

Cities and Local Growth Unit – Desk Top Audit

Issues of non-compliance - SSLEP Local Assurance Framework

Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 31, paragraphs 117 and 118), states that:

“The Local Assurance Framework should set out decision making processes of the LEP, with sufficient clarity so that local people and stakeholders can check that decisions have been made in line with the appropriate processes and by the correct person or group.

To achieve this, in the Local Assurance Framework each LEP should publish the respective roles and responsibilities of:

- the Chair;
- the LEP Board;
- any Sub-Boards;
- the Accountable Body; and
- the Section 151 Officer.”

Through our recent checks we struggled to locate the information in relation to the LEP’s Chair. Please can the LEP review its Local Assurance Framework and confirm where this information is located, or amend as needed. Some of this information may be located within the LEP’s Articles of Association, in which case they may wish to provide a link to this from their LAF. Either way, for the purposes of transparency it is important that the information is easily accessible and in straightforward language.

ACTION: The LEP to review and amend its Local Assurance Framework to explain the roles and responsibilities of the Chair.

Defined term for Chairs and Deputy Chairs

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 34, paragraph 133) requires the LEP to have a “defined term limit of three years for the Chair and Deputy Chair, with an optional extension of three years. There is an option to extend for a further three years in exceptional circumstances if approved by the Board”. Our recent checks were unable to find this information in the LAF.

ACTION: Please can the LEP check their policy and amend as needed, stating it within their LAF; or provide a link from the LAF to their Articles of Association if it is correctly featured there.

Succession Planning:

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 20-21, paragraph 65 i) requires the LEP's Local Assurance Framework to include appropriate succession planning and arrangements for the resignation of Board Members. In our recent check we were unable to locate this information, so please can the LEP indicate where this is; or amend their LAF as needed.

ACTION: The LEP to include details of succession planning in their LAF.

Diversity Statement

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 23 paragraph 79) states that the diversity statement should include a commitment to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of LEP Boards are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023. Whilst we noted the LEP's diversity statement, we could not find both commitments and request that this is amended.

ACTION: The LEP to update its diversity statement to include that by 2020 at least one third of members of LEP Boards are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023.

Government Branding

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 30, paragraph 115) states that the LEP should commit to meet Government branding guidelines for projects in its Local Growth Assurance Framework and to ensure correct branding and wording is used for websites, signage, social media, press notices and other marketing material. Whilst we noted that the LEP has the correct branding on its website, we were unable to locate their commitment to meeting Government branding guidelines.

ACTION: The LEP must ensure that it updates its Local Growth Assurance Framework to commit to meeting Government branding guidelines.

Additional points to note and action

Articles of Association:

Please feedback to the LEP that it is best practice to publish your Articles of Association on the LEP website.

Roles and Responsibilities of the S151 Officer

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 31, paragraph 118) requires the LEP 'to publish the respective roles and responsibilities of the S151 Officer'. Whilst the S151 Officer is referred to throughout the LAF, ideally the LEP should provide some specific details that are easy to find/see.

Independent Secretariat:

The National Local Growth Assurance Framework (page 34, paragraph 134 – 135) requires all LEPs to have an independent secretariat. Although recent checks found some information on independent secretariat, could the LEP please review this and explain it more clearly.