Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. The LEP is committed to creating a work environment with the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In view of this commitment, we encourage employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the LEP's work to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of reprisal. For employees and those working closely with the LEP, please follow the whistleblowing policy on our website. For third parties and members of the public, please follow the complaints procedure outlined below.

2. If, however, a member of the public or third party believes that their complaint fits the description below; they can elect to report their concerns through the whistleblowing policy procedure.

3. *Whistleblowing* - where an individual who has concerns about a danger, risk, contravention of rules or illegality provides useful information to address this. In doing so, they are acting in the wider public interest, usually because it threatens others or impacts on public funds. By contrast, a grievance or private complaint is a dispute about the individual's own position and has no or very limited public interest.

Confidentiality

4. If a member of the public or a third party wants to make a confidential complaint or raise a concern, it will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made to protect the person's identity if they wish to remain anonymous. The LEP will consider all complaints or allegations.

Anonymous allegations

5. The LEP takes all complaints and concerns raised by members of the public and third parties seriously. We will investigate anonymous allegations. However we remind complainants that when people put their names to an allegation the ability to investigate and therefore reach firm conclusions is strengthened. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of the LEP. When exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:
   - the seriousness of the issue raised;
   - the credibility of the concern; and
   - the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

6. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government may request information arising from this process if they have concerns regarding a LEP or have been approached with similar complaints. The expectation is that this information will be provided on an anonymous basis. However, it may be necessary to provide personal details to progress a complaint.

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7. Where details are gathered, the LEP will put in place appropriate data protection arrangements in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 2018.

Contacts for Complaints

8. If you have a complaint please submit your complaint in email or in writing to:

   Herts LEP
   One Garden City, Broadway
   Letchworth Garden City
   Herts SG6 3BF
   info@hertfordshirelep.co.uk

9. The LEP is aware that the organisation's ordinary complaints procedure may not be suitable if someone wants the complaint to remain confidential. If you would like to make a confidential complaint please submit your complaint to the designated officers below:

   Neil Hayes, Chief Executive
   neil.hayes@hertfordshirelep.co.uk

   or

   Sally Stanley, Office Manager
   sally.stanley@hertfordshirelep.co.uk

   State that you want the complaint to remain confidential.

10. Complainants should provide any information or evidence that may be relevant to the complaint, including names, dates or documentation in this correspondence.

Action taken by the LEP

Stage one

11. The designated complaints officer will raise your concern and investigate the complaint. You can expect the officer to:
    - Contact you within 10 clear working days to acknowledge the complaint and discuss the appropriate course of action.
    - Write to you within 28 clear working days with findings of the investigation. If the investigation has not concluded within 28 clear working days, the officer will write to you to give reasons for the delay in resolving the complaint.
    - Take the necessary steps to rectify the issue.

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Stage two

12. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the complaint or the complaint involves those responsible for the confidential complaints procedure you should escalate the complaint to the LEPs Accountable Body which is Hertfordshire County Council, and follow their complaints procedure.
13. The Accountable Body has a duty to ensure that the LEP has followed its complaints procedure correctly. These organisations will have their own confidentiality procedures.

Stage three

14. If you are either unable to raise the matter with the LEP or you are dissatisfied with the action taken you can report it direct to the Cities and Local Growth Unit in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, at the following email address: localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk or by writing to: LEP Compliance Deputy Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Fry Block, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF. You should clearly mark your email or letter as "Official - complaints".

15. If you would like help making a complaint, you can contact your local councillor or MP. You can also get help from a specialist advice agency or organisation which represents people, such as a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

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