also now exploring:

Renewables income (SEGs)
(existing 5MW, est ~£40-200k/yr)

PPAs

Climate bonds

~£0.5m

Innovate UK Net Zero Living Fund
[Procurement toolkit]

SW Net Zero Hub
[Estate retrofit]

Public Health
[Healthy Homes Dorset (domestic retrofit)]

COMF grant
[Healthy Homes Dorset (domestic retrofit)]

“ The proposals to invest 700k in additional solar PV across our estate and 1.3m pounds in replacing obsolete streetlights with LEDs directly accelerate our decarbonization pathway, cutting emissions, reducing energy, and building a resilient modern public estate.

These projects are not just technical upgrades. They are enablers of a more sustainable Dorset, supporting cleaner, safer streets and long-term savings that protect frontline services. This is climate leadership in practice ”

Cllr Nick Ireland
Leader, Dorset Council



DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker, Summer 2025 (Published 28/10/25)

Figure 2.1: Whether support use of renewable energy (% based on all people), Autumn 2021 to Summer 2025

