

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 localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead by **16 December 2019**. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website by **28 February 2020** and confirmation sent to localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk (**max 500 words**)

In my role as Chair, I am committed to building on the excellent track record the Marches LEP has for good governance and will ensure, with the support of the Board and the LEP CEO, the systems and processes we use meet National Assurance Framework requirements including operating as a legal entity.

The Marches LEP became a company limited by guarantee in February 2019. The LEP Board has concerns about the tax implications resulting from incorporation and has sought independent legal advice which it is in the process of reviewing. The LEP Board is also awaiting clarification from CLGU on this matter.

Our governance structure as outlined in our Accountability and Assurance Framework of March 2019 recognises that the most significant sources of funding for promoting economic growth in the Marches is the Local Growth Fund, the EU Funding Programme (2014 - 2020) and the Marches Investment Fund. The governance structure also recognises that the LEP receives other funding from the government to support the work of the LEP.

The governance arrangements are designed to ensure that: the LEP Board has an overview of all LEP-related activity; funding is being allocated in a transparent and coordinated manner which provides value for money; and assurance is provided through our accountable body's S151 Officer on the proper use and administration of public funds.

As outlined in our scheme of delegation the LEP Board may delegate specific functions to the LEP Chair, CEO, the S151 Officer at our accountable body, Shropshire Council, or the LEP Performance Risk and Monitoring Committee (PRMC), as required for the timely and efficient operation of the Partnership. However, the LEP Board retains overall responsibility for these functions even when they delegate responsibility for delivery or project/programme monitoring.

When decisions are made by the LEP Board they are translated into action by the LEP Secretariat or sub groups of the LEP Board working with the Marches partners to deliver LEP Board priorities and desired outcomes.

The LEP CEO and Secretariat work with the S151 Officer of the Accountable Body to report on progress in delivery of Growth Deal and other funds to both the PRMC and the LEP Board. The LEP Board monitors programme spend, receives information on project performance and manages risk through receiving copies of the programme risk register at Board meetings. The PRMC monitors the detail of programme performance, finances and output metrics for the Growth Deal and other projects and reviews in detail the LEP Risk Register at every meeting.

In relation to scrutiny of the work of the LEP, the agreement with the three Local Authorities in the Marches is the LEP is invited to attend at least one scrutiny committee each year. In 2019/20 the LEP Chair and CEO have attended the scrutiny committees of Shropshire Council (5 Sept) and Herefordshire Council (22 Oct). A date is being planned to attend a scrutiny committee at Telford and Wrekin Council in early 2020.

Information on the LEP's governance arrangements and projects it has supported are available on the LEP website.

Signed:

Name: Mandy Thorn MBE

Position: Chair

Date: 16/12/2019

Signed:

Name: Gill Hamer

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 16/12/2019