



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@levellingup.gov.uk, copying the BEIS Area Lead, by **19 January 2023**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **28 February 2022** with confirmation sent to the email address above. **(max 500 words)**

Following the Government's announcement in March 2022, that requires LEPs to be integrated into local democratic institutions, the SSLEP recognised the need to immediately adapt its current governance arrangements.

As the SSLEP aligns with Integration Pathway 2, the Board and local partners adopted a progressive approach, ensuring early alignment with the governance and strategic ambitions of Democratically elected Leaders (DELs). And on 16th June 2022, SSLEP Board formally endorsed the 2022/23 Delivery Plan which sets out the principles and approach to future change.

Priority work identified this financial year is summarised below:

- Implementation of a new agile Board, and Terms of Reference, in line with the Local Assurance Framework requirements
- Consider selection of economic development models of best practice for the implementation of a new company structure
- Redesign of a new LEP structure to ensure it is fit for purpose to deliver its new mission and strategy
- Review of Sub-Group structures
- Redesign and remodelling of the Growth Hub, including recruiting to a new structure
- Ongoing programme management
- Review of financial and human resources
- Development of a new Reserves Policy to inform decision-making during transition)
- Review of existing LEP accountabilities
- Starting the process of transferring selected/agreed LEP accountabilities to Local Authorities

Executive Board meet a minimum of six times a year and will have met 8 times (in the calendar year 2022). Meetings consisted of two 'in person' and the remainder, MS Teams. Agendas, reports and minutes are published in line with the Local Assurance Framework.

The Annual Report for 2021/22 was published in November 2022.



The AGM was held on Thursday 17th November 2022, via MS Teams, and was open to the public to attend. The event was publicised on the LEP website, through social media and partners.

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 17th January 2023 with papers available on the Staffordshire County Council (SCC) website, while a webcast recording of the meeting is also available.

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 Executive Board and CEO are aware that the current representation is resulting in the expected ratio of private sector Board members not being met. This is consequently being addressed as part of the LEP's transitional work which includes the establishment of a new agile Board that will ensure future private sector board ratios are met. The new Board recruitment process is proposed to start March 2023 and the SSLEP's Local Area Lead is aware of the ongoing transitional work.

Signed:

Name: Alun Rogers
Position: Chair
Date: 19th January 2023



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Signed:

Name: Andy Devaney
Position: Interim Chief Executive Officer
Date: 19th January 2023