

# Single Assurance Framework

September 2022



## VERSION CONTROL SHEET

Version No.	Date	Approver	Update
V3.0	September 2022	WMCA Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review to update SAF, to include Appendices on Housing, AEB, and Transport, removal of duplication.</li> </ul>
V4.0	September 2023	WMCA Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearer highlighting of Governance role and approvals</li> <li>Inclusion of Socio-Economic Duty</li> <li>Updates to Inclusive Growth Framework</li> <li>Inclusion on Modern.gov for Approvals</li> <li>Change from Statutory Officers Panel to Designated Sign-off meeting.</li> <li>Changes in approval from SLT to Executive Board</li> <li>Updates to Adult Education Budget Programme</li> </ul>

This Framework will be reviewed, as a minimum, annually as per requirements, and also amended in response to Government or organisational changes. Every effort will be made to ensure individual users of this Framework and other key stakeholders are made aware of changes when they occur. The next scheduled review is due to be completed in September 2024.

Advice and guidance regarding this policy Framework can be obtained from the West Midlands Combined Authority's Programme Centre of Excellence: [ProgrammeAssuranceandAppraisal@wmca.org.uk](mailto:ProgrammeAssuranceandAppraisal@wmca.org.uk)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

HM Treasury define Assurance Frameworks as ‘An objective examination of evidence for the purpose of providing an independent assessment on governance, risk management, and control processes for the organisation.’

The aim of this document is to set out how the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will spend or invest public money responsibly, both openly and transparently, and achieve Value for Money (VFM). It provides a proportionate and consistent approach for the application and approval of all funding opportunities and the initiation, development and delivery of projects, programmes and activity that places a financial liability onto the WMCA that is not classed as Business as Usual (BAU).

### 1.1 The Purpose of the Single Assurance Framework

This document outlines:

- the WMCA response to the [National Local Growth Assurance Framework](#)
- the respective roles and responsibilities of the WMCA Mayor, the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and other elements of the decision-making
- the key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency, legal compliance, and VFM
- how potential investments will be assured, appraised, prioritised, approved and delivered, and
- how the progress and impacts of these investments will be monitored and evaluated.

The Single Assurance Framework (SAF) sits alongside the following WMCA governance and policy documents:

- [WMCA Constitution](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Single Commissioning Framework](#)
- [Investing With Us](#)
- Strategic Risk Management Framework
- [WMCA Aims and Objectives](#)
- [Annual Business Plan](#)
- [Plan for Growth](#)
- [Inclusive Growth Framework](#). The Assurance Framework has been written to ensure that projects are developed to deliver inclusive growth in a more balanced West Midlands economy.
- Health and Equity Impact Assessments

The SAF has been developed in response to the ‘National Local Growth Assurance Framework’ ([National Local Growth Assurance Framework](#)). It applies to all existing and new 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. It also enables a proportionate approach to be applied for the development of business cases.

The SAF is a set of systems, processes and protocols designed to provide an evidence base and independent assessment of the governance, risk management, and funding processes of a funding or grant applications. It enables WMCA to monitor, measure and scrutinise how well Policy Aims are being met and risks are being managed. It also details processes to be implemented that will help to ensure an adequate response if risks or performance go into exception.

WMCA also operates according to:

- Local Government Financial Framework, as set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Local Government System Statement. [Local Government Finance Settlements](#)
- HM Treasury Guide to developing the project business case [Guide](#)
- HM Treasury Guide to Assuring and Appraising Projects: [Green Book](#)
- [Orange Book](#) (Strategic Risk)
- [Magenta Book](#) (Evaluation)

The SAF provides assurance to the Departmental Accounting Officer by explaining how funding granted or devolved to the WMCA is allocated, and that there are robust local systems and controls in place which ensure resources are spent with regularity, propriety and value for money.

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.

## 2. ABOUT THE WEST MIDLANDS

### 2.1 The Mayoral Combined Authority

WMCA is a Mayoral Combined Authority and is an accountable public body established under [Section 103](#) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It was set up on 16 June 2016, with the mission of improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the West Midlands. Its functions were provided or delegated to it by the following Orders:

- The West Midlands Combined Authority Order 2016
- The West Midlands (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017
- The West Midlands Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions and Amendments) Order 2018
- The West Midlands Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018

As and when Government officially devolves further powers to the Combined Authority, in order to deliver against new policy and agenda, this will be reflected in the SAF.

### 2.2 Regional and Local Leadership

The leadership of the WMCA disseminates from the Mayor and the seven constituent local authorities, who have full voting rights. These are:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- City of Wolverhampton Council

There is also non-Constituent representation from Local Authorities outside of the West Midlands Constituent areas which can sign up for more than one Combined Authority. They are:

- Cannock Chase District Council
- North Warwickshire Borough Council
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Rugby Borough Council
- Shropshire Council
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Tamworth Borough Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Warwickshire County Council

### 2.3 Vision and Priorities

The WMCA vision is to build “a more prosperous and better connected West Midlands which is fairer, greener and healthier.” The WMCA does this through its [Inclusive Growth Framework Fundamentals](#), which focuses all types of investment – public, private, capital, revenue, time, attention – on the same set of social and environmental missions.



This is expressed through the six WMCA Aims and Objectives which are operationalised through the annual business planning process.

When WMCA refreshes its near-term strategy it consults with stakeholders.

## 3 GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

### 3.1 The Mayor

The WMCA Mayor has a manifesto of commitments on which they were directly elected by the electorate across the West Midlands constituent areas. The Mayor executes certain powers and functions that are devolved to the WMCA by Central Government, to deliver their manifesto of commitments to constituents.

The Mayor is the Chair of the WMCA Board. The Mayor provides leadership in terms of proposing a Mayoral budget and as part of the Board in agreeing the revenue and capital budgets for WMCA and ensuring the appropriate use of these budgets.

### 3.2 The WMCA Board

The WMCA Board is the legal and accountable body for funding devolved to the WMCA. It is responsible for a range of functions including transport, housing, skills, economic development, and regeneration functions including post 18 education and training across the West Midlands region.

The WMCA Board exercises all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and the Constitution and agrees policies and delegated responsibilities to conduct its business. [WMCA Constitution](#)

The Constitution details WMCA meetings and Boards, which have either decision-making powers or are advisory. Those with decision-making powers have their Terms of Reference which can be found within the Constitution.

The current Governance Review has produced a diagram showing the different Boards and this can be provided.

#### 3.2.1 Recruitment of New Members

Members of the WMCA Board are appointed by the Constituent and Non-Constituent Authorities designated by the Orders establishing the WMCA. Members must be elected Members of their appointing Authority and must be replaced if they are no longer elected Members.

Members of other Committees of WMCA are nominated by their Authority and appointed to Committees by the WMCA Board.

#### 3.2.2 Induction

New Board members will undergo Induction training covering the senior management structure and their roles, the governance structures including the SAF, how the combined authority is funded, risk, and the annual aims and objectives.

### 3.2.3 Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for members is set out within the WMCA Constitution ([WMCA Constitution](#)), and reminds members that they act on behalf of the whole region's interest and not just their particular area of the region. The Nolan Principles of Public Life ([Nolan](#)) provides a framework for the members and officers of WMCA.

### 3.2.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Board is comprised of elected representatives appointed to the Board by the Constituent and Non- Constituent Authorities and so the composition of the Board is outside of the control of the Combined Authority. However, as a Combined Authority, we'd like to have a Board that reflects the population of the WM region, and so support constituent and non-constituent authority efforts to have elected representatives reflective of their constituent population.

As of June-2023, the gender breakdown of the WMCA Board as a whole (Mayor, constituent authority representatives, non-constituent authority representatives) is 19 men (79%) and 5 women (21%). There is also currently one vacancy on the board.

### 3.2.5 Remuneration

WMCA does not pay any allowances to the Board Members other than the Mayor and Deputy Mayor whose allowance is agreed by the Board following the recommendation of an Independent Remuneration Panel. Chairs of the Audit and Scrutiny Committees are remunerated as agreed by the WMCA Board following the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The WMCA Board on 09 June 2023 agreed payments to be made to all Members of Audit and Scrutiny Committees subject to Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill being passed into legislation at which point they will back dated to the start of the Municipal year.

## 3.3 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

WMCA has established an Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) in accordance with the requirements of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny, Access to Information and Audit) Regulations 2017. The Authority has delegated to the Committee the following powers to deal with matters concerning internal audit and the Committee has the following role and functions:

- reviewing and scrutinising the Authority's and the Mayor's financial affairs.
- reviewing and assessing the Authority's and the Mayor's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements.
- reviewing and assessing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources have been used in discharging the Authority's and the Mayor's functions.
- making reports and recommendations to the Authority and the Mayor in relation to reviews conducted under Standing Orders 11.1(a), 11.1 (b) and 11.1 (c).
- to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and ethical governance by the Mayor, Members, and co-opted Members of the Authority.
- to appoint Sub-Committees with delegated power to consider investigation reports; to conduct hearings (including the imposition of sanctions); at the request of the complainant, to review decisions of the Monitoring Officer to take no action on a complaint;

and at the request of the subject member, to review findings of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and action taken in respect thereof.

- to grant dispensations to the Mayor, Members and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Code of Conduct for Members and co-opted Members.
- to exercise any functions which the Authority and Mayor may consider appropriate from time to time.

