



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

## 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](mailto:localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk), copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead by **20 January 2021**.  
**(max 500 words)**

The financial affairs of the LEP are managed synonymously with the affairs of the MCA and SYPTE. This ensures that the LEP's financial affairs are managed in accordance with regulation and best practice.

As the S73 Officer it is my responsibility to ensure that the Group discharges its fiduciary responsibilities and acts as a sound steward of the public funding afforded to it.

Over the last twelve months we have worked closely with the LEP to ensure that its financial activity is guided and ultimately controlled. This has supported the LEP in playing a full role in shaping both the delivery of existing programmes and steering the region's response to the pandemic, informing our Renewal Action Plan.

The financial management arrangements for LEP, MCA and SYPTE are well established and comply with the governance requirements.

In support of continuous improvement, we have implemented a number of changes over the last twelve months. A new, wholly hosted, financial system has been procured and implemented, affording greater control over financial management and reporting. This has been complemented by a new system of in-year financial management that has supported the Group in navigating through Covid related budget pressures.

We have further reviewed our approach to financial planning, and implemented a new system based on Corporate and Business Planning. This strengthens our approach to delivering a medium-term financial strategy that is aligned to the aspirations of the LEP.

Recognising the LEP's desire to support business growth we have reviewed our approach to financial interventions and begun a new workstream to develop a financial toolkit to enable more efficient support to business. The approach to determining LEP investments remains robust, and I sit at the heart of decision making. Our Assurance Framework specifies that all



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business cases brought forward for funding for schemes come before the Appraisal Panel which is chaired by a private sector member of the LEP Board and is supported by the statutory officers. At full business case stage, ahead of final sign off, each scheme is reviewed by independent experts to inform recommendations and verify delivery outcomes. Following this review the Monitoring Officer and S73 Officer are required to sign off each case verifying outcomes and VFM before funding is authorised.

Our Assurance Framework specifies the need for post-delivery evaluation of investments. This supports continuous learning and improvement and helps to shape future investment programmes. Over the year the LEP Board has continuously received financial and delivery updates to promote scrutiny and oversight of its programmes of activity.

I am content that the LEP is sufficiently apprised of information and support to ensure that the funding awarded to it is deployed well, in a manner befitting the use of public funding. I am pleased to report that the MCA's accounts were reviewed by the external auditor, with an unqualified opinion issued and with no issues to report on the VFM statement. Despite the impact of the pandemic, I remain confident that the LGF programme will be delivered on time.

Signed: 

Name: Gareth Sutton

Position: S73 Officer – Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham & Sheffield  
Combined Authority/Sheffield City Region LEP

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021