

Annex B: Section 151/73 Assurance Statement

The Section 151/73 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. In particular, you should focus on any particular issues raised in Annex A Annual Performance Review Preparation. This should be sent to localgrowthassurance@communities.gov.uk copying the Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead by **16 December 2019. (max 500 words)**

As Head of Finance for Hampshire County Council I have worked closely with Enterprise M3, representing the Accountable Body (Hampshire County Council) on the Enterprise M3 Board and Programme Management Group. Senior members of my team also represent the Accountable Body at the Resources, Finance and Audit Committee and the Enterprise Zone Programme Steering Group. Additionally, I meet regularly with the Enterprise M3 Chief Executive and key members of staff.

I witness and endorse the strong ethos of continual improvement throughout Enterprise M3, with the Nolan Principles embedded throughout the organisation. Governance around decision making and transparency are very strong across the Enterprise M3 LEP with high quality formal documentation clearly setting out the position to all boards and committees. This allows for well informed decisions that are subject to external due diligence and rigorous and robust challenge. I can confirm that strict adherence is paid to protocols around declarations of interest with interested parties being excluded from the decision-making process.

At an operational financial level, the HCC finance team and I have a strong working relationship with the EM3 Chief Executive, the Assistant Director Operations, Capital Programmes Manager and the Finance Manager that ensures, on a monthly basis, that all financial revenue and capital income and expenditure is accounted for and that all relevant financial information is presented in a transparent way and made available to the Boards and Committees.

This year to ensure that all the new requirements of the Assurance Framework are being adhered to, Hampshire County Council commissioned an audit to review the Accountable Body arrangements for Enterprise M3. This audit focussed on the role of Hampshire County Council as the LEP's Accountable Body and the implementation of the updated Assurance Framework, effective from April 2019. The audit selected and reviewed a sample of projects to assess compliance with the agreed criteria and performance requirements. This work concluded that there is a "sound framework of internal control is in place and is operating effectively with no risks to the achievement of systems objectives have been identified". This work goes over and above the requirements set out in the National Assurance Framework and is an example of the way in which both Enterprise M3 and Hampshire County Council operate.

The County Council also continues to work collaboratively with the LEP to ensure that resources are used in the most effective way and to provide cash flow support and loan funding if required to even out fluctuations in Government Funding. I have identified no issues of concern in governance or transparency and I look forward to a continued close working relationship next year.

Signed: Signature not included in this version

Name: Rob Carr

Position: Head of Finance

Date: 12 December 2019