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**Report to:** Governance and Audit Committee

**Date:** 28 July 2022

**Subject:** **Annual Accountability Reports**

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## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide the annual accountability reports about complaints and concerns raised about the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) and/or members of the LEP Board this year.
- 1.3 To provide a summary of applications for grants considered during the last financial year under arrangements to address conflicts of interest and to note the recently approved broadening of the scope of the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Protocol to non-voting co-optees on Combined Authority committees.

## **2. Information**

- 2.1 As part of the business of the Annual Meeting, annual accountability reports are provided in relation to the complaints and whistleblowing procedures and the management of conflict of interests during the 2021/22 financial year. They are also required to be considered by the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 2.2 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, and
  - the LEP's confidential complaints procedure.

Complaints about the LEP may also be channelled through the Combined Authority's complaints policy and concerns raised under the Combined Authority's Whistleblowing Policy. (The Whistleblowing Policy extends to concerns raised about the LEP and has been endorsed by the LEP Board).

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 The Monitoring Officer can now report that no complaint has been received under this procedure in the financial year ending 31 March 2022. Further, no complaint has been received under the confidential complaints procedure, nor the Combined Authority's complaints procedure.
- 2.5 The Whistleblowing Policy requires the Combined Authority's Head of Internal Audit to provide an annual report of concerns raised under the Policy to the LEP and to the Combined Authority's Governance and Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit has confirmed that no concerns in relation to the LEP were received under this policy during the financial year 2021 – 22.

#### Grant applications

- 2.6 The LEP and Combined Authority's jointly adopted Conflicts of Interests 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 the statutory requirements relating to declarations at formal meetings, and do not extend to declarations outside of formal meeting of the LEP Board or Combined Authority meetings.)
- 2.7 No grant applications were received that required consideration under the conflicts of interests arrangements for the last municipal year. Declarations made by members at the LEP Board or Combined Authority meetings are publicly available on the LEP or Combined Authority's website as they are recorded in the minutes for each meeting.
- 2.18 For the purposes of transparency, the Committee is asked to note the below recipients of grants who are private sector members without voting rights, who currently fall outside the scope of the conflict of interests arrangements.

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Date of application</b>	<b>Project amount</b>	<b>LEP Programme</b>	<b>Related Member</b>

Mind Body Goals Ltd	19/11/2021	£24,990 (project) £10,570 (Grant award)	Connecting Innovation	Colin Glass, Business Investment Panel
Paxman Coolers Ltd	25/1/2022	£87,500 (project) £39,375 (Grant award)	Connecting Innovation	Richard Paxman, Business, Economy and Innovation Committee

2.9 When the conflicts of interest arrangements were first introduced, the thematic committees were advisory and not decision making and the private sector co-optees were voting members and therefore fell within the scope of the arrangements. As a consequence of moving to decision making committees, non LEP Board private sector representative co-optees must legally be non-voting and as such now fall outside the arrangements. However, for the purposes of full and open transparency it is considered best practice for the arrangements to apply to all co-optees whether voting or not and therefore it is proposed to extend the scope accordingly. This change has now been approved by the Combined Authority.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

3.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

4.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

5.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

**8. Staffing Implications**

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

**9. External Consultees**

9.1 None.

**10. Recommendations**

10.1 To note that no complaints or concerns have been raised this year about the LEP (nor about any member of the LEP Board) under the LEP's complaints procedure, the Combined Authority's complaints policy or the Whistleblowing Policy).

10.2 Notes that no grant applications were received that were required to be considered under the conflicts of interest arrangements in place during 2021 – 2022.

**11. Background Documents**

11.1 None.

**12. Appendices**

12.1 None