



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@communities.gov.uk, copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead by **14 January 2022**.

(max 500 words)

I am the Section 73 Officer for the North East LEPs accountable body, the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA).

A close working relationship exists between the NTCA and LEP Executive Team. I hold regular meetings with the North East LEP Chief Executive and attend LEP Board and Investment Board meetings. My team, led by a Strategic Finance Manager (SFM) has formal working relationships with LEP Directors / Managers, holding monthly budget monitoring meetings and joint workshops with LEP Programme Managers. Support is provided with corporate budget expenditure /forecasts and medium- term financial plans reports to the LEP Board.

The LEP Board and Investment Boards have met frequently, and I can provide assurance that investment decisions are subject to appropriate rigour and scrutiny by Board members. All decisions are taken at quorate Board meetings, in accordance with the LEP constitution and published on the LEP website.

The NTCA Cabinet has approved delegated authority to the NTCA Executive and Major, enabling LEP Board decisions to be expedited. Quarterly 'Funding Update Reports' to the NTCA Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on LEP 'Project Funding Approvals' and also programme performance updates, provide transparency and opportunities for scrutiny.

The LEP Officer Delegation Scheme has been refreshed, supported by the NTCA Monitoring Officer, and approved by both the LEP Board and NTCA Cabinet.

Close relationships have helped ensure the LEP has effective, accessible support and financial advice. The SFM holds regular LEP briefing meetings with me and undertakes checks on performance monitoring returns on the Getting Building Fund, Growth Deal and other LEP managed smaller programmes prior to DLUHC / BEIS submission.



I have signed off quarterly GBF programme data submissions on the Government's Delta System and biannual returns to DLUHC on the LGF programme.

Either I or my SFM attend LEP Technical Officer Group meetings where draft project investment reports and programme monitoring updates are presented. This provides an early opportunity to comment and contribute to the appraisal of projects, including on matters such value for money, clawback and inclusion of special conditions in funding awards to protect the LEP and NTCA.

I also liaise closely with the LEPs Financial Consultant who provides specialist support over the strategic use of the North East Investment Fund and Enterprise Zone Investment Strategy. Where appropriate, LEP financial proposals, e.g. planned Commercial Property Investment Fund, are shared with the Financial Directors of the 7 North East Local Authorities allowing additional opportunities for scrutiny prior to LEP Board decisions.

The LEP budget and outturn position are reported transparently in NTCA Budget Reports and included within the NTCA Statement of Accounts. The external audit of the NTCA 2020/21 Statement of Accounts is underway and will go to 25/1/22 NTCA Cabinet with the Independent Auditors Report.

I can provide assurance, to the best of my knowledge, that the North East LEP affairs have been conducted to a high professional standard and are consistent with the expectations and requirements in the DLUHC National Assurance Framework Guidelines.

Signed:

Name: Janice Gillespie

Position: S73 Officer, North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Date: 10th January 2022