SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR DORSET INNOVATION PARK LTD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 JULY 2026

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

Present remotely: Cllrs Ben Wilson

Also present: Cllr Piers Brown and Cllr Les Fry

Officers and others present (for all or part of the meeting):
Jan Britton (Executive Director - Economy and Environment), Nick Webster (Head of Growth and Regeneration), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Kevin Forshaw (Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park Ltd), Cecilia Bufton (Chair of the Board, Dorset Innovation Park Ltd) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer)

1. **Minutes**

   The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

   There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Public Participation**

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

4. **Councillor Questions**

   There were no questions from councillors.

5. **Forward Plan**

   The Forward Plan was noted.

6. **Review of Terms of Reference**

   The terms of reference for the shareholder committee were noted.

7. **Dorset Council Update Report**

The shareholder committee considered a report of the Head of Growth and Regeneration, which presented an update on the current position regarding the council's support for Dorset Innovation Park Ltd and the operation of the Dorset Innovation Park.

In presenting the report, the Head of Growth and Regeneration provided an overview of the position with the 2025/26 year-end business rates, the outcome of the commissioned study into a hotel development at the park, conversations taking place with partner authorities regarding Wessex devolution proposals, the implications of the recent government published UK Defence Investment Plan and the planning application related to the Winfrith Nuclear site and Nuclear Restoration Services.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- It was noted that Dorset Council had commissioned a masterplan to guide the future development of the Winfrith Nuclear site, with the aim that the masterplan would be a material consideration in future planning decisions. It was planned for this to be considered by Cabinet later in the year
- A planning application submitted on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, presented some conflict with what was to be included in the masterplan, and representations from the council's economic development team had been made to the planning authority, which would need to be considered alongside other representations
- The importance of the emerging proposals, which prioritised clean energy-led employment, including opportunities in nuclear, hydrogen, advanced engineering and research and development, were highlighted
- Consideration of the proposals for a potential hotel development at the park were ongoing with further discussion to be held with Cabinet members in the Autumn, before a report was brought for decision by Cabinet
- In response to a question, it was confirmed that a detailed finance report would be brought to the next meeting of the shareholder committee. This would provide further information to assist with shareholder decision-making.

The report was noted.

8. **Dorset Innovation Park Ltd Managing Director's report**

The shareholder committee considered a report of the Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, which provided an update on the current situation at the Dorset Innovation Park Ltd and on matters since the last meeting in April 2026.

The Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, provided an overview of the areas covered by the report, which included work undertaken to establish the company, including putting policies in place, staffing and legal requirements. It was confirmed that the intention was for the company to take over Dorset Innovation Park asset management on 20 July 2026.

The Chair of the Board, Dorset Innovation Park noted the close working that continued with Dorset Council and thanked those officers involved in this area. In addition, the Chair reflected on recent meetings held with tenants on site and future support requirements.

Those present considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion the following points were raised:

- In response to a question regarding the pace of council decision-making, it was noted that close working with officers to date, had ensured there were currently no issues. The need to drive development at a commercial pace was recognised and the Local Development Order and company framework for decision-making being developed would assist with this, whilst retaining the independence required by the company
- There had been improvement seen in the pace of decisions being made by the council, particularly as required by some recent areas of work
- Reference was made to the local skills improvement plan and there was a need for further work to understand how any collaborations would work moving forward. Areas of skills gaps had been noted and there was a need for a specific defence investment plan. Further discussion would take place during exempt business
- It was agreed that a report on company governance would be brought to the next meeting of the shareholder committee, to ensure transparency
- In addition, a quarterly finance report would be presented to the next meeting and there was a request for an informal briefing for shareholder committee members ahead of the meeting
- Work was ongoing by the company, working closely with the council’s legal team, to review aged-debt issues
- Security arrangements were being reviewed, with funding requested and a security committee to be reinstated. Key companies on site were engaged in the process. Security arrangements would satisfy Ministry of Defence and NATO requirements
- A proposal for a new gate house for the site was being developed and a report would be presented at the appropriate time.

The report was noted.

9. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

10. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by S Bartlett seconded by R Biggs

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following items in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Reason for taking the item in private

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The livestream ended at this point.

11. **Dorset Innovation Park Ltd Managing Director's Report - Exempt Appendix**

The shareholder committee considered issues arising in the reserved matters section of the report of the Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, with responses provided to questions and comments. Updates as appropriate, would be provided at future meetings.

12. **Innovation Park Training and Education Update**

The shareholder committee received a presentation from the Head of Growth and Regeneration and the Managing Director, Dorset Innovation Park, regarding training and education matters associated with the Dorset Innovation Park.

In response to a question, consideration would be given to the level of information that could be made available publicly for future reporting purposes.

Duration of meeting: 11.30 am - 1.26 pm

Chair

....