



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 DBT Area Lead, by **29 February 2024**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **15 March 2024** with confirmation sent to the email address above. **(max 500 words)**

Somerset Council's S151 officer and Accountable Body team continue to provide valuable challenge and support. Support has not been impacted by the Somerset local government reorganisation or financial pressures.

Further to Government announcement to cease support for LEPs and subsequent guidance, the LEP are working with the Accountable Body and upper tier Local Authorities to implement the transition arrangements in accordance with the LEP Integration Plan. The Plan sets out a target date of 31 March 2024 to transfer the relevant functions. The Plan was endorsed by the LEP and all Local Authorities in February and discussions are underway in respect of winding up the LEP and transfer of assets. In January, auditors were asked to provide assurance that the LEP transition plans are in accordance with the LEP's Articles of Association and the Assurance Framework. The report stated "the information provided to us does not highlight any obvious implications with the Articles of Association and Assurance Framework from the proposed transition of LEP functions to the upper tier authorities within the HotSW area."

The LEP continues 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, Dorset and Government.

The Local Authorities operate a Scrutiny Committee to provide further democratic oversight of the LEP. In 2023/24 the Committee met three times with the LEP Chief Executive and Local Authority representatives in attendance. The decision was made to cease the Committee on the 31 March 2024.

The LEP's Impact Study was published on our [website](#) with a supporting [infographic](#).

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

Whilst the Board achieved the current 1/3 threshold for female representation in 2022/23, moving to 50% in 2023/24 was not possible due to the ongoing challenges on uncertainty over the future role of the LEP, therefore making Board recruitment difficult. With Government's decision to cease LEP funding and integrate functions into Local Authorities board recruitment has ceased.

Despite continued uncertainty over a long period, the Board remain engaged and committed and the LEP team have demonstrated great resilience to continue to deliver the LEP's work.



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Department for
Business & Trade

LEP Chairman Statement
As Chair I am signing it to confirm that on the advice of the S151/Accountable Body as given to and accepted by the LEP Board that we have complied with the Assurance Framework, however I am aware that the LEP CEO has some ongoing questions as to the validity of the advice given and is therefore unable to sign. It is the CEO hope that their reservations should be addressed through the wind-up process and appointment of a liquidator.

Signed:

Name: Karl Tucker

Position: Chair

Date: 29 February 2024

Signed: /

Name: David Ralph

Position: Chief Executive

Date: /