### **3.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

WMCA has established an Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Regulations with the powers to:

- review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Mayor and/or the Authority
- make reports or recommendations to the Mayor and/or the Authority on matters that affect the Authority area or the inhabitants of the area
- make reports or recommendations to the Mayor and/or the Authority with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Mayor and/or the Authority
- where a decision has been made by the Mayor, the Authority, or an Officer and was not treated as being a key decision and a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee is of the opinion that the decision should have been treated as a key decision, that Overview and Scrutiny Committee may require the decision maker to submit a report to the Authority within such reasonable period as the committee may specify.

WMCA has also established a Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Regulations for monitoring and oversight of the performance of the transport capital programme delivery for projects being delivered under CRSTS and other funding allocations.

The members of the Committee are nominated by the Constituent and Non-Constituent Authorities forming the Combined Authority.

### **3.5 Investment Board**

WMCA has established an Investment Board as a Sub-Committee of the WMCA Board chaired by the Portfolio Lead for Finance and Investment, which makes investment and financial decisions to proposals between £5million and £20million. The financial delegation between £1million and £5million is made at the Designated Sign-off Meetings. The Investment Board also provide guidance to the WMCA Board for Investment and financial decisions above £20million.

### **3.6 Statutory Officers**

#### **3.6.1 Head of Paid Service**

It is the role of the Head of Paid Service, also known as the Chief Executive, to ensure that all the authority's functions are properly co-ordinated as well as organising staff and appointing appropriate management.

The duties and responsibilities of the post include:

- the statutory responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service to manage the budgets and funding allocations available to the Combined Authority, in partnership with the s151 officer
- leading the Executive Directors to deliver the strategic direction for the Combined Authority as outlined by West Midlands Combined Authority Board
- co-ordinate strategy, development and delivery ensuring a joined-up partnership approach to deliver the aspirations of the West Midlands Combined Authority
- ensure the champion the delivery of the strategic priorities of the Combined Authority and put in place the resources necessary to achieve this. efficient and effective implementation of WMCA's programmes and policies across all services and the effective deployment of the authority's resources to those ends
- advise the Combined Authority, its Board meetings on all matters of general policy and all other matters upon which his or her advice is necessary, with the right of attendance at all Board meetings and other meetings as appropriate
- advising the elected Mayor on the delivery of strategic priorities
- represent the Combined Authority at local, regional and national level in partnership with the Mayor
- act on advice given by the Monitoring Officer on any situations that could put the Combined Authority in jeopardy of unlawfulness or maladministration, or protect the Combined Authority against any reputational risks.

### 3.6.2 Section 151 Officer

The WMCA Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub fulfils the role of the Section 151 Officer, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, extended in Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 – England and Wales.

The responsibilities of the Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub reflect those documented are documented in the CIPFA published document [The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government | CIPFA](#) It details five Principles:

- the Chief Financial Officer in a local authority is a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the authority's Policy Aims sustainably and in the public interest
- the CFO in a local authority must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the authority's overall financial strategy
- the CFO in a local authority must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole authority of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently, and effectively
- the CFO in a local authority must lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose
- the CFO in a local authority must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

In WMCA the Executive Director of the Finance and Business Hub is a member of the Executive Board and has oversight of and an ability to influence all major decisions of the Authority. The Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub has ensured that the Authority has robust systems of internal controls and appropriate separation of duties to ensure the legality and probity of financial transactions.

These processes are set out in the Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders and other policies such as the Money Laundering Policy and the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.

All reports to Boards and Committees include the financial, legal and risk implications of proposals. The Executive Director of Finance and Business Hub and the Finance Team review all reports before they are presented to the WMCA Board or other decision-making Committees.

### **3.6.3 Monitoring Officer**

The Director of Law and Governance has been appointed as the WMCA Monitoring Officer and discharges the functions in relation to WMCA as set out in section five of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Their responsibilities regarding the Assurance Framework are:

- Providing advice on, and maintaining an up-to-date version of the Constitution and ensuring that it is widely available for consultation by members, employees, and the public
- After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, report to the Authority if they consider that any proposal, decision, or omission would give rise to or has given rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposed decisions being implemented until the report has been formally considered by the WMCA Board
- Ensuring that decisions, together with the reasons for those decisions and relevant officer reports and background papers are made publicly available as soon as possible
- Advising whether decisions are within budget and policy framework and whether any decisions or proposed decision constitutes a key decision
- Providing advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues to the Mayor, members and officers, and generally support and advise members and officers in their roles.

Contributing to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct, The Authority has delegated to the Monitoring Officer powers to deal with matters of conduct and ethical standards in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011:

- Discharging the functions under any enactment (whenever passed) of a Monitoring Officer, proper officer, or responsible officer, concerning the Authority's legal affairs and arrangements, including compliance with the law.

The Monitoring Officer and the Legal Team should review all reports to ensure that legal implications are correctly identified before they are presented to the WMCA Board or other decision-making bodies.

## **3.7 Related Processes and Procedures**

### **3.7.1 Inclusive Growth**

The Inclusive Growth Framework is in place to ensure that WMCA delivers inclusive growth, “a more deliberate and socially purposeful model of economic growth – measured not only by how fast or aggressive it is; but also by how well it is created and shared across the whole population and place, and by the social and environmental outcomes it realises for our people.”

This requires all WMCA activities to consider the [eight fundamentals of inclusive growth](#), ensuring all projects, programmes and investments reflect a commitment to social, economic and environmental missions.

### 3.7.2 Equality, Diversity and the Socio-Economic Duty

A procedure is in place to ensure that WMCA and its constituent authorities will take into consideration section 149 of the Equality Act, ensuring that any project considers: Policies

- in particular, Part/Section 1 where "An authority to which this section applies must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage"
- the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not
- the need to foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### 3.7.3 Whistleblowing

WMCA has adopted a [Whistleblowing Policy](#) to enable and encourage employees to raise concerns about wrongdoing by the Authority, the Mayor Officers or contractors without fear of reprisal or detriment.

### 3.7.4 Complaints Procedure

A [Complaints Procedure](#) is in place to ensure that any complaints relating to the arrangements, processes or decision making associated with a project is dealt with fairly and effectively.

### 3.7.5 Gifts and Hospitality

A Gifts and Hospitality policy is in place to ensure that no WMCA Member or WMCA officer receives remuneration or expenses in relation to its activities, other than their salary and in accordance with policy which has a procedure in respect of declaring gifts and hospitality.

### 3.7.6 Registration and Declaration of Interests

WMCA Board and Committee Members are required to make a declaration of any interest they have in an item of business at Meetings of the Board. Officers are required to declare any interests they have in contracts. The completed registration of Members' interest forms are accessible via the WMCA website: [Declarations of interest](#) In addition, elected Local Authority members will have completed their Local Authority's Register of Interest. Where Members have a prejudicial interest in an item of business the WMCA Members Code of Conduct requires that they should leave the meeting while the item is considered.

### 3.7.7 Freedom of Information

A [Freedom of Information](#) (FOI) procedure is in place to manage requests related to the activities of the WMCA. Appropriate data protection arrangements are in place within this process.

### 3.7.8 Treatment of Risk

Our Strategic Risk Management Framework (SRMF) provides the process and structures for undertaking risk management at the WMCA in accordance with HM Treasury Orange Book. The SRMF supports the consistent identification, assessment, monitoring and escalation of risks across Directorates, so as to provide visibility at strategic, operational, programme and project levels.

The SAF has an important role to play in ensuring that risk is managed appropriately by supporting the application of the SRMF across all SAF Projects and Programmes.

### 3.7.9 Transparency

The WMCA is subject to the same Transparency Code that applies to Local Authorities. [Transparency](#). The WMCA website [wmca.org.uk](http://wmca.org.uk) contains a comprehensive set of information and there are links to key documents, referenced within this document.

A Mayoral update is distributed to stakeholders throughout the West Midlands informing them of current and planned WMCA activity and how they can get involved. WMCA has a continuous communications strategy, including using social media to provide the public and stakeholders with updates on activity. Stakeholders and the public can contact the WMCA via the website [Contact Us](#) and by responding to social media posts. A [Calendar](#) of events is available on the WMCA website detailing the dates of all key meetings. Where there is a requirement as a condition of funding, WMCA will ensure that Government (and other funders) branding is used in any publicity material.

### 3.7.10 Inviting Applications for Funding

WMCA publishes details of its tender opportunities on the [Procurement](#) section of its website, In addition, the Housing, Property and Regeneration Directorate has devolved housing and land funds to develop housing and regeneration projects in the West Midlands through equity, loan and grant. Developers and Investors who are interested can contact WMCA on [invest@wmca.org.uk](mailto:invest@wmca.org.uk) More details can be found on [Investing with us, Commercial Development Funding - WMCA CIF - FDC](#). [West Midlands Innovation Programme – Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands](#) also offer opportunities, for Innovation Funding.

### 3.7.11 Publishing Meeting Minutes

The schedule of meetings for the calendar year is published on the WMCA website. The notice of meetings, the agenda and the accompanying papers for formal Board and Committee Meetings are published five clear working days in the advance of the meeting. WMCA includes its Forward Plan in the Agenda of the Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings. Where papers contain commercially sensitive information or are subject to one of the exemptions under the Local Government act 1972 Schedule 12A or the Freedom of Information Act 2000,



they are categorised as a private item and are not published. The Monitoring Officer will give advice regarding whether the item should be classified as private, but Members have to make a decision to go into private session unless a confidential item has been declared confidential by the Government in which case it must be taken in private.

