



## 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](mailto:localgrowthassurance@levellingup.gov.uk) copying the BEIS Area Lead by **19 January 2023. (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. 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 regularly, 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 are published on the LEP website.

The NTCA Cabinet and Mayor approve all LEP Board decisions under delegated authority, with these subsequently reported to the next NTCA Cabinet meeting. Regular LEP funding programme and plans are also submitted to the Cabinet to provide transparency and opportunities for scrutiny. During 2022/23 the LEP funding programmes were subject to an internal audit review in regard to the accountable body's oversight role.

There have been no changes to the LEP Officer Delegation Scheme and where financial decisions are taken under delegation these are reported for information to the LEP Board and to the NTCA.

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 programmes prior to their submission to DLUHC / BEIS.

As required, I have signed off quarterly and biannual financial data returns to DLUHC on LEP managed funding programmes.



Either I or my SFM attend LEP Technical Officer Group meetings where draft project investment reports and programme performance 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 and in particular on the establishment of the £35m Commercial Property Investment Fund and procurement of an external Fund Manager.

The LEP budget and outturn position are reported transparently in NTCA Budget Reports and included within the NTCA Statement of Accounts which are subject to annual external audit.

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.



Name: Janice Gillespie

Position: s73 Officer North of Tyne Combined Authority

Date: 17/1/2023