

Annex B: Section 151/73 Assurance Statement

The Section 151/73 Officer should here provide a report to the Annual Conversation 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. In particular, you should focus on any particular issued raised in Annex A. **(max 500 words)**

As the accountable body for the Marches LEP Shropshire Council provides support to the Marches LEP. This includes support from a dedicated member of staff within the finance team, plus support from other senior finance officers and the s151 Officer. Support includes financial monitoring of LEP funding and spending including individual schemes, development of policies and procedures for the award of and monitoring of funding allocated and advice on the governance and administration of public funds.

The s151 Officer and relevant finance team staff meet formally with the LEP team on a bi-monthly basis to ensure all financial and governance issues are discussed and reviewed in a timely manner. The s151 Officer also attends each Performance Risk and Monitoring Committee to present papers, provide updates and deal with any queries relating to finance or governance within the remit set out in the Accountability and Assurance Framework.

The 2016/17 Statement of Accounts for the Marches LEP were drawn up by the finance team and presented to the LEP Board in September. The accounts provide a view of the overall financial position of the LEP and improvements to the format and usability of the accounts have been made following feedback from the Marches LEP Board Members each year since they were first produced for 2015/16.

In December 2016 the Accountability and Assurance Framework was updated to ensure it adequately reflected the LEP National Assurance Framework release October 2016. The s151 Officer was able to confirm the Accountability and Assurance Framework had been agreed and implemented to DCLG ahead of the February 2017 deadline.

Shropshire Council, as accountable body for the Marches LEP, makes use of the internal audit service to identify an audit plan incorporating the LEP based on a risk assessment and discussion with the LEP Team and s151 Officer. In 2016/17 a positive assurance was given which included the following areas:

- Effective governance arrangements are in place for the LEP
- New and existing income streams are maximised
- The LEP employs clear eligibility criteria for the utilisation and allocation of funding streams.

There were no major issues relating to the LEP, or raised in Appendix A of this document, that require further identification or reference here.

Section 151/73 Sign-off:

Signed:

Name: James Walton

Position: Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance (s151 Officer), Shropshire Council (Treasurer Marches LEP)

Date 27.11.17