



Housing & Land Delivery Board

Date	19 th January 2022
Report title	Single Commissioning Framework: Outputs and Performance Monitoring
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Mike Bird, Leader, Walsall MBC
Accountable Employees	Gareth Bradford, Director of Housing & Regeneration Rob Lamond, Strategic Planning Manager Rachel-Ann Atterbury, Projects Officer
Previous Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery Steering Group: December 2021

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Housing & Land Delivery Board is recommended to:

- a) **Note** the purpose and key operating principles of the Single Commissioning Framework as agreed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board in March 2019, including the process of continuous review;
- b) **Note** that the Single Commissioning Framework has been subject to a number of internal audits since its inception to ensure it continues to operate efficiently and maximises value for money;
- c) **Note** the move towards **more robust and consistent performance reporting processes** for all future schemes seeking WMCA housing and land investment, in line with the recommendations of internal audits, changes to output/outcome monitoring at the corporate level and best practice in the existing pipeline; and
- d) **Note** that the changes detailed in this paper are focused on monitoring **only in line with the continual review process** – it does not propose changes to the Single Commissioning Framework’s key operating principles and governance systems, nor to WMCA’s funding eligibility requirements.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides a summary of the history of the Single Commissioning Framework (SCF) and updates the Housing & Land Delivery Board on additional measures we are using to capture data on the wider outputs, outcomes and impact of WMCA's housing and land investments. This would see existing best practice measures, monitoring and reporting processes applied to all SCF schemes as the norm, in line with key recommendations of internal audits and the desire for more prescription and monitoring of impacts of WMCA interventions.
- 1.2 It is important to note that **WMCA is not looking to amend the key operating principles, scheme eligibility determinants or governance systems of applications for SCF funding at this stage.** These changes are focused solely on **performance and output measurement** across schemes and are intended to better align housing and land investment outputs with WMCA's wider organisational outputs, corporate strategy, inclusive growth framework and to provide assurance on the delivery of those outputs earlier in the SCF process.
- 1.3 Accompanying this paper will be **a presentation to provide further detail on progress to date and the proposed performance measuring and monitoring approach which has been used recently on a number of high profile SCF schemes and tested with developers.**

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In March 2019, the Housing & Land Delivery Board, Investment Board and WMCA Board all agreed the key operational principles of the SCF. These principles had been prepared collectively by officers of WMCA, local authorities, LEPs, government and other organisations over an extensive 12-month co-development programme. The SCF acts as a single portal for accessing WMCA Housing and Land funds and provides a streamlined and consistent approval process with explicit links to WMCA's Housing and Land deliverables. This [guidance booklet](#) provides further information on the process for prospective applicants.
- 2.2 In recognition of the dynamic nature of the construction and real estate sectors, it was agreed that the SCF would be subject to a process of continuous review and amendment (as necessary) which would be agreed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board under delegated authority from WMCA Board. This would ensure that the SCF process could respond to legislative, technical, financial and organisational changes which would impact future delivery whilst also enabling WMCA to continue to align its investment criteria with its policy ambitions.
- 2.3 The SCF has been in operation since April 2019. Since this time, a number of updates have been made to its eligibility criteria in line with WMCA's policy development, and with agreement by the Delivery Steering Group and the Housing & Land Delivery Board. These include strengthened requirements around Advanced Manufacturing in Construction (AMC), Affordability, Zero Carbon and Design.

