



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 **14 January 2022**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **28 February 2022** and confirmation sent to the email address above.
(max 500 words)

The SSLEP keeps its governance arrangements under constant review, including its Local Assurance Framework. An exercise commenced to undertake a formal review of the structure of the SSLEP, however the ongoing uncertainty regarding the outcomes of the LEP review, and future role of LEPs, means that work to review the LEP structure (and particularly the roles of the sub-groups) has been paused.

However, work has been undertaken on the closer alignment of the Growth Hub with the SSLEP and an external review of the SSLEP's accountabilities which will help provide the basis of a full governance review when the outcome of the LEP review is known.

The LEP is scrutinised on an on-going basis via the role of the Accountable Body who attend the Executive Board and other sub-groups, ensuring compliance with the LAF and other relevant legislation (e.g. state aid). In addition, the Accountable Body arranges an annual external audit to check compliance. The LEP is also formally scrutinised annually by a joint meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committees of the two Upper-Tier authorities in its area, to which the District and Borough Councils are also invited to send representatives. This meets the requirements of NLGAF. The last meeting took place on 6th January 2022.

Our LEP Executive Board meets a minimum of six times a year and has so far met 7 times in 2021-22, with two further meetings scheduled before the end of the year. Meetings have been conducted on MS Teams due to COVID 19 restrictions and are open to attendance by guests / the general public.

The AGM was held on Thursday 18th November, also via MS Teams, and was open to the public to attend. The event was publicised on the LEP website, through social media and partners and a number of additional local businesses and partner organisations did attend.



The LEP has both an Audit and Finance Committee and Strategic Programme Management Group (SPMG), which have delegated functions from the Executive Board in relation to financial and risk management and oversight of the main LEP programmes respectively. These groups report back to Executive Board at regular intervals and papers for the SPMG are published on the LEP website – so as to provide transparency in relation to significant funding decisions.

Key documents from the Assurance Framework can be found on or linked to from the SSLEP website 'Governance' page. These include the Code of Conduct, Policy on Gifts and Hospitality and accompanying Register of Gifts and Hospitality, Whistle Blowing Policy, Privacy Policy, and Remuneration and Expenses Policy. Signed Declarations of Interest are also published on the Governance page of the SSLEP website. This includes Directors and key staff responsible for advising the board. These are reviewed twice per annum as a minimum, with members advising of changes in the intervening period.

The SSLEP has had no immediate concerns raised during the last year around its governance and transparency. The continued delay of the outcome of the LEP review has made it difficult to progress changes due to the uncertain future role of the LEP.

Signed:

Name: Alun Rogers

Position: [Chair]

Date: 18th January 2022

Signed:

Name: Anne Boyd

Position: [Chief Exec]

Date: 18th January 2022