



Governance Assurance Annual Statement 2018

As an organisation that is both funded by and responsible for public funds, robust and transparent governance is essential. We have strong systems in place to ensure that we apply the highest standards of governance, supported by our accountable body, the North East Combined Authority (NECA).

We take seriously the importance of delivering our responsibilities as a Local Enterprise Partnership through compliance with Government best practice guidelines and in accordance with our own operating principles and standards detailed in our [Local Assurance Framework document](#). This sets out how we make decisions and ensure value for money when we invest in projects across the North East LEP area. Importantly, this document also sets out how we communicate and publish information to the public about our affairs such as our annual accounts, with the latest accounts being able to be viewed [here](#) on the our accountable body's website. The NECA S73 Finance Officer has arranged for the external audit of our latest accounts and these have been confirmed as being in good order.

This year, we've launched a newly designed North East LEP website with an improved user journey, meeting national best practice guidelines. We've introduced a section that provides full details of all projects that we invest in. It also features a new section that updates regularly on the six targets set out in the North East Strategic Economic Plan. You can view this section [here](#).

The North East LEP has continued to receive strong support from the NECA and its seven constituent local authorities. The NECA committees perform an important democratic role in being able to review our activities and to hold the LEP to public account. The NECA Governance and Overview and Scrutiny Committees receive updates on our activities and are able to review planned key decisions. These meetings and the NECA North East Leadership Board meetings are held in public and Board papers can be viewed [here](#).

We also during the year co-located the Monitoring Officer at NECA with the LEP Executive Team. The Monitoring Officer's role is to ensure that we have robust and transparent governance arrangements and importantly that we operate legally with clear policies and procedures on such matters as complaints and whistle blowing for instance.

All Board members complete declaration of interest forms and due care is taken to ensure that correct procedures are followed when there is a potential conflict and this is reflected in the minutes of meetings. Board minutes and the register of Board member interests are published on our website [here](#).

We continue to enjoy strong relationships with business representative groups and hold regular senior level meetings with the North East England Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Federation of Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs Forum. This strength of collaboration has been recognised by Government.

In March 2017 we formally launched the refreshed North East Strategic Economic Plan after 12 months of evidence building and extensive consultation. With over 300 stakeholders attending the launch, we were delighted by the support and enthusiasm for the refreshed plan and we have benefited from on-going support from across the region as we strive to deliver the objectives of the plan, in partnership, to create 100,000 more and better jobs for the North East LEP area.

Chair & Chief Executive Sign-off:

Andrew Hodgson
Chair, North East LEP
25/01/2018

Helen Golightly
Executive Director, North East LEP
25/01/18