3.0 Improving performance-monitoring of new schemes

- 3.1 In its three years of operation, there is demonstrable evidence of the SCF expediting investment, driving additionality on 'difficult to deliver' sites and delivering value for money by enhancing quality outputs in line with WMCA's policy objectives. However, as WMCA's Housing and Land programme has matured, opportunities to improve efficiency, monitoring and added value have been identified and incorporated within the SCF's continuous review process including the four external audits that have been undertaken on the SCF and its operation.
- 3.2 WMCA's wider strategic and corporate objectives and governance systems have also developed in this time. By aligning SCF measuring and monitoring processes with the wider WMCA approach, we will be better able to evidence the impact of housing and regeneration investment on inclusive growth, skills and employment, net zero and other areas identified in the WMCA's Corporate Aims and Objectives.
- 3.3 In collaboration with relevant WMCA teams, a series of metrics which demonstrate a scheme's contribution to WMCA's strategic objectives have been identified. These metrics fit within the following broad categories:
- Skills and Employment
 - Affordable Housing
 - AMC and Zero Carbon Homes
 - Mobility and Connectivity
 - Design and Environment
 - Local Economy Benefits
- 3.4 More detail on the specific data, which WMCA is collecting from applicants for SCF funding, will be presented at the meeting and circulated afterwards. It is important to note that WMCA is **not** seeking to introduce any new requirements for funding at this stage. The purpose of this work is to develop a **more robust and consistent reporting system** for those requirements already in place so we can clearly demonstrate impact and added value.
- 3.5 To ensure that the SCF process continues to be recognised as **simple and efficient**, WMCA has actively sought to avoid creating additional work for those applying for funding as well as those administering the process. The identified measures focus on **definitive and quantifiable** outputs – in terms of time, money or numbers – which would be assessed as part of programme management, Corporate Social Responsibility reporting or typical Public Sector tendering processes. WMCA has tested the additional measures on many new schemes entering the SCF in 2021 and those delivered with our strategic partners and this has confirmed that the proposed reporting process is not unduly onerous nor cost/time-prohibitive for the applicant.
- 3.6 In addition to demonstrating added value to WMCA's Corporate Strategy, these metrics will capture wider benefits leveraged through housing and land investments, providing evidence of 'levelling up' in the West Midlands and building HM Government's confidence and trust in the region's ability to deploy funding effectively – thus supporting our case for future devolved funding.
- 3.7 Furthermore, these datasets will provide a much clearer picture of delivery and change on the ground. At the regional scale, this will enable us to identify improvement and opportunity areas and inform our overall strategic direction, whilst also demonstrating

how housing and land investment is driving inclusive growth, delivering skills and employment opportunities, responding to #WM2041, enhancing residents' mobility and connectivity and supporting other corporate priorities. At the local scale, it will enable us to provide more detailed reports to Local Authority and other partners on the precise outputs and outcomes of our housing and land investments and inform conversations around how best to utilise future funding to support local ambitions.

4.0 Next steps

4.1 The presentation given at the January 2022 meeting will provide the Housing & Land Delivery Board with further information on the process to date, the proposed measures and monitoring processes which WMCA is looking to undertake for future schemes and the programme for implementing these changes. The presentation will be shared following the meeting.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Housing & Land Delivery Board on additional measures being put in place to capture data on wider outputs of WMCA's housing and land investments.

5.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of the SCF monitoring update by the Housing & Land Delivery Board. There may be, in future, financial implications arising from decisions to capture the additional outputs but any such decisions would be subject to WMCA's approved assurance processes.

5.3 Any WMCA investment to deliver the West Midlands Investment Prospectus would be governed and administered through the WMCA Single Assurance Framework, Single Commissioning Framework, the Commissions Pathway and in line with the accounting and taxation policies of the WMCA and HMRC. All disposals of land must follow the disposals policy following approval at Strategic Asset Board.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 Section 113A(1)(a) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 gives WMCA a power of competence appropriate for the purposes of carrying-out any of its functions. Part 4 of The West Midlands Combined Authority Order 2016 (2016 No 653) confers that the functions relating to any economic development and regeneration in the constituent councils are exercisable by WMCA. Part 3 of The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 confers functions corresponding to the functions of the Homes and Communities Agency has in relation to the combined area. Paragraph 10 (2) (a) of the 2017 Order confers the function of improving the supply and quality of housing to the Combined Authority, 10 (2) (b) to secure the regeneration or development of land or infrastructure in the combined area, 10 (2)(c) to support in other ways the creation, regeneration or development of communities in the combined area or their continued well-being and 10 (2)(d) confers the function of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and good design.

6.2 It is noted that the purpose of this paper is to update the Housing & Land Delivery Board on additional measures being put into place to capture data on the wider outputs of WMCA's housing and land investments. This is to ensure that all existing best practice measures and monitoring processes are captured under the SCF process. The

SCF requirements will be implemented through the funding agreements on individual schemes and legal input should be sought as and when required.

7.0 Equalities Implications

7.1 There are no immediate equalities implications in relation to this report. The proposed performance monitoring process includes measures which address the impact of schemes on local residents, including 'harder to reach' groups.

8.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

8.1 The measures identified are fully aligned with those of the Corporate Strategy and Inclusive Growth Decision-Making Toolkit and Framework. The proposed performance monitoring process will provide WMCA with a clearer picture of how Housing and Land investments are delivering benefits for local residents in terms of access to housing, services, skills and employment as well its impact on the local environment and economy.

9.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

9.1 The implications of this report cover the whole WMCA geography.

10 Other implications

None.

11 Schedule of Background Papers

None.