Draft minutes of meetings are published as soon as practicable after the meetings on the WMCA website. All WMCA Board minutes are signed at the next suitable meeting and published.

### **3.7.12 Publishing Decisions**

WMCA publish a Forward Plan of key decisions that will be taken by the WMCA at least 28 days before the decision is made to enable members of the public the opportunity to view and comment upon them. Details of all key decisions made by the WMCA are recorded within a log accessible at: [Decisions](#) The WMCA maintains a live Activity Register to support the Executive Board, this is in addition to a Contracts register which provides details of all contacts and agreements signed by the WMCA.

## 4 THE SINGLE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK: PROJECT LIFECYCLE PROCESS

### 4.1 Introduction to the Single Assurance Framework (SAF)

The SAF is designed to be used as guidance to project developers and sponsors to understand the processes associated with the application and the route to approval of all external funding opportunities. Where financial liability is placed onto the WMCA, the SAF is applicable throughout the four stages of the project or programme lifecycle: initiation, development, approvals and delivery. The SAF provides consistency of approach for Assurance, independent Appraisal, and smart decision-making across all funding pots. Furthermore, it allows proportionality to be applied for the development of business cases via defined development routes. The SAF does not apply to projects or programmes that are defined as corporate, continuous improvement or BAU activity.

#### 4.1.1 A Corporate Project

A corporate project is created to address an internal business need, benefitting the organisation, for example, a change to the operating systems of the organisation. Risk Management should be considered with risks reviewed as part of activity. Once a corporate project is completed, it may become BAU. A Corporate Project should aim to address Corporate Aim 6. (Develop our organisation and be a Good Regional Partner). A corporate project can go through the Change Gateway, a sub-group of CMT (Corporate Management Team) where specialists in Finance, Projects, Digital & Data and Human Resources where applicable will review and support the strengthening of the business case and the identified benefits including whether the resources, both financial and people, are in place to deliver.

#### 4.1.2 A SAF Project

Projects and Programmes which follow the SAF are focussed on achieving positive outcomes for the local community. They are typically funded by external sources such as devolution deals and bid applications/grant awards from Central Government, for example, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and the Investment Programme, where the WMCA is the accountable body. The SAF is applied flexibly and proportionately, dependent upon the level of risk associated with a Project or Programme. The SAF enables an independent assessment and appraisal of an investment opportunity. Programmes and Projects following the SAF route should aim to address one or more of the Corporate Aims (1 to 5).

The SAF process enables accountability, including public engagement, probity, transparency, legal compliance and VFM to be applied, and includes processes for oversight of projects, programmes and how the progress and impacts of these investments will be monitored, reported on and evaluated.

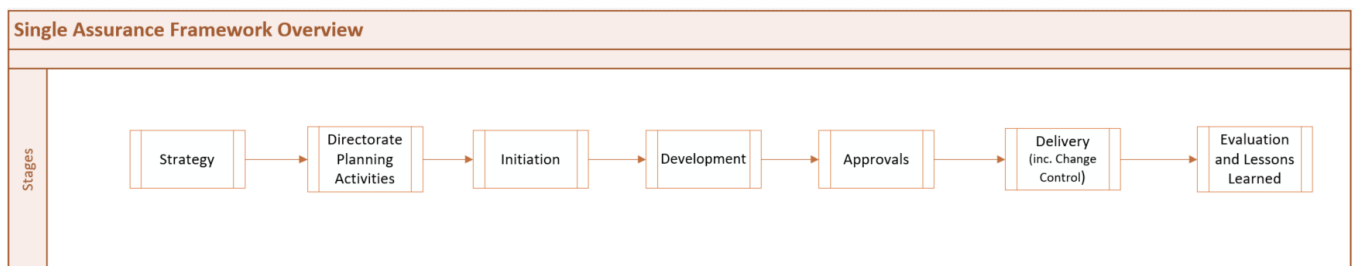
The SAF has been developed to ensure:

- significant financial and governance protections exist for the stewardship of public funds
- delivery of high standards of project development, approval, delivery and oversight
- trust is built in the organisation's officer expertise
- that consistency, controls and clarity are embedded to deliver confidence in the WMCA's decision-making and ability to deliver
- political and reputational risk is effectively managed

- additional funding is secured into the region, by driving continuous improvement of the quality of external funding applications/submissions.

The SAF sets out the appropriate process for the risk and investment profile of a Project or Programme and incorporates guidance on business case and supporting project management documentation required together with the standards and criteria that need to be met to help drive effective project management. Out of Directorate second line of defence assurance and appraisal processes are also incorporated within SAF processes together with additional guidance and templates to drive consistency of approach. These are available on [Single Assurance Framework](#) internet page and on the intranet.

The following diagram provides an overview of the SAF process.



## 4.2 Value for Money

A key objective of the SAF is to support WMCA in making investments that represent the best VFM. All business cases seeking approval are assessed against HM Treasury Green Book and the 5-case model.

## 4.3 Pre-Initiation

The development of project ideas, and external funding opportunities are Directorate-led and co-ordinated/managed using Directorate Activity Registers and the External Funding Application Register. Appendix 5.6 details the External Funding Application Process. This process ensures that the Section 151 Officer and the Executive Board are aware of all potential applications for funding ensuring risks, any conditions of funding, and the resources needed to deliver a project or programme of activity are considered, (with approval given to proceed) should the application be successful.

## 4.4 Purpose of The Annual Plan

The WMCA Annual Business Plan demonstrates how organisational objectives, Directorate plans and programme and project activity support overarching economic strategies, demonstrating a 'golden thread' approach. The purpose of the Annual Business Plan is to:

- articulate the WMCA priorities for the year so that partners and stakeholders understand the key areas of focus
- provide a strategic context for the WMCA as an organisation so its plans and operational activity are aligned to the overall vision and priorities
- enable oversight and review of performance against priorities. It helps to demonstrate how High-Level Deliverables (HLDs) contribute towards delivering the overarching WMCA Policy Aims.

## 4.5 In-Year Proposals for the initiation of Projects/Programmes

Partner organisations may submit in-year Project/Programme Project Initiation Documents that are not included within the current Annual Plan. These will still be considered by the appropriate delegated authority.

## 4.6 New Funding Opportunities

During the year, there may be further unexpected funding opportunities that need to be pursued because of new or changes to existing Government initiatives and priorities or where there is a need to address emerging priorities. Initially, these opportunities will be discussed at Directorate level and progressed through Executive Board meetings. Where these instances emerge, they will be incorporated within the Directorate Activity Register and enter the SAF Initiation stage. Where necessary and appropriate, processes will be expedited to ensure that funding can be accessed quickly.

## 4.7 SAF Stage 1: Initiation

The Initiation stage is the first step to developing a Business Case, a proposal, idea or ambition. All proposals will be required to complete a Project Initiation Document (PID) before they can progress to the project development stage.

Project initiation, like the project development process that follows, is a Directorate led process. The Project Initiation Document (PID) contains key information about the proposal including its strategic fit, development route to be followed, affordability/funding requirements and equality assessment. Directorates should engage the following subject matter experts when developing a PID:

- Finance Representative/Business Partner
- Legal Business Partner
- Procurement Business Partner
- Programme Assurance & Appraisal Team Representative

When a PID is developed, the project is also added to Directorate Activity Registers for discussion at Directorate Pipeline Meetings. The decision to proceed is made according to the delegated authorities.

The PID/project proposal will either:

