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Date: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Melanie Dawes  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Dear Ms Dawes,

### **Assurance Framework Compliance – Hertfordshire LEP**

I am the s151 officer for Hertfordshire County Council and therefore have responsibility for Accountable Body considerations with regards to the Hertfordshire LEP.

I, my finance team and officers from the Hertfordshire LEP have worked incredibly hard in recent weeks and months to respond positively to the evolving position around LEP governance and we all support the direction of travel around strengthening LEP governance, transparency and accountability.

This work has not been straightforward, with guidance continuing to develop and evolve, right up to today's deadline for when s151 officers are required to formally submit declarations of compliance. I also note that the welcome engagement with CIPFA to support s151 officers with their responsibilities has not yet resulted in formal guidance being published.

I have engaged closely with this work and have worked with LEP officers to update our local assurance framework and ensure it is published on our website.

I am satisfied that the Hertfordshire LEP's local assurance framework has been agreed and implemented and that it meets the standards set out in the LEP National Assurance Framework (2016) and that the LEP's policies and processes meet the minimum requirements set out in the LEP Governance and Transparency Best Practice Guidance (2018). We are continuing to monitor the position closely and will continue to make changes to our policies, local assurance framework, and ways of working, as the national guidance continues to evolve – particularly once the CIPFA guidance to s151 officers is concluded.

During these latest developments, it has become clear that transparency around potential conflicts of interest and acceptance of the formal code of conduct has become particularly important. Decisions at the Hertfordshire LEP are made at one of three locations – the main LEP Board, the recently established "Chair of Chairs" Board or the



Programme Management Committee. I am therefore very pleased that despite the template for conflicts of interest only being circulated a month before the deadline for asserting compliance, we have achieved 100% completion of the conflicts forms and sign up to the code of conduct for every member of these three boards, and they are all live on the Herts LEP website.

Given our focus on ensuring good governance and in the interests of complete transparency, we have gone further than these three decision making boards and have asked every LEP sub-board member to also complete the conflict forms and sign up to the code of conduct.

We have not received completed forms for 7 members of these sub boards by today's submission deadline. Therefore, despite these sub-boards being essentially advisory in nature and not being responsible for final decision making (as this happens at the three boards described above), we have decided to temporarily make these individuals inactive, so they will not be able to provide advice or guidance on decisions being made by the main board.

We will ensure all sub board members have documentation in place before they are able to participate in future meetings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Owen Mapley".

**Owen Mapley**

**Director of Resources and s151 Officer**

**Hertfordshire County Council**

cc Karen Hillen  
Andrew Lee