

The LEP Chair and Chief Executive should provide here a brief formal assurance statement on the status of governance and transparency. In particular, you should focus on any issues raised in the LEP Review. This statement should also be published on the LEP's website following conclusion of the Annual Conversation Process (in April 2019) You should cover any Overview and Scrutiny function undertaken by the Accountable Body.
(max 500 words)

CWLEP has completed another year of positive progress in terms of governance, delivery and strategy achieving classifications from the Annual Performance Assessment that place us in the top three of all LEPs for overall performance. By using the LEP Review process CWLEP has been able to once again articulate its clear ambition to be the benchmark for other LEPs.

Governance and Decision Making

Further development of policies and processes will continue moving forward reinforcing CWLEP's determination to be 'best in class' regarding governance and transparency. The governance processes, supported by the F&G Board and the accountable body's section 151 officer, have been further expanded and continue to be strengthened with the addition of documented key policies, which develop employee awareness, reduce risk, assist transparency and develop consistency across the group companies.

Further policies added include a Privacy policy, Secure Handling and BYOD policy, a Leave Policy which has been combined with the Staff Handbook, and an Employee Privacy statement compliant with GDPR introduced. Group employees have also received GDPR awareness training and CWLEP have their own Data Protection Officer and are members of the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office).

In the interest of further transparency all members of the CWLEP Executive have completed a register of interest form. These are published on the website. Coventry and Warwickshire Champions Ltd has been repositioned as a direct subsidiary of CWLEP. The subsidiary will be guided by and adopt CWLEP governance and is focused on continuing its success as the best business networking body in Coventry & Warwickshire, that other LEPs want to emulate. Its focus remains on telling, selling and promoting all that is good about the area and now has 150 business members governed by a strong Place board.

CWLEP has increased the size of its board to 20 and strengthened its commitment to Equality and Diversity in the recent appointments of 3 female directors and representation of the SME sector with the appointment of Tony Minhas. The board have resolved to strive towards the targets for 2020 and 2023 set out in the review and have agreed to changes in the constitution that place a collective responsibility on all categories of board directors to achieve equality and diversity.

Scrutiny has been strengthened with the creation of a super scrutiny panel through the Coventry & Warwickshire, Hinckley & Bosworth Joint Committee.

Delivery

Regarding CWLEP programme and project delivery, the significant detail provided by the Programme Management Team within its regular Programme Reports has been central to its transparency and understanding. These have provided the private sector led PDB (and the LEP Board) with clear visibility of each project, supported by RAG ratings and action plans. This has enabled the PDB to review higher risk projects in substantial detail, leading to specific actions and recovery plans which have addressed any ongoing risks. The Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Deal achieved full defrayal against its Government allocation of £14.859m in 2018/19. Overall the programme defrayed £21.772m of project spend in 2018/19 which was above the spend target for the year. This demonstrates the CWLEP's ability to effectively manage large programmes involving multiple projects and stakeholders. The LGF Programme has committed over 99% of its allocation and of the 41 projects, 25 have spent 100% of their allocation. In addition, over 50% of projects have defrayed between 70 – 100% of their allocations. The CWLEP has a clear pipeline of projects refreshed in 2018 with a clearly endorsed strategy for managing any remaining LGF funding. After successfully achieving its 2018/19 financial target, the Local Growth Fund is targeted with achieving £36.542m of project defrayal against the Government allocation of £8.215m for 2019/20.

Strategy and Strategic Direction

Through its extensive partnership work, the CWLEP continues to utilise the expertise of local public and private sector stakeholders to develop its strategies and programmes, to help secure ongoing funds, and deliver economic and lasting change within the region. An OECD study has described the CWLEP as “a key linking organisation for local businesses, universities & government, helping to co-ordinate, prioritise and stimulate action”. The CWLEP's partnership-based approach encompasses both its core governance and delivery structures, and through more informal means such as the provision of advice and guidance, and engagement with its business groups. These types of engagement take place not only at the Coventry and Warwickshire level, but also the wider WMCA and Midlands Engine area levels and with Government via a positive working relationship with our BEIS local team our LEP sponsor and MHCLG. We are an active member of the LEP Network contributing to policy debates and dialogue with Whitehall.

CWLEP supported joint working between a series of partners in relation to specific investment and development opportunities in Coventry and Warwickshire. One notable success has been the significant collaboration between WMG, Coventry City Council and the CWLEP resulting in the award of £80m funding for the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre (UKBIC). As one of the WMCA 3 LEPs we have taken a key role in developing and launching the West Midland Local Industrial Strategy with the Chair of CWLEP as the Chair of the WMCA Strategic Economic Development Board.



The CWLEP Growth Hub remains one of the key catalysts in the region for aiding the development of local businesses, helping increase employment opportunities and increasing local prosperity. CWLEP continues with its engagement of the regions SME's with support for this very important regional sector coming from its well-developed SME Business Group and CWLEP's highly thought of Growth Hub.

Final Outcome of Annual Conversation 2018

On 18th April 2019, Stephen Jones, Director Cities and Local Growth Unit sent a letter to CWLEP announcing the final outcome and conclusion of the 2018/19 Annual Performance Review (APR). **Governance** of CWLEP is considered to be **EXCEPTIONAL** highlighting the strong private sector leadership, engagement and challenge which is now embedded in the CWLEP Board and its sub- boards. **Programme Delivery** within CWLEP is considered to be **GOOD** and recognises that the Programme Delivery Board is operating effectively, and the region is ably supported by the Growth Hub. The **Strategic Impact** of CWLEP is considered to be **EXCEPTIONAL** recognising that the strategic leadership and influence of CWLEP is highly effective in carrying forward policy challenges at a national and regional level.