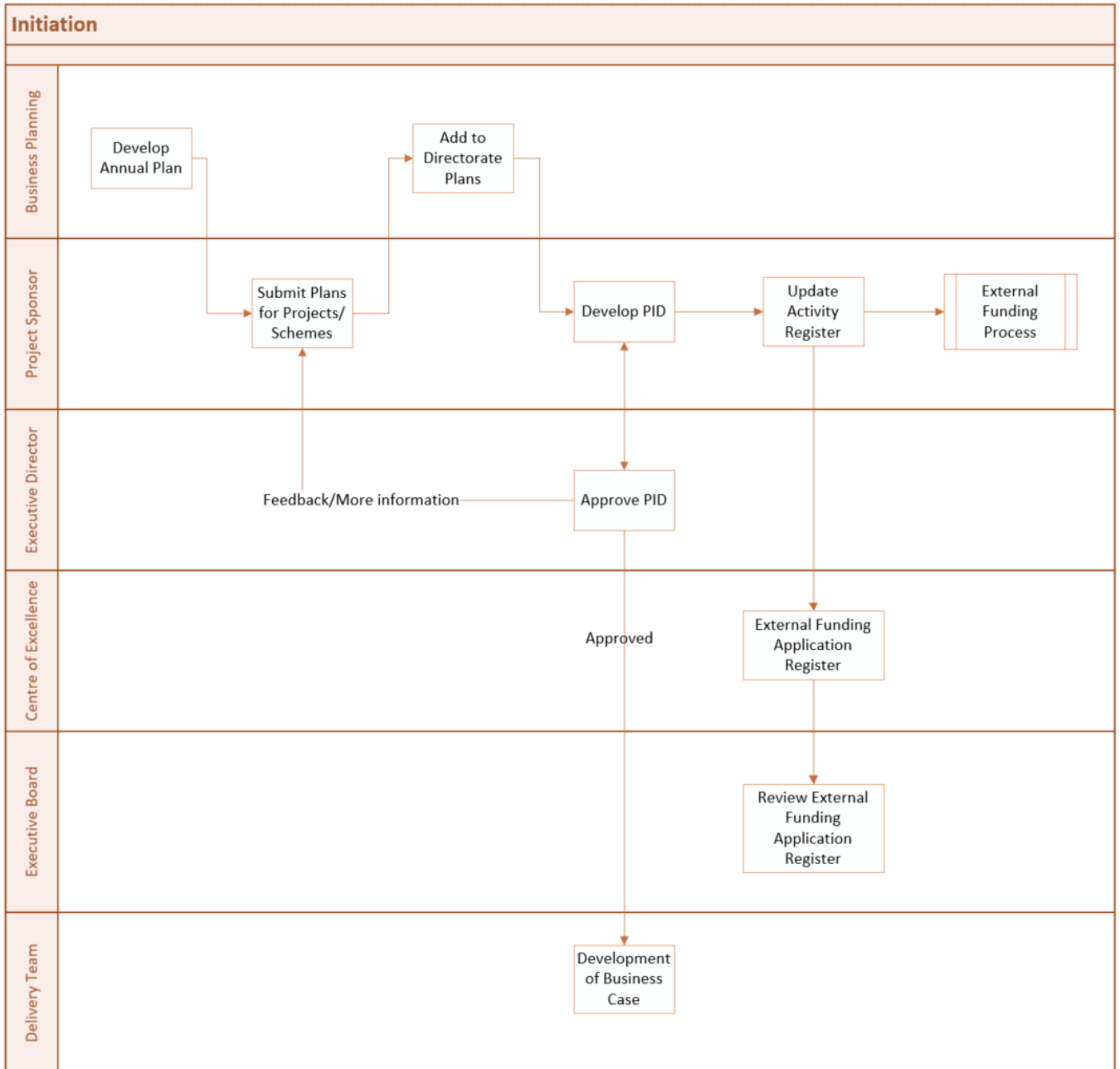
- enter the strategic planning stage, if it is an in-year submission not included in the Annual Business Plan. In such a circumstance the Executive Director can accept the principle of the proposal and submit it to the strategic planning process for consideration for inclusion in future Annual Plans, or,
- be rejected/deferred.

A decision to reject will be taken if:

- it is decided that an Annual Business Plan item is no longer deliverable
- or a strategic fit exists due to changes that have occurred since it was added to the Annual Plan

- if an in-year submission is not deemed to fit strategically with the WMCAs Strategic Objectives.

The PID must be completed and have received Finance (S151) approval, before moving to the development stage. The decision to proceed, also mandates any initial (seed) funding to complete any feasibility study and/or development of the project.



## 4.8 Directorate Pipeline Meetings:

Each Directorate records its own project activity on the Directorate Activity Register. Directorate project leads log projects that are in one of the stages of development and delivery and, whether external funding is being bid for, or being offered by the sponsoring Government Department. The Directorate Meeting is held with the Programme Assurance and Appraisal's Centre of Excellence (CoE), along with wider members of Enabling Services such as Finance Business Partners, Procurement and Business Improvement Team members. External Funding Applications, grants or projects are reviewed to ensure that the project developers have the information/templates they need to develop the project. The CoE will also provide indicative dates of the stages that the project will go through to approval.

The WMCA Executive Board receive a monthly External Funding Application Register for review and approval during their scheduled meetings, and with the appropriate Executive Director held accountable for all Initiation decisions they make. From a scrutiny perspective, the Policy Working Group will also review the register to ensure strategic alignment to WMCA and regional priorities.

If a business case crosses several Directorates/Portfolios, then CoE should advise on who the lead Directorate is.

## 4.9 SAF Stage 2: Development

The Development Phase follows Initiation; this is the stage where the relevant business case(s) is/are developed, and where out of Directorate assurance activity takes place prior to the business case progressing onto the approvals stage. This stage needs to be repeated whenever a business case is developed and requires approval. Support and guidance through this stage is provided by the Programme Assurance and Appraisal team. The CoE will provide guidance on the business case development route of a project is, i.e., the number and type of business cases to be completed.

The business case is developed by the sponsoring Directorate or external delivery partner, ensuring that its content meets the required standard defined within WMCA guidance ([Templates and Guidance](#).) All WMCA business case templates and guidance incorporate HM Treasury Green Book requirements and capture how the scheme will support WMCA Policy Aims and Objectives. The business case sponsor is required to demonstrate within the business case how the scheme will meet any funding conditions and/or delivery milestone dates/requirements. Where the sponsors/delivery partners are external to the WMCA. they will be supported through the process by the lead Directorate within the WMCA. The sponsor is responsible for engaging subject matter experts from key enabling services in the development of their business case:

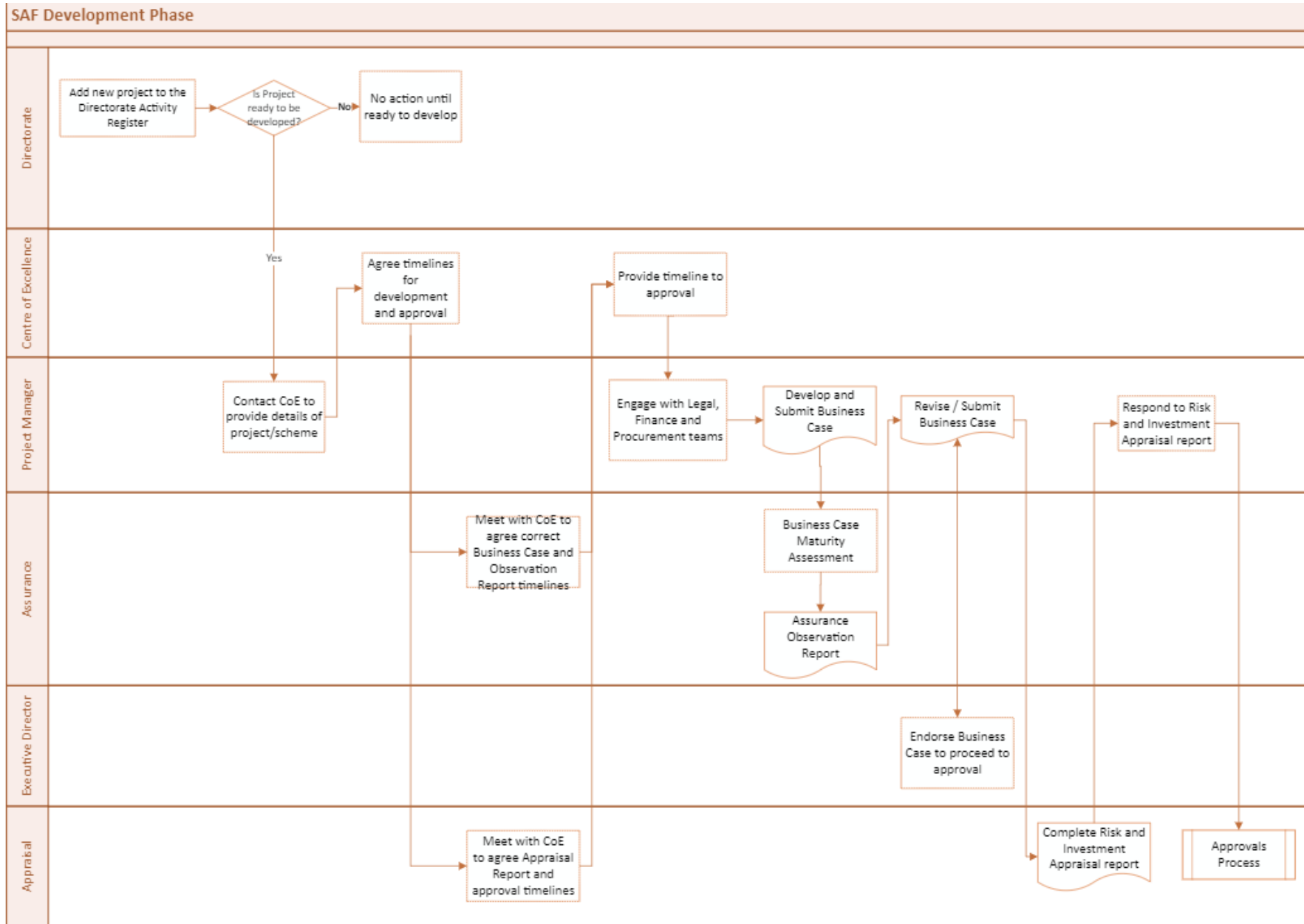
- the Finance Business Partner should review/input/provide assurance of the Financial Case
- the Procurement Business Partner should review/input into the Commercial Case to ensure an appropriate procurement strategy is developed
- the Legal Business Partner should review content/input into the Commercial Case to ensure any funding agreements and/or contractual arrangements are developed appropriately

- technical input may be required for subject matter experts within delivery directorates (e.g., specific input for transport and active travel schemes). The Delivery Directorate and/or CoE will advise on the engagement required.

The Programme Assurance and Appraisal team, via the CoE should be engaged prior to the development of a business case, to ensure an appropriate development route and timeline through to approval is agreed.

