

Monitoring and Assurance Framework - Programme

Introduction

The Monitoring and Assurance Framework sets out how the Joint Committee Management Officer and Programme Compliance Officer will monitor and assure programme compliance for the programme/project funds allocated to Walsall MBC as accountable body to ensure that the BC LEP, supported by the BCC Ltd in its roles as its secretariat, makes decisions in accordance with the Assurance Framework, and support the Section 151 Officer in regards to annual compliance sign off.

The Monitoring and Assurance Framework applies to the funding streams allocated to Walsall MBC as the accountable body: – Local Growth Fund (including the Growth Hub project funding from July 2015) and LEP Core and Strategic Funds.

The Joint Committee Programme Management Officer and Programme Compliance Officer will periodically review visit requirements to ensure alignment with funding provider criteria and national recommended guidance.

The Monitoring and Assurance Framework at Programme level comprises of:

- Review of programme documentation on a continuous improvement basis
- Annual Internal Assurance Audits of programme/project evidence

Overview of Assurance Audit

The purpose of the audit is to ensure programme requirements are being met both through pre-contracting and post-contracting activities. Project documentation is reviewed to ensure the project lifecycle is followed as identified in the Assurance Framework, including the approval processes and use of exercised delegated authority. The audit will be carried out annually against programmes to ensure accountable body requirements are met.

Accountable Body Obligations

Document retention timelines are required to be observed by the Accountable Body. The current retention period of 3 years after the end date of this programme 31 March 2021, i.e. to be held until 31 March 2024. All related project information to be held in an accessible format during this period.

Evidence Documentation

Evidence is held in project electronic and hard copy files. Key documents reviewed for audit evidence will be in line with each programme requirement.

Highlighting Issues and Reporting

The Joint Committee Programme Management Officer and Programme Compliance Officer will notify any issues identified following an internal process for resolution and escalation prior to external escalation if material and as appropriate. This may include reporting at 1. Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Board, 2. City Deal, Growth Deal & Combined Authority Working Group and 3. City Deal, Growth Deal & Combined Authority Advisory Board, in line with meeting protocols. The Section 151 officer has the option to attend LEP Board meetings for mitigation as required.

An assurance dashboard will be produced annually to be reported to the S151 officer and City Deal, Growth Deal & Combined Authority Working Group.

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**Figure 1:
Programme Assurance Audit Framework**

The assurance audit will review:

1. A representative sample of projects against the programme lifecycle stages for live projects with signed grant agreements. This will be a minimum 20% of each of the 3 project types i.e. transport, site investigation/developments and other projects, to review:-

- Initial Proposal
- Full Business Case
- Due Diligence
- Project approvals
- Contract award
- Post Contract Delivery and Monitoring processes

2. Pre-contracting activities

To ensure funding recommendations to the BCJC for review by the Joint Committee Secretariat follow assurance framework approvals processes:-

- A representative sample of at least 3 meetings throughout the year of City Deal, Growth Deal & Combined Authority Working Group (to include decisions made by email) for 20% of project proposals taken to the meeting, to review
 - protocol for the meeting
 - subsequent decisions have been met, including implementation of any conditional requirements
 - required documentation prior to recommendation is in place (e.g. initial proposal etc.)
- A representative sample of at least 3 meetings throughout the year of City Deal, Growth Deal & Combined Authority Advisory Board (to include decisions made by email) for 20% of project proposals taken to the meeting, to review
 - protocol for the meeting
 - subsequent decisions have been met, including implementation of any conditional requirements
 - required documentation prior to recommendation is in place (e.g. consultation papers etc.)
- Number of occasions where delegated authority exercised and amount against tolerance at programme and project levels (per financial year)
- Overview of project approval detail found in project evidence.

3. Post-contracting visit activities

100% of live projects across funding streams in relation to previous financial year

- Review of scheduling, process and delivery of programme/project visits
- Overview of project delivery and monitoring process
- Findings and summary of Audit Monitoring dashboard(s) data

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