



Annex B: Section 151/73/127 Assurance Statement

The Section 151/73/127 Officer should here provide a report to the Annual Performance Review on their work for the LEP over the last twelve months, and their opinion, with a specific requirement to identify any issues of concern, on governance and transparency. The report should focus on any issues raised in Annex A: Annual Performance Review Preparation. This report should be sent to the Assurance Team via localgrowthassurance@levellingup.gov.uk copying the BEIS Area Lead by **19 January 2023. (max 500 words)**

As Section 151 Officer of GCC responsible for the Accountable Body (AB) function provided to the LEP, I can confirm that GFirst LEP operates in accordance with its Local Assurance Framework (version 10, Jan 2023) and I am satisfied that the LEP has implemented the minimum standards as outlined in the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (Version 4, Sept 2021).

The AB team are able to routinely scrutinise LEP governance as we are given full access to the LEP processes and decision making. AB officers are actively involved informally on a frequent basis and more formally now on a quarterly basis (was monthly during the main delivery period of the Local Growth programme) through a joint Programme Management Group (PMG). The senior AB officer attends and feeds in-to the financial reports of the LEP Investment Panel meetings and I or my nominated deputy attend the LEP Board meetings.

The LEP and AB have a strong working relationship with officers from both parties that have worked together for several years now through the PMG. There is a high level of mutual respect and trust and business is conducted in an open and transparent manner. This allows the group to resolve issues, working together constructively as and when they arise.

I am satisfied that the LEP operates with good governance and transparency. In 22-23 the LEP went through a process of recruiting several new board members through an open recruitment process. The LEP also considered the diversity of the board in this process and as a consequence now has a 50/50 split of male/female members and one BAME board member. Of particular note is that the new board representative for the Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Sector is now female.

I can confirm that the LEP maintains a public register of board member's interests and also a public register of 'gifts, hospitality and expenses' received by both board members and staff.

The primary focus for the AB over the last year has been overseeing the funding and delivery of the Getting Building Fund Projects, the legacy LGF Programme projects, management of the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund



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(GIIF) and the continuation of the LEP as a 'going concern' as a consequence of delays to LEP core funding and the on-going LEP Review.

GCC have worked alongside GFirst LEP to understand the funding conditions and reporting requirements associated with the various funding programmes and to ensure all deadlines are achieved. The full spend profile for the GBF programme was achieved by 31-3-22 and there is now only one legacy LGF project yet to fully claim all funds, the Gloucester Railway Station project, but all contracts have now been let.

Area of concern:

The primary area of concern is future viability of the LEP pending the outcome of funding decisions for the 23-24 financial year. Contingency funding arrangements through the retained business rates pool and surplus funds from the GIIF are in place to sustain the LEP until 31-3-24 but viability beyond that will depend on the agreed transition arrangements for the LEP pending a devolution deal for Gloucestershire.

Signed:

Name: Steve Mawson

Position: S151 & Executive Director of Corporate Resources

Date: 18-1-23