



Annex C: Governance Assurance Statement

The LEP Chair and Chief Executive should here provide a brief formal assurance statement on the status of governance and transparency. This should include any overview and scrutiny function undertaken by the Accountable Body. This should be sent to the Assurance Team via localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk, copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead, by **20 January 2021**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **24 February 2021** and confirmation sent to the email address above.

(max 500 words)

The LEP has had a productive 12 months in continuing its transformation programme to become a high performing LEP / beacon of good practise.

Following the publication of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (NLGAF) in January 2019, the LEP reviewed all parts of its Assurance Framework (AF). The AF has been kept under constant review, with minor amendments addressed throughout the year, and a fuller review undertaken twice a year. The most recent full review was undertaken Autumn 2020, (version 8).

The 'Strategy, Delivery, Governance' model provides the golden thread that guides the Executive Board and LEP Secretariat functions. Executive Board meet a minimum of six times a year and will have met 10 times in 2020/21, with meetings conducted digitally given the pandemic. Agendas, reports and minutes are published in line with the AF. The Annual Report for 2019/20 was published in Spring 2020 and the Delivery Plan for 2020/21 thereafter.

The LEPs first AGM since it became listed on Companies House took place on 17th September 2021. A decision was made to separate it from the annual conference. The conference took place over the 1st and 2nd of December 2021 using a professional online platform and recording studio to provide visibility and to showcase the changes made to the LEP organisation. High quality content was generated/captured and is/will continue to be being utilised on our social medial channels.

Our Accountable Body has undertaken an audit of our policies and procedures during December 2021 to support the Section 151 officer in completing their Assurance Statement.

Our publication policy maximises the number of papers that can be published. Following a review of our sub-groups and re-vitalised decision-making role for our Strategic Programme Management Group (SPMG) papers for that meeting,



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& Industrial Strategy

including business case reviews and project monitoring reports, are also published.

Independent scrutiny by Local Authorities is undertaken at least annually at a joint meeting of the upper tier Local Authority Scrutiny Committees, with attendees invited from all District and Borough Councils. Details of the meetings are publicised on Council websites and linked to from the SSLEP website. The last meeting was hosted by Stoke-on-Trent City Council on 23rd November 2020. We are undertaking a review of our scrutiny arrangements– which will form part of our next review of the AF (to be reported to SSLEP Board in February 2021), with a view to move them to a more frequent cycle.

Key documents from the AF can be found on or linked to from the SSLEP website 'Governance' page. The LEP is also scheduled to undertake its Peer Review with the Cumbria LEP in Q4, and has also volunteered to trial a variant peer review comprising a 'three LEP conversation' to demonstrate its commitment to good practise with the LEP Network.

The LEP is proactive in recruiting new Board Members and is also advertising for a Chief Executive. The LEP is committed to diversity and maintaining private sector representation.

The Annual Report for 2020/21 will be published in early Q1.

Signed:

Name: Alun Rogers

Position: Chair

Date: 18 January 2021

Signed:

Name: Mark Parkinson

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 18 January 2021