
Report to: Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 23 July 2019

Subject: **Annual Accountability Reporting**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide annual reports in respect of complaints and concerns raised about the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) and/or members of the LEP Board this year.
- 1.2 To provide a summary of applications for grants considered during the last financial year under arrangements to address conflicts of interest.

2. Information

Annual reports

- 2.1 Concerns from a member of the public or a third party about the LEP may be reported through:
 - the procedure for considering complaints alleging a failure to comply with the LEP Board Members' Code of Conduct,
 - the LEP's confidential complaints procedure,
 - the LEP's whistleblowing policy.

Complaints about the LEP may also be channelled through the Combined Authority's complaints policy.

- 2.2 The procedure for considering complaints alleging a failure to comply with the LEP Board Members' Code of Conduct requires the Monitoring Officer to report annually to the LEP and to the Governance and Audit Committee about any complaints received about any member of the LEP Board, and the outcome of any such complaint. The Monitoring Officer can now report that no complaint has been received to date under this procedure.

- 2.3 Nor has any complaint been received under the confidential complaints procedure, nor under the Combined Authority's complaints procedure.
- 2.4 The LEP's Whistleblowing Policy provides for the Combined Authority's Internal Audit Manager to provide an annual report to the LEP and to the Combined Authority's Governance and Audit Committee. The Internal Audit Manager has confirmed that no concerns were received under this policy during the financial year 2018-19.

Grant applications

- 2.5 In May 2019, the LEP and the Combined Authority jointly adopted an overarching Conflicts of Interest Policy and Protocol. The Policy provides an overview of conduct-related provisions applying to Members and officers, with a particular focus on conflicts of interest arising in respect of applications for loans or grants to business, which is addressed by way of the Conflicts of Interest Protocol. The Protocol seeks to ensure that such applications are dealt with fairly and impartially, including where decisions are made by officers under delegated authority. (The specific declaration requirements in the Codes of Conduct adopted by the Combined Authority and the LEP reflect statutory requirements relating to declarations at formal meetings, and do not extend to declarations outside of formal meetings of the LEP Board or committees). The Policy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report, and the Protocol as **Appendix 2**, for information.
- 2.6 The arrangements set out in the Protocol replaced provisions in the Combined Authority's Officer Delegation Scheme which required applications for economic loans or grants in respect of which a member had an interest, to be referred to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before approval.
- 2.7 For transparency and accountability, **Appendix 3** to this report is a summary of grant applications considered by officers under delegated authority in the financial year 2018-19, and their outcome. Declarations made by members at the LEP Board or panel meetings are publically available on the LEP or Combined Authority's web-site as they are recorded in the minutes for each meeting.
- 2.8 For accountability in respect of other procedures of the Combined Authority, the Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion on this agenda provides an update in respect of the Combined Authority's whistleblowing policy, and addresses compliance with the Combined Authority's Code of Conduct for members.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None.

5. Staffing Implications

5.1 None.

6. External Consultees

6.1 None.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Governance and Audit Committee notes that no complaints or concerns have been raised this year about the LEP (or about any member of the LEP Board) under the LEP's complaints procedures, the Combined Authority's complaints policy and the LEP's whistleblowing policy.

7.2 That the Governance and Audit Committee notes

- the Conflicts of Interest Protocol and Policy attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to this report, and
- the summary set out in Appendix 3 to this report, relating to grant applications considered under conflict of interest arrangements in place during 2018-19.

8. Background Documents

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Conflicts of Interest Policy

Appendix 2 – Conflicts of Interest Protocol

Appendix 3 – summary of grant applications considered under conflict of interest arrangements during 2018-19.