

Annex B: 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 issues raised in Annex A Annual Performance Review Preparation. This should be sent to localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead by **16 December 2019. (max 500 words)**

Dorset Council is the Accountable Body for the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (DLEP) and manages the day to day accounting activities which include;

- Growth Deal
- Growing Places fund
- Careers and Enterprise Company
- Dorset Gateway
- Enterprise Zone

This arrangement is governed by a Service Level Agreement which is in place until March 2021 and is subject to an annual review.

As the Council's s151 officer I, or an appropriate senior finance delegate, attend all the DLEP Board Meetings. I meet with the DLEP Director on a regular basis.

In April 2019, two Unitary Authorities were established (Dorset Council and BCP Council) which replaced the 9 existing Districts and Borough Councils within Dorset. This coincided with my appointment as section 151 officer within the Accountable Body. The formation of two Unitary Authorities has helped to streamline the Governance arrangements and the engagement with DLEP, through a reduction in the number of committees/sub groups. A Dorset wide Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which was approved by the DLEP board in July, will further strengthen the working relationships.

In FY18/19, Dorset Council, on behalf of DLEP, received £19.4m for the delivery of the Growth Deal Programme. The Accountable Body is involved in the due diligence process, with the s151 receiving all project business cases and, if applicable, the independent assessment for their review and comments prior to submission to the DLEP Board for an official decision. The Accountable Body, alongside the programme managers, ensure claims are correct and admissible so that payments can be made. Risk based sample checks are undertaken on all project claims. Sign off of payments are then subject to a 3-stage authorisation process to ensure compliance with the term and conditions of the grant before payments are certified. As s151, I jointly sign off all Growth Deal payments with the LEP Director.

The Accountable Body's involvement in the Growing Places Fund is restricted to governance and control. Most of the due diligence and legal work is undertaken by third parties, with oversight and input from the Accountable Body. Prior to any funds being released, the loan securities and loan agreement are formally signed off by Dorset Council's legal department. The Accountable Body ensures that interest payments and capital repayments are invoiced and paid on schedule.

£205,000 was received from BEIS for the delivery of the Dorset Gateway during the year. Dorset LEP use a subcontractor to provide this work, so all invoices were compliant prior to payment. The grant was audited by an Independent Chartered Accountant who requested an interim audit for FY19/20 due to discrepancies over the recorded spend profile, which were fully explained by the Gateway manager allowing for the audit to be signed off.

The Accountable Body also received funding on behalf of DLEP in respect of the Careers and Enterprise Company. All claims received from our subcontractors were checked in accordance with the grant conditions.

Having considered all the relevant information, in my role as the Section 151 Officer, I am of the opinion that the financial affairs of the Dorset LEP are being properly administered and that the LEP Board has a proper oversight of the financial resources available to it.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aidan Dunn." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Name: Aidan Dunn

Position: S151 Dorset Council

Date: 17th December 2019