The lead Directorate is responsible for ensuring they, any partners, or the sponsor meet deadlines, engage the appropriate subject matter experts and technical appraisers and adhere to required formats when developing a business case. The Programme Assurance and Appraisal team can provide advice on the requirements of the SAF if needed, at the start of and during the Business Case development stage. Sponsors must ensure their business case is developed and is aligned with any external development and assurance requirements (driven by Government Departments), with the aim to eliminate duplication of effort. Where projects are funded through multiple funding streams, the proportionate SAF approach will be agreed by the appropriate delegated authority and implemented.

Early engagement with the Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team is key to ensure any recommendations will be addressed and business cases can be updated within the timescales agreed.





## 4.10 SAF Stage 3: Approvals (Governance)

In order to achieve better decision making, the SAF looks to enable:

- the appropriate initiation process that drives strategic fit
- the proportionate business case development process that meets national and WMCA standards of best practice development
- expertise within Directorates to be used develop required business cases
- out of Directorate/second line of defence assurance principles and processes to assess the maturity of business cases and undertake risk & investment appraisal
- support to focus Board considerations and inform the decision-making process.

In addition to an Assurance Observations Report being produced following the maturity assessment and subsequent update of business cases, a summary Investment Risk and Appraisal will be produced to the decision-making process of the key risks and opportunities associated with the business case.

The process enables:

- decision-makers at all levels to base their decisions upon objective, evidence-based out of Directorate findings and recommendations- in turn driving better decision-makings
- increased Executive Director ownership and delegation
- increased Statutory Officer ownership and oversight
- increased levels of Assurance and Appraisal team support to Panels and Boards
- approvals based on proportionate financial delegation i.e., a request of £50,000 will not scrutinised to the same level of a request for £5million
- the time taken to reach an approval decision being reflective of the level of financial ask.

The business case route is dictated by delegated approval authority/Approval level or the value of the Project. The approval process begins following successful progression through WMCAs Development stage.

### 4.10.1 Key SAF documentation

The level of approval required is required is determined by the level of financial commitment, The following diagram provides an overview of the documentation is needed depending on the approval route:



Further details regarding the purpose of each business case can be found in Appendix 5.5

## 4.11 Risk & Investment Appraisal

All approvals are required to undergo an independent Risk & Investment Appraisal of a business case that is designed to provide the sponsor/Directorate assessment. The independent Risk & Investment Appraisal is undertaken by Programme Investment Appraisers within the Programme Assurance & Appraisal team, its purpose is to provide a report identifying the risk and opportunities profile to help inform decision-makers. A proportionate approach is applied to the level of Appraisal completed in lieu of the financial ask; a one-day Summary Appraisal is completed for items under £1million whereas a five-day comprehensive Appraisal Report is created for items over £1million.

The Risk & Investment Appraisal involves analysis of information within a business case, providing an objective perspective on:

- analysis of content across HMT's 5-case model as outlined within the Green Book
- validation of the evidence base/ content of the Economic Case
- analysis of Net Present Social Value and Social Impact
- analysis of risks and opportunities associated with delivery/cost/time/funding
- analysis of financial, regulatory, investment, reputational and other risks and proposed risk mitigations as outlined within the WMCA's Strategic Risk Framework.

The report will set out:

- an assessment of the level of risks and opportunities in approving that Business Case
- observations on how the level of risk could be mitigated, including cost, including the post mitigation risk level.

## 4.12 Approval Levels

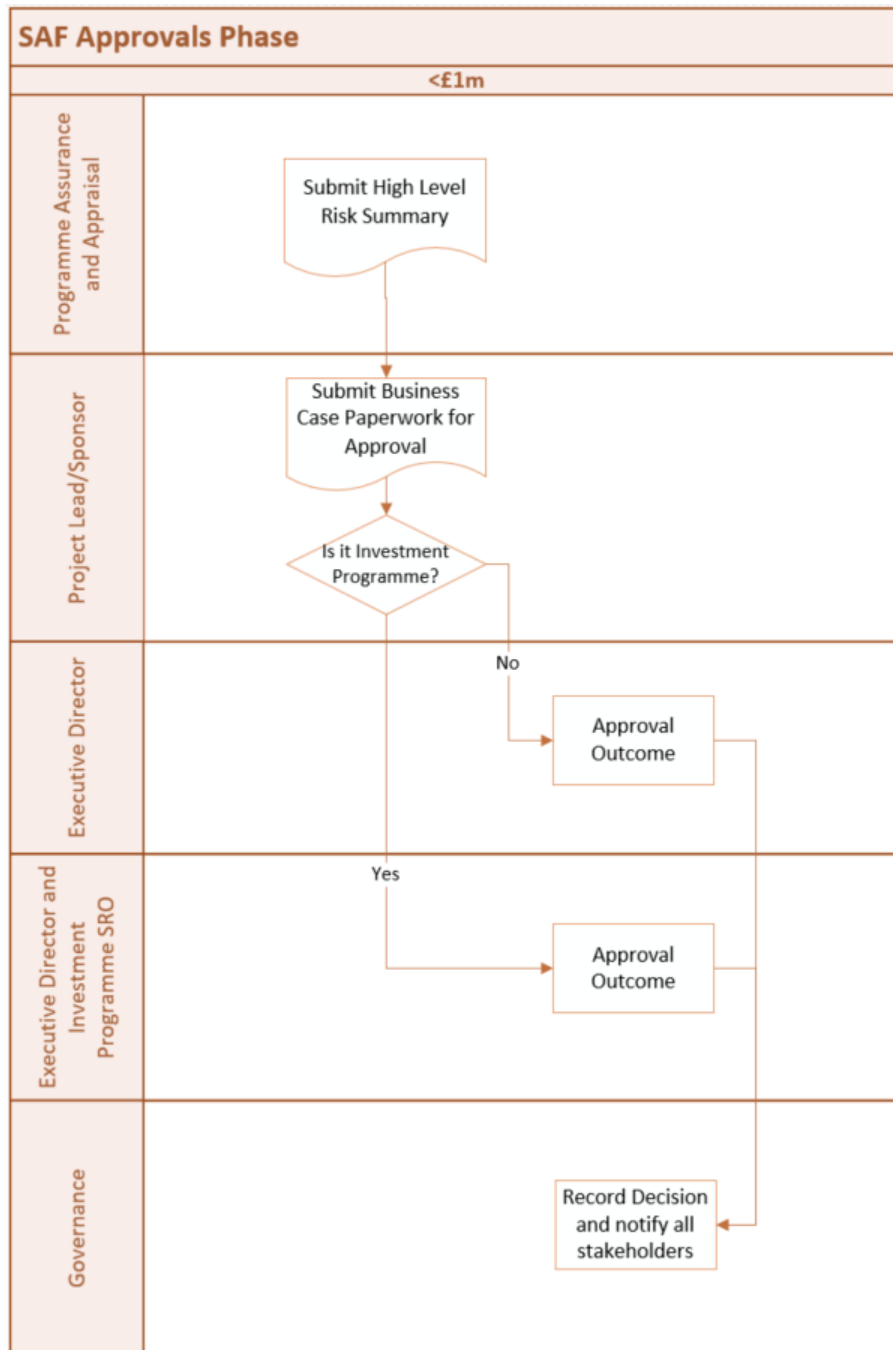
### 4.12.1 Approvals Up to £1million

For Project / Programme approvals, the relevant Executive Directors have delegated approval for business cases up to the value of £1million.

For Investment Programme approvals, the relevant Executive Director will also require the approval of the Investment Programme Senior Responsible Officer (SRO).

A high-level Risk and Investment Appraisal Report is completed to inform the decision-maker of the key risks, opportunities, and approval recommendation to inform their decision. This Report is submitted to the Executive Director alongside sponsor owned documentation such as the Business Case and any required appendices. Decisions taken by the Executive Director are captured in a log held in the Directorate.

The Project Lead/Sponsor will communicate the decision to Enabling Services and any external applicant (if applicable). This will ensure effective mobilisation of the project.



#### 4.12.2 Approvals Between £1million - £5million

These are considered to be Key Decisions and as such must be published on the WMCA public facing website at least 28 days before the decision is due to be made.

