



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)**

This year CWLEP (Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership) has been working with its three LAs to implement the Government's decision that LEP functions should be undertaken by LAs from April 2024. Notwithstanding the transition, we have continued to maintain our strong track record of delivery against the Assurance Framework. The future structure and role of the LEP once it is in LA ownership will trigger a significant review and update of the local assurance framework, to ensure it is reflective of our evolving operations.

The LEP Annual Conference and Meeting took place on the 18th of October 2023 at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire, which maximised engagement and attendance in the event. The group annual report and accounts for 2022/23 was also published on the LEP's website in December.

Our board, which met monthly, and sub-board meetings remained predominantly virtual and were all open to the public, with future dates and times published on our website. Terms of Reference, agendas and minutes for committees are published on our website, other than items which are confidential in nature. We use the same test as local authorities to identify these items.

Board meetings dates have been set until only until March 2024 after which the LEP will become Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington and be overseen by a Joint Committee made up of the three Local Authorities.

Our section 151 Officer remains committed to attending key assurance meetings, including our newly established Finance and Performance Committee (inaugural meeting held in September 2023) and the main LEP Board. To gain the assurances the section 151 Officer relies on the Cheshire East Internal Audit team continue to audit our local assurance framework and its implementation across our delivery. The main area identified to date, as part of the February 2024 audit, is to ensure all policies and terms of reference are reviewed on an annual cycle, even if they haven't undergone a significant re-write, to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

The following policies were reviewed, updated and published this year:

- Complaints policy



- Declaration of interest's policy
- EDI policy
- FOI policy
- G&H policy
- Recruitment & selection policy
- Sustainability policy
- Whistleblowing policy

We continue to embed online solutions to capture registers of interest for board members and senior officers, as well as gifts and hospitality.

To improve our operations and increase our effectiveness, regular reviews are completed of our procurement & risk policy. We continue to develop our programme management software to ensure greater transparency and access to data across the organisation. The programme team is working to bring on board more efficient data and reporting software such as Microsoft PowerBi. As we work more closely with the Local Authorities, there are more frequent requests for insights and data analysis. This will increase efficiencies and provide intelligence for evidence led decision making.

Signed: 
Name: Clare Hayward
Position: Chair
Date: 26/02/2024

Signed: 
Name: Philip Cox
Position: Chief Exec
Date: 26/02/2024