

Annual Assurance Statement 2019

We confirm that EM3 has adhered to the values and standards as set out in our Assurance Framework which was published on a dedicated governance section on our refreshed website in March 2019. Our Assurance Framework is regularly reviewed by our team and by our board and we strive to reach high standards in transparency and accountability in all that we do.

EM3 has a strong culture of continuous improvement and we embrace change whether it be in governance, new delivery models or within the way we work as a board and team.

EM3 has always responded swiftly and positively to refreshed governance requirements. We have met the requirements of LEPs as set out in the National Assurance Framework published in January 2019 including being on target to meet the diversity deadline of a one third representation of women on our board by March 2020 and half by 2023. We have contributed to a range of activities, as evidenced by the leading role we have played across Southern LEPs to promote diversity on LEP Boards.

We are open, transparent and accountable and have a strong culture of continuous improvement across the organisation. Over 2019, we revised our website to ensure that key documents can be located easily across a number of different devices. Our Annual Report was published in June 2019 at our Annual General Meeting which was attended by over 200 delegates from across the local business community.

Following our AGM our Annual Report was sent all MPs across the EM3 area. We have worked with our Accountable Body to independently audit the arrangements in place between our two organisations and this work concluded that these arrangements were robust. As we have done for a number of years, we publish our audited accounts on our website, along with all our finance monitoring papers which are presented to the EM3 Board.

Our culture of continuous improvement, accountability and transparency can be evidenced by three key strands of work in 2019:

1. Our published **Delivery Plan** – in response to the revised National Assurance Framework, we prepared and published a Delivery Plan in April 2019 which set out what we intended to achieve in 2019/20. The Board receive updates on the progress at each Board Meeting and these updates are published on our website.
2. Our commitment to **independent evaluation** of our activities. We have commissioned a comprehensive piece of work that will not only look at projects and programmes but also at our work as an organisation as a whole. It will draw on a number of contributions from businesses, partners, local authorities and government departments. We are committed to publishing this work and sharing it with others in early 2020.
3. Our new **scrutiny arrangements** which have been implemented through our Joint Leaders Board. The first formal scrutiny panel met in November 2019 and was attended by Leaders from across the EM3 area. Our JLB confirmed their confidence in the LEP and the minutes from this meeting are available on our website.

In summary, at EM3 we are determined to have and be seen to have the highest standards of governance, accountability and transparency. We recognise this involves making sure theory is played out in day to day practice; being open to outside scrutiny and keeping standards constantly under review.