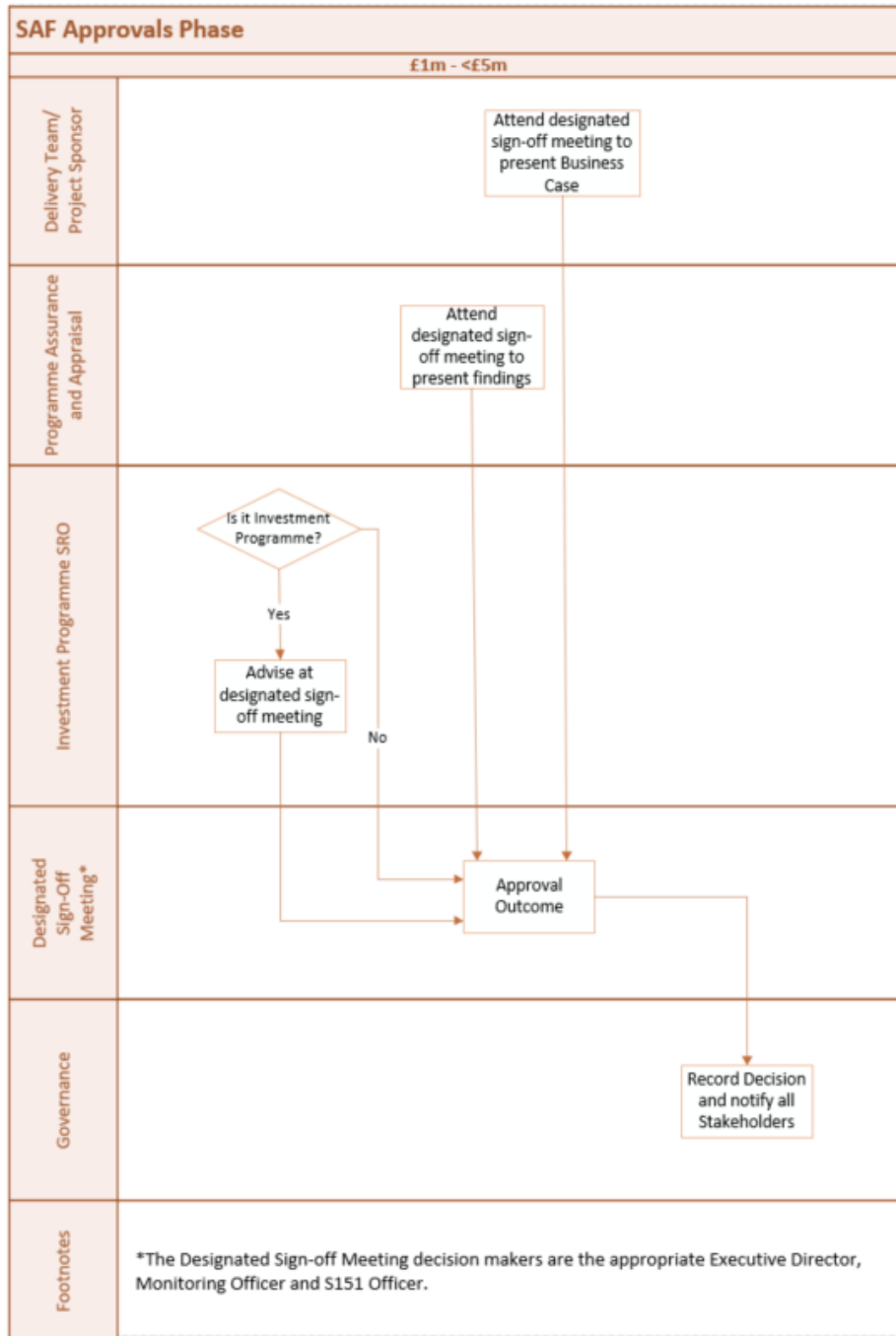
For these, Programme and Project paperwork will be submitted via the Modern.Gov platform including a covering report. Appraisal will upload the Risk and Investment Appraisal report ahead of the meeting where the decision will be made.

The Project Sponsor will submit Project paperwork, including a Cover Report. In tandem, the Appraisal Team will submit a Risk and Investment Appraisal Report. Approvals between £1million and £5million are reviewed and approved at the Designated Sign-Off Meeting, which consists of the following WMCA Officers:



- Relevant Executive Director
- Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
- Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Project Lead/Sponsor (for the section of the meeting for the project requiring a decision)
- Appraisal representative (to advise risks, opportunities and recommendation based on the outcome of appraisal activity.)

Non-Investment Programme funded business cases and approvals only require Designated Sign-Off Meeting consideration: however, Investment Programme funded business cases and approvals also require the involvement of the Investment Programme Senior Responsible Officer who, in such circumstances, will attend the meeting to provide input into the decision-making process. The Risk and Investment Appraisal Report highlights the key risks for consideration. Governance will record the decision taken (with any conditions) and will communicate it to the Project Lead/Sponsor and Enabling Services. If the Delivery Partner is external, the Project Lead/Sponsor will communicate the decision to them.



### 4.12.3 Approvals of £5million and above

These are considered to be Key Decisions and as such must be published on the WMCA public facing website at least 28 days before the decision is due to be made.

For these, the Project Lead/Sponsor will submit all Programme and Project paperwork via the Modern.Gov platform including an Investment Board covering report. Appraisal will upload the Risk and Investment Appraisal report at least 6 clear working days ahead of the Investment Board Meeting.

Approvals above £5million are above the levels of officer approval delegations and must therefore be considered and approved by Boards consisting of regional political representatives. Decision-makers are asked to consider the Business Case and the Risk & Investment Appraisal Report when making a decision.

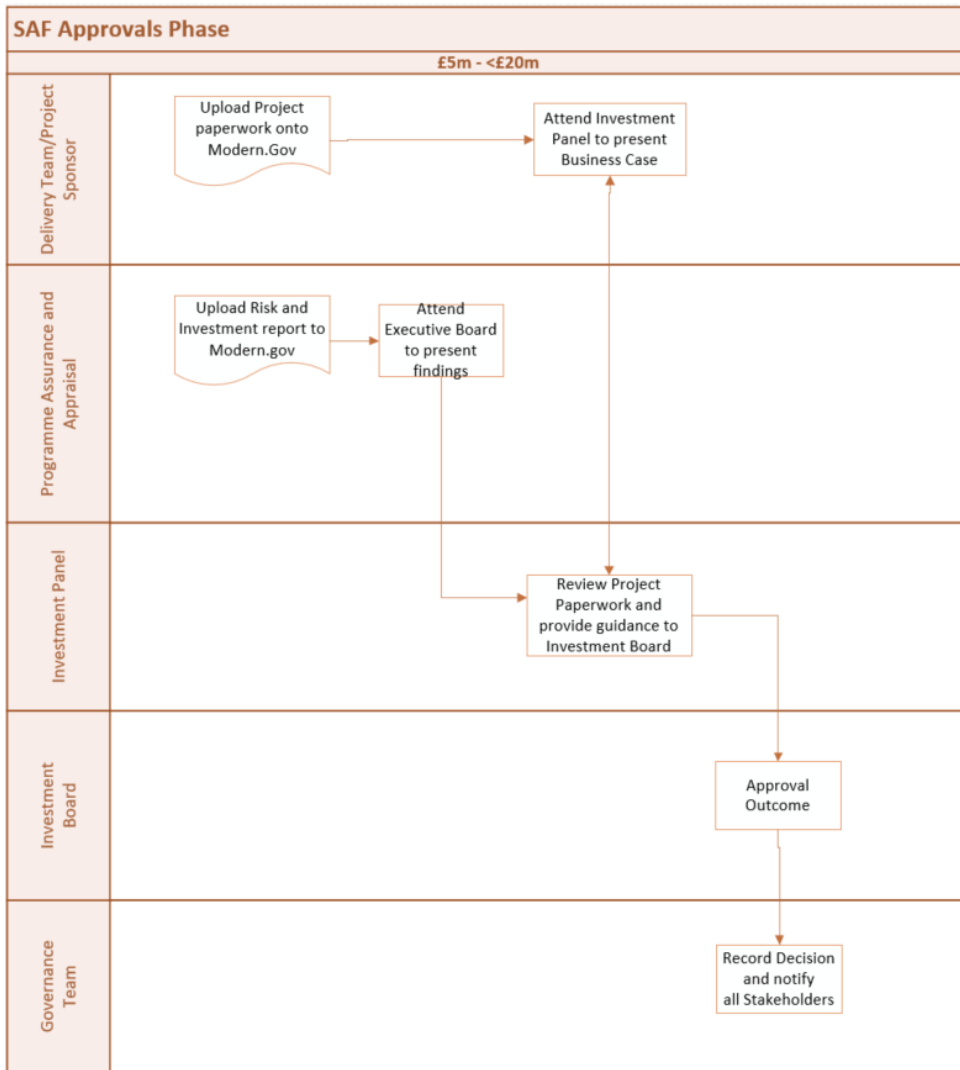
The Project Lead/Sponsor attends the meeting to present the Business Case and answer any queries. Whilst the Appraisal representative attends to highlight any key risks, opportunities and their recommendation to the decision-makers.

To support decision-making boards, and the Investment Panel will review business cases and supporting documentation to support effective decision-making by:

- identifying key lines of enquiry for the Investment Board to focus on
- validating and challenging business case content
- validating and challenging external review of the business case
- validating and challenging the quality and robustness of business case content
- ensuring a consistent approach to challenging HM Treasury's 5 case elements within Business Cases
- examining the Risk and Investment Appraisal to understand key risks, opportunities and recommendations.

The Investment Panel will provide the Investment Board with a recorded discussion for each proposal, noting observations to consider, including the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal, observations on the level of investment risk and providing any recommendations for improvement or to mitigate risks. This may lead to additional conditions to be added to funding agreements, conditions for withdrawal of support, additions to M&E plans.

Governance will record the decision taken (with any conditions) and will communicate it to the Project Lead/Sponsor and Enabling Services. If the Delivery Partner is external, the Project Lead/Sponsor will communicate the decision to them.



