

Annex D: Section 151/73 Assurance Statement

The Section 151/73 Officer should here provide a report to the Annual Performance Review on their work for the LEP over the last twelve months and their opinion with a specific requirement to identify any issues of concern on governance and transparency. In particular, you should focus on any particular issued raised in Annex A. **(max 500 words)**

Dorset County Council is the Accountable Body for Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) and manages the day to day accounting activity of Dorset LEP including the Growth Deal, Growing Places Fund, Careers and Enterprise Company and Dorset Gateway. Dorset LEP and the Accountable Body have a Service Level Agreement in place until 31 March 2021 and this is subject to an annual review.

The Council's s151 officer or the Group Finance Manager attend all LEP board meetings. The Section 151 officer meets every two weeks with the Dorset LEP Director.

In Financial Year 2017/18 the Accountable Body received £15.8m on behalf of Dorset LEP for the delivery of the Growth Deal Programme. The Accountable Body plays an important role in Dorset LEP's due diligence process, with the s151 receiving all project business cases for review and comment prior to submission to the Dorset LEP Board. The Accountable Body also supported Dorset LEP by working with programme managers to ensure claims from delivery partners were correct and admissible so that payment could be made. 100% checks take place on projects under £1m and over £1m a 20% spot check is completed. Sign off of payments are then subject to a three stage authorisation process to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant before payments are certified. The s151 Officer / Group Finance Manager and LEP Director sign off on all Growth Deal payments.

The Accountable Body also performs an important function in the financial, legal and due diligence processes for the Growing Places Fund, liaises with Dorset LEP and applicants to ensure all necessary security and loan agreements are in place before loans are paid out. The Accountable Body ensures that interest payments and capital repayments are invoiced and paid on schedule. The Accountable Body attends the Growing Places Fund Steering Group to present finance reports and to inform due diligence processes ensuring compliance with government requirements.

The Accountable Body received £205,000 from BEIS for the Dorset Growth Hub/ Dorset Gateway during the year. Dorset LEP used a subcontractor to provide this work, so all invoices were compliance checked prior to payment. This grant was audited by an Independent Chartered Accountant and no areas of concern were raised.

The Accountable Body also received funding on behalf of Dorset LEP in respect of the Careers and Enterprise Company. All claims received from our sub-contractors were checked to ensure they met the conditions of the grant.

Dorset LEP is working with the Accountable Body together to deliver the Enterprise Zone at Dorset Innovation Park and has implemented a payment system for invoices relating to the delivery of the Implementation Plan.

Signed: 

Name: Richard Bates

Position: CFO

Date: 10 December 2018