

Annex E: Governance Assurance Statement

The LEP Chair and Chief Executive should here provide a brief formal assurance statement on the status of governance and transparency. In particular, they should focus on any issues raised in Annex A. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website following conclusion of the Annual Performance Review process (in April 2019). You should cover any overview and scrutiny function undertaken by the Accountable Body. **(max 500 words)**

We continue to perform strongly and deliver growth programmes of national significance with 20,000 new jobs and 500 new businesses already created, with half of all LEP investment focused on our 5 most deprived areas. Initiatives of national significance are in development including AMRC (NW) and Eden of the North. Our new Local Industrial Strategy, which will be launched in Summer 2019, will set out an ambitious future with agreed priorities to guide Lancashire's evolving growth plan.

We have maintained strong governance with transparent decision-making, underpinned by robust financial assurance, which is fully compliant with national guidance. Early in 2018, the Government's Internal Audit Service undertook a deep dive of our assurance and programme delivery performance. The LEP was assessed as good with outstanding features – an outcome we expected but the independent validation is re-assuring to the LEP Board and partners alike.

This positive assessment is shared by the s.151 Officer of our Accountable Body. Furthermore, LCC's Monitoring Officer (and the LEP's Company Secretary) is actively engaged in ensuring the highest public standards in the conduct and operation of our assurance arrangements. The accountable body's External Scrutiny Committee has reviewed our performance with the LEP offering to present more regularly on specific issues. LCC's Internal Audit Service also independently reviews the performance and practice of the LEP, as part of the Accountable Body's corporate audit programme, with no issues of concern raised in 2018/19.

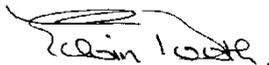
The Board meets in public and we are committed to making the work of the LEP more accessible. We have produced a Key Achievements document, our first Business Plan and second Annual Report, with budget and financial information on LEP programmes and projects available on our website. We are also currently developing a new website for the LEP which will make it easier for stakeholders to access publicly available information and find out more about our work, decision-making and governance structures with agendas, key decisions, business cases and strategic documents all easily accessible. A linked Lancashire investment website dedicated to meeting the needs of businesses, investors and developers is also in development. The LEP's new website will be launched in February 2019 and there has already been a soft launch of the Lancashire investment website with further work being undertaken to formally launch in March 2019.

However, we are not complacent. The LEP Board and Performance Committee regularly test the rigour of our assurance arrangements, with additional external challenge provided by Lancashire Leaders. In our view, the LEP meets or exceeds all current assurance requirements, including the recommendations set out in the recently published LEP National Review, though we await new national guidance. We are also involved in peer reviews with other LEPs and work with the LEP Network to share best practice.

The LEP continues to command the support of business, university and local authority leaders in Lancashire and recognises the need to work hard to retain their confidence. The LEP benefits from having 5 local authority leaders, as LEP Board Directors, with the LEP Chair a member of Lancashire Leaders. A tangible benefit of this collaborative approach was a successful Growth Deal 3 outcome for Lancashire with further joint working underway on a range of key initiatives.

We continue to engage with key stakeholders as we respond to the LEP National Review. In preparing our Local Industrial Strategy and the evidence base which underpins it, we will provide extensive opportunities for business and public engagement, as we aim to establish a modern industrial vision for Lancashire's economic future and develop an ambitious growth plan for the whole of Lancashire.

Signed:



Name: Edwin Booth CBE DL
Position: LEP Chair
Date: 31 December 2018

Signed:



Name: Martin Kelly
Position: LEP Chief Operating Officer
Date: 31 December 2018