

Monitoring and Assurance Framework - Programme

Introduction

The Monitoring and Assurance Framework sets out how the Single Accountable Body (SAB) team will monitor and assure programme compliance for the programme/project funds allocated to Walsall MBC as the SAB. This is to provide the BC LEP assurance that funds are being spent in line with the decisions that they have made and follow the BC LEP Assurance framework. In addition this will provide assurance to the Section 151 Officer that grant funding has been spent in line with the grant agreement and enable his submission of the annual compliance letter to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

The Monitoring and Assurance Framework applies to all funding streams received by Walsall MBC as the SAB on behalf of the BC LEP.

The SAB team will regularly 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 Assurance Audits of programme/project evidence
- Annual Internal Auditors checks that funds have been approved through the Assurance framework and are compliant with grant funding conditions

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 required approval processes. The audit will be carried out annually on programmes/projects to ensure accountable body requirements are met.

Accountable Body Obligations- Record retention

Document retention timelines are required to be observed by the SAB in line with funder's minimum requirements. Where this is not stated then a minimum of 7 years after the programme/project closure. All related project information to be held in an accessible format during this period.

Evidence Documentation

Evidence is held in programme/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 SAB team will notify any issues identified during relevant visits with the Project Manager/ Senior Responsible Officer. An audit dashboard will be produced annually and reported to the HoR Working Group. All material issues during each year will be reported to the SAB Working Group and where applicable an agreed method of escalation to relevant parties/boards.

An assurance dashboard will be produced annually to be reported to the S151 officer and the HoR 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 The Funds (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.)
- 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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