



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee

Date	4 October 2023
Report title	Single Assurance Framework (SAF) Annual Refresh 2023
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Report has been considered by	WMCA Executive Board

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee is recommended to:

Read this report and note its contents for information. The report provides background information on the requirement for the Single Assurance Framework (SAF) update and the changes made as part of this year's annual review and refresh.

To note SAF updates have been undertaken and endorse the SAF 2023 version to progress to WMCA Board for approval.

1. Purpose

WMCA is required to undertake an annual refresh of WMCA Single Assurance Framework document in accordance with Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) document: The National Local Growth Framework (September 2021). This framework sets out government's guidance for places that are required to develop their own local assurance framework. The report provides the background to the updated Single Assurance Framework, highlighting the key changes. The updated Single Assurance Framework is also attached.

2. Background

The SAF applies to all existing and new major investment funding and projects that place a financial liability onto the WMCA. It provides consistency of approach and standards for programme assurance, appraisal, and decision-making for these major programmes. It also enables a proportionate approach to be applied for the development of business cases – compliant with HMT Green Book (meeting government's expectations for projects to develop **'better business cases for better outcomes.'**)

Within WMCA, the SAF is a valuable tool to enable the WMCA to deliver successful projects and explain the clear rationale through the development of business cases, detailing how objectives will be delivered, using HM Treasury Green Book principles.

In September 2022, the WMCA Executive Board approved a revised Single Assurance Framework which had a major rewrite. This year the changes are quite minor. The key changes are:

- Clearer highlighting of Governance role and approvals
- Inclusion of Socio-Economic Duty
- Updates to Inclusive Growth Framework
- Inclusion on Modern.gov for Approvals
- Change from Statutory Officers Panel to Designated Sign-Off meeting.
- Changes of name and process for approval from SLT to Executive Board
- Updates to Adult Education Budget Programme

3. Advice

The request is to endorse the attached SAF, it will be submitted to the following:

- 03/11/2023 - Mayor & Portfolio Leads Liaison (this is a new stage requested by Governance)
- 17/11/2023 - WMCA Board for endorsement.

4. Executive Board Support

To note, the updated document was approved by WMCA Executive Board on 6th September 2023.

5. Financial Implications

By adherence to the Single Assurance Framework, the Government Departments will continue to have confidence in the ability of WMCA to manage funds. The SAF does not have any funding requirements, there is no financial approval being requested.

6. Legal Implications

This report outlines the key changes of the Single Assurance Framework which has been updated in accordance with annual review requirements. The updated SAF Guide has been reviewed by:

- Director of Law & Governance
- Head of Legal Services
- Head of Corporate Support & Governance

7. Equalities Implications

No implications.

8. Inclusive Growth Implications

The Single Assurance Framework and supporting proforma have been written to ensure that Inclusive Growth and equalities are part of the considerations when writing business cases. The framework was reviewed by:

- Strategic Lead for Inclusive Growth
- Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth
- Equalities and Diversity Manager

9. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

All areas.

10. Other Implications

N/A

11. Schedule of Background Papers

Appended – Single Assurance Framework (SAF) 2023 version.