



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)

This year CWLEP has continued to focus on identifying areas of improvement for greater transparency and stronger governance, as part of our ongoing commitment to this area, while continuing to maintain our strong track record of delivery against the Assurance Framework.

The AGM took place on 19th October, providing an opportunity for the public to scrutinise the achievements of LEP from the previous financial year. The annual report 20/21 has since been published on the LEP's website. The new 22/23 delivery plan is underway, with the final publication planned May 2022.

This year has seen an increased focus on our diversity ambition, with a new diversity action plan and becoming a disability confident employer. The recruitment for the LEP board has not only looked to improve our gender balance, with a 50:50 gender split of the private sector membership, but we have also introduced a diversity questionnaire for the board to help to identify further opportunities for our diversity action plan.

Our board and sub-committee meetings (predominantly virtual) are open to the public upon request, with online invitations sent out to interested parties to join. All committee and board papers continue to be published on the LEP website, as well as their terms of reference. The website itself has now completed its full upgrade (cheshireandwarrington.com), which has been designed to deliver a more accessible platform, with all relevant policies, transparency documentation and board information readily available.

A new Collaboration Agreement with Cheshire East has been completed and is awaiting final sign off by the S151 officer. The updated agreement has been designed to reflect roles and responsibilities and to cover all relevant funding streams. The relationship between Cheshire East and the LEP continues to be strong, with regular attendance from S151 and/or Deputy regularly engaging with the full LEP board, P&I and the F&A Committees.

The Cheshire East Audit team completed a full review of the local assurance framework in January 2022, with minor areas identified (which have been addressed), including updating broken hyperlinks within the LAF



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and publication of our updated policy documents following their annual review. This year the new HR and Office Manager has undergone a detailed review of the LEP's policies and improved the formatting and updated the content of existing policies and has generated new policies to ensure the LEP is future fit, including the new policies from the diversity action plan.

The LEP has developed a new online solution to complete both our registers of interest and G&H registers. While in-person meetings are infrequent, it was important to ensure a robust system was in place to allow proper consideration from senior officers and board members for their returns, while also ensuring an accessible remote solution.

The O&S Committee continues to operate independently with quarterly meetings. The committee has focused not just on interrogating the LEP and its sub-boards delivery towards its overarching objectives and recovery plan, but also implementing actions from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Review and LEP Peer Review.

Signed:
Name: Clare Hayward
Position: Chair
Date: 14/01/22

Signed:
Name: Philip Cox
Position: Chief Executive
Date: 14/01/22