



DORSET

Local Enterprise Partnership

**Section 151
Officer Assurance
Statement**

November 2017

The Section 151/73 Officer should here provide a report to the Annual Conversation 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.

Dorset County Council is the Accountable Body for Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) and manages the day to day activity of the LEP, Growth Deal, Growing Places, Careers and Enterprise Company and Growth Hub.

The Council's s151 officer or the Assistant Head of Finance attend all LEP board meetings and is in regular contact with the LEP Director.

In Financial Year 2016/17 the Accountable Body received £12.3m to deliver the Growth Deal Program. Whilst the LEP managed the projects, the Accountable Body needed to work with the partners to ensure the claim was correct so that payment could be made to them. Checks were undertaken on their claims for expenditure, ensuring that they were in line with the MoU and grant conditions before payments were authorised.

The Environment Directorate in DCC managed the day to day activities of the Growing Places Fund. The Accountable body liaised with them to ensure all necessary security and loan agreements were in place before the Accountable Body allocated the loans out. The team met with one loanee on a monthly basis where there was an area of concern but the company is now back on track. During the year three loans were issues to organisations and one loan was repaid back. The Accountable Body attended the Growing Places Steering Group when needed to present finance reports. The Accountable body also carry out financial checks on companies prior to the approval of Growing Places Fund loans.

The Accountable Body claimed £205,000 from BEIS for the Dorset Growth Hub during the year. DLEP used a subcontractor to provide this work, so all invoices were checked to make sure any payment to them was correct. This grant was audited by an Independent Chartered Accountant and no areas of concern were raised with the Accountable Body.

A new grant claim that the LEP received was in respect of the Careers and Enterprise Company. All claims received needed to be checked to ensure that the claim meet the conditions of the grant. This grant claim was also audited with no issues raised.

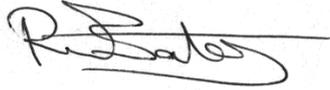
On 31st March 2017, Dorset County Council and Purbeck District Council purchased the land for Dorset Innovation Park – the Enterprise Zone. Dorset County Council is working closely with colleagues at Purbeck District Council and the LEP to ensure the objectives of the Enterprise Zone is met. Funding has now been agreed from the partners and the Growth Deal to provide the infrastructure investment required for the EZ, in addition to the investment in Ultrafast already agreed. These arrangements are managed through a management board and evidence a good relationship

between the partners involved.

I am pleased to report that there are no significant issues around governance or transparency.

Section 151 Sign-off:

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Bates', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Name: RICHARD BATES

Position: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (s151) – DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL

Date 24-11-17