

## 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](mailto: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)**

Somerset County Council's S151 officer and Accountable Body team continue to provide valuable challenge and support, for example working on a cashflow plan as part of 23/24 budget-setting and active participation in SIP and F&R meetings. Support has not been impacted by any of the Somerset local government reorganisation.

The LEP completed the annual Board review in July. Board members generally felt the Board was working well with praise for the Chair and the CEO during this period of change and recognition that future skills are needed in change management and SME experience. Areas for improvement were strengthening external engagement to improve wider awareness of the LEP's work and the Board's risk awareness. Broader awareness was seen as a challenge given very small comms budget but the LEP is consistently growing followers on social media in addition to engagement with BROs etc. On risk, the Board agreed to review the risk register twice a year, most recently in October.

Whilst the Board has achieved the current 1/3<sup>rd</sup> threshold for female representation, moving to 50% in 23/24 will be very challenging given on-going uncertainty over the role of the LEP, therefore making Board recruitment difficult. The LEP wishes to continue to draw on the exemptions previously notified to the Cities & Local Growth Unit under the National Assurance Framework. The LEP worked through the BROs to run a Future Leaders programme, identifying and coaching future prospective Board members who could also potentially work with and support partners' business engagement panels/ boards etc. 15 participants were recruited but 2 dropped out due to personal circumstances and work commitments. 70% were female and 30% male, including one from the BAME community. The program had an average 70% attendance for all sessions and so far one person has joined the Business Leadership Group.

The Joint Committee operates a Scrutiny Panel to provide further democratic oversight of the LEP. In 22/23 the Panel met twice and considered devolution/ LEP integration and the LEP's overall work programme, with the CEX and COO reporting to the Panel. Two meetings are planned this year - more details at

## Creating opportunities in Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay

Heart of the South West LEP CIC, is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee.

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No. 8880546, Registered Office, Exeter Science Park, FO6, 6 Babbage Way, Clyst Honiton, Exeter EX5 2FN

[Agenda for Heart of the South West \(HotSW\) Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\)  
Joint Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 13th October, 2022, 2.15 pm - Democracy  
in Devon](#)

The LEP's AGM was again held online and accounts sent to Companies House with an overview of the LEP's operating costs within the annual report.

The LEP remains part of the Joint Committee meetings and continue to work closely with our Local Authority partners whose support is hugely appreciated. We have continued to lead and shape the Great SW partnership with Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly and Dorset and Government recognition of this in 2022 is a significant milestone.

Despite uncertainty over a long period, first from the LEP review then the prospective Devon devolution deal, the Board remain engaged and committed and the LEP team have demonstrated great resilience to continue to deliver the LEP's work.

Signed:



Name: Karl Tucker

Position: [Chair]

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023



Signed:

Name: David Ralph

Position: [Chief Exec]

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023

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