



Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Governance Assurance Statement

January 2022



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Annual Performance Review, Annex C: Governance Assurance Statement

The LEP Chair and Chief Executive should here provide a brief formal assurance statement on the status of governance and transparency. This should include any overview and scrutiny function undertaken by the Accountable Body. This should be sent to the Assurance Team via localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk, copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead, by **14 January 2022**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **28 February 2022** and confirmation sent to the email address above.

(max 500 words)

Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is committed to working in an open and transparent manner and within a strong governance structure. We confirm that Dorset LEP adhered to the values and standards as set out in our Local Assurance Framework (LAF) which is reviewed annually and is hosted on our website. We operate in an open, transparent and accountable way and have a strong culture of continuous improvement. Over the last year, we have revised our policies, processes and website to ensure that they are accessible and easily located.

Governance and Decision Making

Our LAF and all Committee Terms of Reference clearly state all members shall abide by the 7 principles of public life.

Our Board is 80% private sector, 50% SMEs and we have utilised co-opted members to ensure we retain a third female representation Board in decision making. We have a robust governance structure aligned to our LAF that offers reassurance, transparency and scrutiny.

Our governance principles are to:

- Operate in accordance with the LAF
- Pursue activities which add value, and do not unnecessarily duplicate the work of the members of the partnership / roles of other organisations with similar aims
- Make effective use of the resources available to it and accounts appropriately for that use as set out in the Dorset LEP Accountable Body Agreement
- Be accountable for our performance, through clear decision-making by the Board, regular monitoring of progress against the Delivery Plan, annual performance review by government, relevant benchmarking against other LEPs
- Be transparent in our reporting to the public on our governance arrangements, decisions, and activities.

Transparency

Our Committee and Board agendas, papers and minutes are published on our webpages, along with Board / Committee member details and meeting dates.

Our policies are published clearly on our website and we continue to strengthen our processes with the annual review of all policies and processes including Decision Making and Due Diligence, Hospitality & Anti-Bribery, Conflicts of Interest, Communications etc.

We respond quickly to communications and have a clear complaints policy and process available on our website.

While we return zero accounts to Companies House, we publish our annual income and expenditure openly on our website.

Effectiveness

We have internal standard operating procedures to ensure consistency and resilience and we deliver training to staff regularly. Key functions are reviewed frequently, and enhancements created.

We also continue to support the LEP Peer-to-Peer process and have engaged formally and informally with other LEPs to make improvements.

We work closely with our Accountable Body and the S151 officer attends Board meetings and is a member of the Finance, Audit & Corporate Risk Committee. The Accountable Body performs an important function in our financial, legal and due diligence processes and we meet with them regularly to drive improvements.

We have worked with our Finance, Audit & Corporate Risk and Overview & Scrutiny Committees as to assess governance arrangements in place. Dorset LEP has a sound system of governance, risk management and control operating effectively and consistently applied.

Signed:



Name: Cecilia Bufton
Position: Dorset LEP Chair
Date: 6 January 2022

Signed:



Name: Corrina Osborne
Position: Dorset LEP Director
Date: 6 January 2022