

**Annex B: Section 151/73/127 Assurance Statement 23-24**

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 DHLUC/DBT Area Lead by **29 February 2024. (max 500 words)**

As Section 151 Officer of GCC responsible for the Accountable Body (AB) function provided to the LEP, I can confirm that GFirst LEP operates in accordance with its Local Assurance Framework (version 10, Jan 2023) and I am satisfied that the LEP has implemented the minimum standards as outlined in the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (Version 4, Sept 2021).

The AB team are able to routinely scrutinise LEP governance as we are given full access to the LEP processes and decision making. AB officers were engaged formally on a regular basis up to April 2023 through the Programme Management Group and are involved more informally but still on a regular basis as the Growth Programmes wind to a close. The senior AB officer attends and feeds in-to the financial reports of the LEP Investment Panel meetings and I or my nominated deputy attend the LEP Board meetings.

The LEP and AB have a strong working relationship with officers from both parties that have worked together for several years now through the PMG. There is a high level of mutual respect and trust, and business is conducted in an open and transparent manner. This allows the group to resolve issues, working together constructively as and when they arise.

I am satisfied that the LEP operates with good governance and transparency. The LEP has always considered carefully the diversity of the board and has consistently exceeded the minimum thresholds expected for both gender (6 of 13 board members) and the public/private sector (10 of 13) representation.

I can confirm that the LEP maintains a public register of board member's interests and also a public register of 'gifts, hospitality and expenses' received by both board members and staff.

The primary focus for the AB over the last year has been planning for the integration of the LEP in the County Council, advising on asset disposals for project promoters where projects have completed their delivery period and the ongoing administration of the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund.



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GCC have worked alongside GFirst LEP to understand the funding conditions and reporting requirements associated with the various funding programmes and to ensure all deadlines are achieved. The full spend profile for the GBF programme was achieved by 31-3-22 and there is now only one legacy LGF project yet to fully claim all funds, the Gloucester Railway Station project, but all contracts have now been let with full completion expected autumn 2024.

The integration plan has now been agreed and approved by GCC Cabinet with LEP activities transferring to GCC with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 which is funded for 2024-2025 financial year only and includes a number of staff transferring under TUPE arrangements.

Funding beyond March 2025 is uncertain – future funding requests will need to compete against other Council priorities

Signed:

Name: Paul Blacker  
Position: Director of Finance and S151 Officer  
Date: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024