Dorset Council

SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR DORSET INNOVATION PARK LTD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair) and Shane Bartlett

Present remotely: Cllrs Simon Clifford

Apologies: Cllrs Ben Wilson

Also present: Cllr Les Fry

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
Jan Britton (Executive Director - Place), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Kevin Forshaw (Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park), David Happy MBE (Chair, Dorset Innovation Park Board), Timothy Robertson (ICT Project Manager), Nick Webster (Head of Growth and Regeneration), Colin Wood (Innovation Lead), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer) and Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

16. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

18. **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

19. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

20. **Forward Plan**

The forward plan was noted.

21. **Introduction of Managing Director and Chair**

The shareholder committee welcomed the Chair of the Dorset Innovation Park Ltd Board, David Happy MBE and the Managing Director of Dorset Innovation Park Ltd, Kevin Forshaw, who both provided a short introduction.

22. **Vision discussion (presentation)**

The shareholder committee received a presentation from the Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, which provided an overview of the planning and implementation of the transition from Dorset Council to Dorset Innovation Park Ltd. The presentation included information on the role of the company, details around the fundamental company set-up, priority workstreams to support future operations and proposals to agree and communicate future park development.

The Chair of the Board recognised the work being undertaken to move the company forward and thanked all those that attended a recent open day at the park.

The shareholder committee discussed the matters covered in the presentation and comments were made in the following areas:

- Dorset Council was ambitious for the potential of the site and in particular the opportunities to innovate and create higher paid, skilled jobs
- A discussion was held in respect of the role of large data centres and whilst it was recognised that these were important, other innovative options would be investigated including green energy and use of lower energy chips, being more appropriate and energy efficient
- In response to a question on the aspiration to take the innovation park into profit, the Managing Director noted that at this stage, it was hoped that this would happen in year 4, although this could potentially be earlier dependant on the progress with planned projects
- A question was raised relating to the configuration of the building and provision of hot desks. Further consideration was required in respect of this, including discussion with the Ministry of Defence
- The Dorset Innovation Park Business Plan would be brought to the February 2026 meeting of the shareholder committee for consideration. This would include a one-year plan and a forward look to the future
- The company would be looking at issues relating to the buildings including heating requirements
- The company would be investigating opportunities and proposals for the innovation park. The Business Plan to be presented to the shareholder committee would include staffing and budget information and plans to promote the site on a wide scale
- The company board had plans to raise the profile and show the potential of the innovation park through events, lobbying and wider promotional activities including with Government and industry sectors
- The Chair made a number of comments following on from the presentation including opportunities to use the conference centre on site for events (particular reference made to a forthcoming “Great South West” board meeting and a Paths to Prosperity meeting) and the importance of links with education providers with reference made to links with sixth form colleges, Coastland College and Kingston Maurward

- Education outreach was key in considering skills development, raising awareness and aspirations
- Reference was made to wider issues of the affordability and availability of housing and how this linked to the provision of jobs. It was recognised that this linked to wider council policies.

23. **Shareholder agreement**

The shareholder committee received a report of the Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, which presented the Shareholder Agreement between Dorset Council and Dorset Innovation Park Ltd.

The Chair highlighted that appendix 1 to the report was an exempt document and therefore the committee would need to move into exempt business if it wished to discuss the contents of the document.

In addition, it was confirmed that Cabinet had given delegation to the Executive Director Place, to conclude the Shareholder Agreement and that the report and Shareholder Agreement were for noting by the committee.

The report and Shareholder Agreement were NOTED.

24. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

25. **Exempt Business**

The shareholder committee did not go into exempt business at the meeting.

26. **Shareholder agreement - Exempt appendix**

There was one exempt appendix associated with agenda item 9 – Shareholder Agreement. However, the shareholder committee did not go into exempt business for the item.

Duration of meeting: 11.10 am - 12.03 pm

Chair

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