

Section 151 Officer Statement

During 20/21 the Accountable Body (AB) has continued to support the LEP during this challenging year and adapted to new ways of working to ensure a consistent service has been provided.

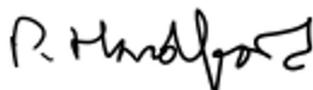
Investment Board meetings have continued to be held, all as scheduled, to allow decision making to continue and as part of this we have provided the initial ICT support to enable this to happen and provided the Investment Board with budget updates for all funds, ensured projects are fully compliant with the Local Assurance Framework (LAF) at every meeting.

One of the main tasks we have completed is to ensure the financial accounts for the newly incorporated LEP were filed with Companies House. To assist with this we commissioned HSKS Greenhalgh, a local accountants, to undertake the production of the accounts and also an audit. We also presented the 2019/20 accounts to the LEP Board on the 24th November 2020 for Directors approval and adoption by the Members at the AGM on the 2nd December 2020.

The LAF has been reviewed in order to meet the requirements in the National Assurance Framework (NAF). These were approved at the 24th November 2020 LEP Board. I am satisfied that the LEP is fully compliant with the NAF and that it continues to strengthen its performance management and its governance.

The AB's Internal Audit have conducted their annual audit and a number of areas of good practice were identified, including the Investment Board operates with clear Terms of Reference and acts as the main decision making and approval forum and the LEP operates in accordance with a governance framework approved by the LEP Board. Five recommendations were raised, two of which were considered 'high priority'. The first is to ensure 40% of all expenditure declared by private sector projects is sampled on a quarterly basis. And the second is to ensure a grant agreement to cover the Growing Places fund loan to Nottingham City Council in relation to the Boots EZ project is signed as soon as possible.

All LGF has been committed by September as per our commitment to MHCLG back in June 2020 and all LGF expenditure is expected to be utilised before the 31st March 2021. The GBF programme continues to progress well and any underspend from the 20/21 allocation will be utilised by the AB through its freedom and flexibilities given by MHCLG. Outputs continue to be a challenge and Covid will no doubt have an impact on when outputs are delivered, however as restrictions continue it is too early say what impact this will have, however we will continue to monitor closely and stay in regular contact with the project promoters.

Signed: 

Name: Peter Handford
Position: S151 officer
Date: 18/1/2021