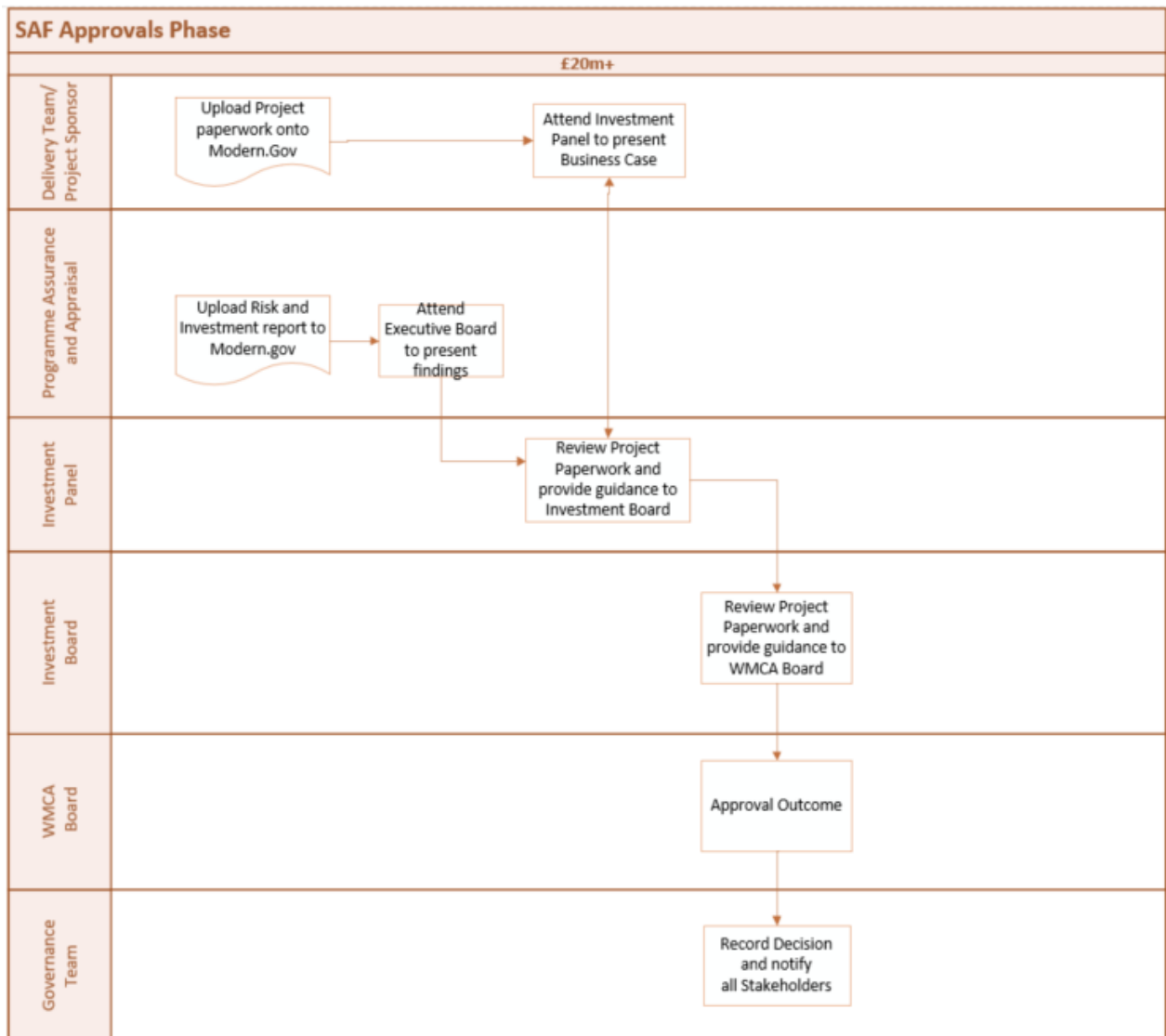


#### 4.12.4 Approvals of £20million and above

These are considered to be Key Decisions and as such must be published on the WMCA public facing website at least 28 days before the decision is due to be made.

There is an additional role for WMCA Board in approving Programmes and Project approvals that are above £20million. For these, Programme and Project paperwork will be submitted via the Modern.Gov platform including the Board Report and Appraisal will upload the final Risk and Investment Appraisal report at least 6 days ahead of the WMCA Board Meeting. The proposal will first be considered by the Investment Board who will then make recommendations to the WMCA Board.

Governance will record the decision taken (with any conditions) on Modern.Gov and will communicate it to the Project Lead/Sponsor and Enabling Services. If the Delivery Partner is external, the Project Lead/Sponsor will communicate the decision to them.



## 4.12.5 Summary of Approval Levels

SAF Approvals Phase				
	<£1m	£1m - <£5m	£5m - <£20m	£20m +
Programme Assurance and Appraisal	Assurance → Risk & Appraisal	Assurance → Risk & Appraisal	Assurance → Risk & Appraisal	
Executive Director		Executive Director Approval		
Designated sign-off Meeting		Approval at designated sign-off meeting*		
Investment Panel			Investment Panel Feedback	
Investment Board			Investment Board Approval	
WMCA Board			>£20m only → WMCA Board Approval	
Footnotes		*The Designated Sign-off Meeting decision makers are the appropriate Executive Director, Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.		

## 4.13 Subsidy Control

WMCA will ensure that all projects comply with Subsidy Control law (formerly State Aid).

Subsidy is where a public authority provides support to an enterprise that gives them an economic advantage, meaning equivalent support could not have been obtained on commercial terms. This could include, for example, a cash payment, a loan with interest below the market rate or the free use of equipment or office space.

Subsidies should be given in the public interest, to address a market failure or equity concern.

To minimise these risks and increase the likelihood that subsidies achieve positive outcomes, the UK subsidy control regime regulates subsidies given in the UK to prevent any excessively distortive or harmful effects. Subsidy control considerations will be made with the advice of relevant professionals in accordance with guidance.

## 4.14 Management of Contracts

Following approval, the Legal Team will send out a Funding Offer Letter, which includes the following: Project Name, Applicant, Maximum Funding Contribution (£), with details regarding when payment was to be issued, (usually connected to milestones), what is Eligible Expenditure, Commencement and Completion dates. Contracts are managed within the individual Directorates to provide a link to the outputs and outcomes of the projects/programmes.

## 4.15 Monitoring and Evaluation

The WMCA Performance Management Framework has been developed in accordance with HM Treasury's Magenta (Guidance for Evaluation) and Green (Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation) Books. The overall approach to monitoring and evaluation is underpinned by the following key principles:

- robust internal controls providing a second line of defence
- adequate resources are in place and detailed in the business case
- monitoring requirements are locally defined, proportionate and reported to the Executive Board in a consistent fashion
- baseline information is consistent across key projects and programmes
- basic process evaluation is conducted internally and more detailed evaluation is commissioned
- data is collected once and used many times to inform other critical documents, such as the Annual Business Plan.
- lessons learned are used to inform future projects and programmes.

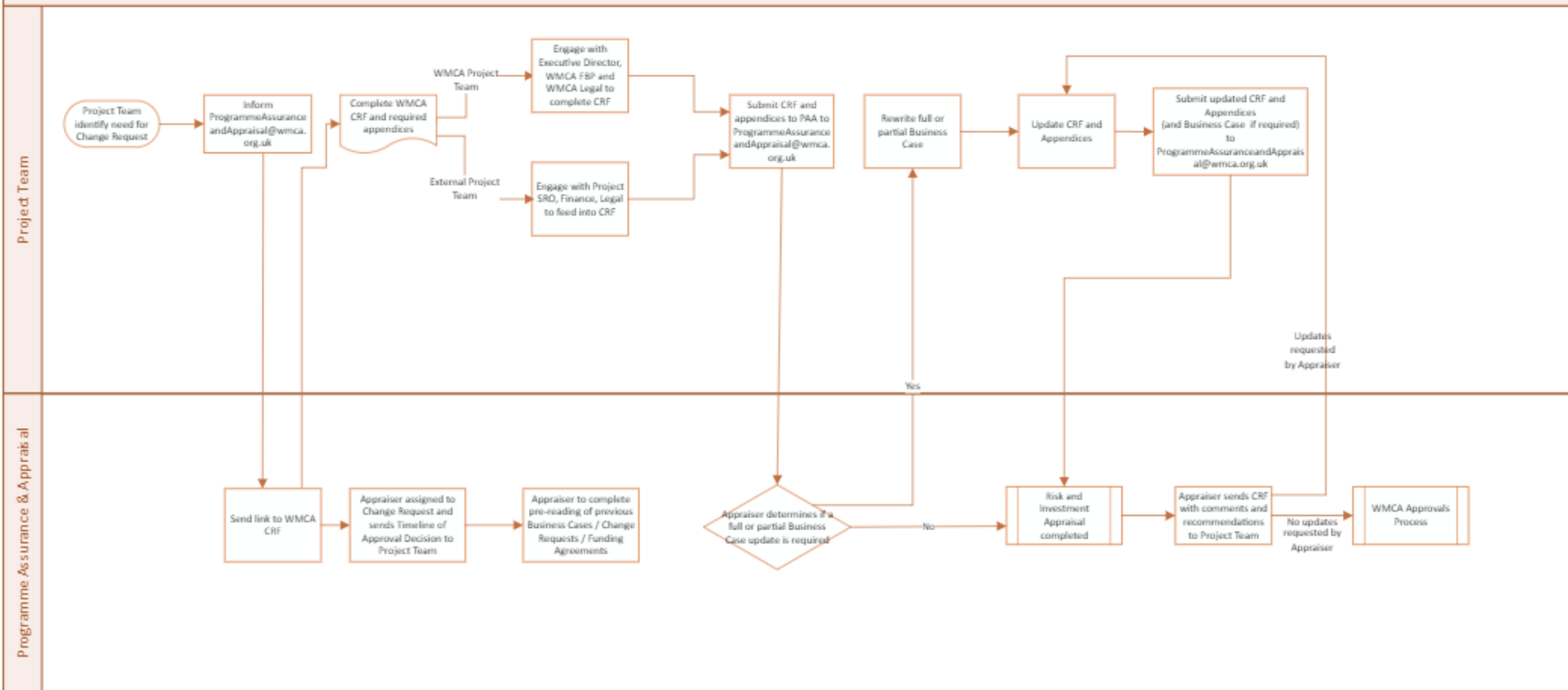
All projects that go through our SAF, will have an effective monitoring and evaluation M&E plan in place which will form a key part of the business case. This will help assess the effectiveness and impact of investing public funds, and the identification of best practice and lessons learnt that can inform decisions about future delivery. Logic chains will guide the collection of data from individual projects during both stages of M&E and will be designed to ensure that it meets the requirements of WMCA and the Government.

This framework aims to ensure that these commitments are delivered by setting out the approach, principles, role and responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes both in the Devolution Deal and within any wider Combined Authority activity.

## 4.16 Change Requests

Approval routes should always be led by the delegation amount; therefore, Change Requests do not need to be approved by the 'original approver' i.e., if it was approved by WMCA Board it does not need to go back to Board. The reason for this is that the original business case was approved by Board and to be sighted on a minor change could delay project progress and cause further time delays whilst awaiting the next meeting. On the occasion the change is deemed contentious, for example, where the scope of the original approved project has changed dramatically or by more than of 10% (generally measured by output quantity). In such instances, the approval decision will be made by the original approver.

### WMCA Single Assurance Framework Change Control Process v2.0



Key	
CRF	Change Request Form
PA&A	Programme Assurance & Appraisal Team
Finance BP	Finance Business Partner
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer

## 4.17 Evaluation/Project Closure

Investment Programme Projects are evaluated in two stages. The first stage is led internally by the WMCA's Investment Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Team and comprises the production of a Project Closure and Lessons Learnt Report in accordance with HM Treasury's Green and Magenta Books. It reviews the milestones and success factors of the project vis-à-vis its proposed Delivery Plan:

- to confirm outstanding issues, risks and mitigations, recommendations, and proposed course of action to resolve them
- outline outstanding tasks and activities required to close the project, and
- identify project highlights and best practice for future interventions.

As part of the funding agreement, the WMCA is required to undertake 5-year Gateway Reviews to assess the impact delivered by our investments led by an independent National Evaluation Panel.

The purpose of the National Evaluation Panel is to evaluate the impact of locally appraised interventions on economic growth in each locality to inform the Gateway Review and Ministerial decision-making on future funding.

## 5 APPENDICES

### 5.1 Transport Projects

For the CRSTS programme (and other transport led projects, regardless of funding streams) there is a requirement that an Annual Programme Business Case be developed and reviewed and updated annually. The Programme Business Case will be subject to the SAF process. Most schemes will also require a standalone Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) business case to be developed. This business case will be used to complete the appropriate Board templates or additional documentation checklists.

The Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team will apply a flexible and proportionate approach, to its activities for transport business cases to retain the benefits of local assurance in terms of speed of decision making, where appropriate.

To ensure that the scope of the business case meets the requirements of relevant funding streams, involving Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) and the Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team will work together to ensure that the project meets strategic and funding requirements.

The Business Case will be clearly articulate how the project/programme will be monitored and evaluated, in collaboration with the national evaluator as part of the development of the national Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

To provide the additional context and evidence required for approval, updated plans, strategies and documents and responses to key questions within the Transport Additional Appendix across the five-case model will also be submitted with the business case. This appendix provides as a 'checklist' of information which should be provided either with the TAG business case or as separate documents.

It is expected that a transport project will usually have both a TAG business case and a WMCA Board-friendly summary document, plus the required supplementary appendices. With the Transport Additional Appendix, there is a table showing the questions completed at each stage of the business case cycle. This does not preclude early completion if the information is available. Information entered in previous stages should be retained and updated where necessary.

### 5.2 Housing Projects

For the Housing, Property and Regeneration Investment Programme (and other Housing, Property and Regeneration led projects) regardless of funding streams will be subject to the SAF. The programmes and projects for funding streams awarded pre-2023 will be required to develop an Annual Programme Business Case. The Programme Business will be updated to include new funding streams where the proposed outcomes and delivery mechanisms are aligned. If a separate Programme (or other) Business Case is considered more appropriate, this will be subject to the same assurance arrangements. Individual projects aligned to a Programme Business Case will be required to produce a Business Case, which will also follow the SAF.

Individual Housing, Property and Regeneration projects will also be subject to the [Single Commissioning Framework](#). Expressions of Interest will be assessed by housing and development internal experts, external advisers and legal and finance business partners to ensure they meet key WMCA priorities and suitability criteria, before being invited to submit an application. Applications are also subject to scrutiny by the same team, to ensure that the project meets funding and strategic requirements, including a Red Book valuation, development appraisal and other supporting studies, for example, cost assessment, remediation studies.

### 5.3 Adult Education Budget Programme

An overarching Skills Programme Business Case has been developed which provides a framework and overview of the Programme including the following confirmed funding received.

Adult Education Budget (AEB)
National Skills Fund 'Free Courses for Jobs'
National Skills Fund 'Technical Bootcamp'
Multiply
UK Shared Prosperity Fund

This Programme Business Case confirms the Economy and Skills Directorate's objectives for the next five years and will support future planned funding and unknown funding opportunities which the West Midlands Combined Authority receives. Any activity/projects/opportunities arising from this funding will be articulated in business cases that will evidence how they will contribute to the overarching Programme's objectives (and conditions of DfE funding).

All business cases developed by the Directorate are subject to existing SAF processes.

This programme of activity is closely monitored and managed and is subject to an annual audit process and reporting.

Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements are implemented to manage performance with outputs reported regularly at the monthly Delegated Sign Off (DSO) meeting. This is attended by Executive Director of Skills, Health and Communities, the S151 Officer, Director of Law and Governance and the Head of Programme Assurance and Appraisal. Should performance be considered to fall below what has been planned and agreed, corrective action will be taken, including the option of undertaking an Assurance 'Health Check.'

#### 5.3.1 Health Check Format and Approach

The Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team implement an annual 'Health Check' Plan across WMCA. The Projects and Programmes that form part of this annual plan are determined through an ongoing assessment of risk and performance.



The purpose of the Health Check is to give confidence to senior managers and decision-makers on a project or programme's performance and ability to achieve its objectives/positive outcomes. It will help drive continuous improvement and focus on key lines of enquiry around the following categories:

- Client and Scope
- Organisational Capability & Culture
- Stakeholder Engagement & Communication
- Risk Management
- Planning & Scheduling
- Health & Safety, Social Responsibility, Sustainability
- Governance
- Supply Chain
- Solution
- Finance
- Performance

### **5.3.2 Oversight of Recommendations**

The findings and recommendations following a Health Check will be detailed within an Assurance Observations Report for consideration and agreement by the Quality Manager and Delivery Manager (Operations) and submitted to the DSO Meeting to ensure progress towards any improvement recommendations is monitored and reported.

### **5.3.3 Timescales**

Dates and timings of health checks will be agreed with the AEB Lead/representative and the Programme Assurance Specialist as part of the process. It is expected that the health check will take approximately two weeks to complete.

## **5.4 SAF Templates**

### **5.4.1 Project Initiation Document (PID)**

The PID is a high-level planning document that will be completed and approved during the Initiation Stage to gather outline information which validates the strategic fit of the intended intervention such as alignment to WMCA Objectives and Aims, potential risks and target benefits. The document will also be used to agree the Business Case development route and provide assurance that key stakeholders at the WMCA have been sighted on the proposal from the outset (Finance, Legal, Procurement and Executive Director).

### **5.4.2 Business Justification Case (BJC)**

The BJC is a single stage business case that is available for schemes that require less development. To use a BJC, projects must not be novel or contentious so options analysis is reduced, where firm fixed prices are available, they should be evidenced from historical delivery. A specific procurement phase is not required as pre-competed procurement arrangement can be utilised.

### **5.4.3 Programme Business Case (PBC)**

The PBC is produced when a strategically linked series of projects requires authorisation to progress. A programme is a series of planned measures, related events and co-ordinated activity in pursuit of an organisations long term goals. The PBC will outline the programme projects dossier including the indicative timeline, costs and the overarching management strategies.

### **5.4.4 Project Case (PC)**

The PC is produced for projects seeking lower level of spend and follow on from a previously approved Programme Business Case. There should be clear alignment to the PBC within the Project Case in terms of how the outputs contribute to the Programme benefits and outcomes.

### **5.4.5 Strategic Outline Case (SOC)**

The SOC or the Strategic Outline Business Case provides the strategic rationale for the intervention and identifies the critical success factors. The preferred option is derived via an options analysis to demonstrate how optimum VFM and social value will be achieved. Stakeholders will understand the robustness of the proposal and the future direction of travel including an updated whole life cost estimation.

### **5.4.6 Outline Business Case (OBC)**

The OBC determines VFM and prepares for the potential procurement by ascertaining affordability, the procurement proposal and funding requirement. At the conclusion of the OBC stage consent should be able to be established for the procurement phase of the project to go ahead or not.

### **5.4.7 Full Business Case (FBC)**

The FBC enables the procurement of the VFM solution, contracting the appropriate deal and planning for successful delivery. At the conclusion of the FBC all dimensions of the five-case model will have been completed and be fully matured including a finalisation of all management arrangements. Key to this is firm fixed and accurate costs, Monitoring & Evaluation arrangements and delivery capability.

## 5.5 External Funding Process

