

Single Assurance Framework

September 2022



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Version No.	Date	Approver	Update
V3.0	September 2022		Review to update SAF, to include Appendices on Housing, AEB, and Transport, removal of duplication.

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 2023**.

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

5	1 - Introduction
5	1.1 - The Purpose of the Single Assurance Framework
7	2 - About the West Midlands
7	2.1 - The Mayoral Combined Authority
7	2.2 - Regional and Local Leadership
7	2.3 - The Economic Strategy
8	3 - Governance and Decision Making
8	3.1 - The Mayor
8	3.2 - The WMCA Board
9	3.2.1 - Recruitment of New Members
9	3.2.2 - Induction
9	3.2.3 - Code of Conduct
9	3.2.4 - Diversity
9	3.2.5 - Remuneration
10	3.3 - Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
10	3.4 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
11	3.5 - Investment Board
11	3.6 - Statutory Officers
11	3.6.1 - Head of Paid Service
12	3.6.2 - Section 151 Officer
13	3.6.3 - Monitoring Officer
13	3.7 - Related Processes and Procedures
13	3.7.1 - Inclusive Growth
14	3.7.2 - Equality and Diversity
14	3.7.3 - Whistleblowing
14	3.7.4 - Complaints Process
14	3.7.5 - Gifts and Hospitality
14	3.7.6 - Registration and Declaration of Interests
14	3.7.7 - Freedom of Information
15	3.7.8 - Treatment of Risk
15	3.7.9 - Transparency
15	3.7.10 - Inviting Applications for Funding
16	3.7.11 - Publishing Meeting Minutes
16	3.7.12 - Publishing Decisions
17	4 - The SAF: Project Lifecycle Process
17	4.1 - Introduction
17	4.1.1 - A Corporate Project
18	4.1.2 - A SAF Project

19	4.2 - Value for Money
19	4.3 - Pre-Initiation
19	4.4 - Purpose of The Annual Plan
19	4.5 - In-Year Proposals for the initiation of Projects/Programmes
19	4.6 - New Funding Opportunities
20	4.7 - SAF Stage 1: Initiation
22	4.8 - Directorate Pipeline Meetings
23	4.9 - SAF Stage 2: Development
25	4.10 - SAF Stage 3: Approvals (Governance)
26	4.10.1 - Key SAF documentation
27	4.11 - Risk & Investment Appraisal
28	4.12 - Approval Levels
28	4.12.1 - Approvals Up to £1million
29	4.12.2 - Approvals Between £1million - £5million
30	4.12.3 - Approvals of £5million and above
32	4.12.4 - Approvals of £20million and above
33	4.13 - Subsidy Control
33	4.14 - Management of Contracts
34	4.15 - Monitoring and Evaluation
35	4.16 - Change Requests
37	4.17 - Evaluation/Project Closure
38	5 - Appendices
38	5.1 - Transport Projects
39	5.2 - Housing Projects
40	5.3 - Adult Education Budget Programme
41	5.3.1 - Health Check Format and Approach
42	5.3.2 - Governance
42	5.3.3 - Timescales
43	5.4 - Typical Funding Letter
44	5.5 - SAF Templates
44	5.5.1 - Project Initiation Document (PID)
44	5.5.2 - Business Justification Case (BJC)
44	5.5.3 - Programme Business Case (PBC)
44	5.5.4 - Project Case (PC)
44	5.5.5 - Strategic Outline Case (SOC)
45	5.5.6 - Outline Business Case (OBC)
45	5.5.7 - Full Business Case (FBC)
46	5.6 - External Funding Process

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 to 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 Sept. 2021**
- 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 value for money.
- 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 **WMCA Constitution**
- Financial Regulations **Financial Regs**
- Single Commissioning Framework **Investing with us (wmca.org.uk)**
- Strategic Risk Framework **Risk Management | WMCA**
- **WMCA Aims and Objectives | WMCA**
- Annual Business Planning
- West Midlands Plan for Growth **Plan for Growth (wmca.org.uk)**
- 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 | WMCA**

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, standards, assurance, appraisal and decision making. It allows for proportionality within 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 application. It enables WMCA to monitor, measure and scrutinise how well Policy Aims are being met and risks managed. It also implements processes 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 Assurance Framework provides assurance to the Departmental Accounting Officer by explaining how funding is granted or devolved to the WMCA is allocated, and that there are robust local systems in place which ensure resources are spent with regularity, propriety and value for money.

Within WMCA, the Single Assurance Framework is a valuable tool to enable the Authority to deliver successful projects and explain the clear rationale through business cases on how objectives will be delivered.

2.1 - The Mayoral Combined Authority

West Midlands Combined Authority 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. WMCA 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. The functions of the WMCA 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 at review periods.

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 - The Economic Strategy

WMCA has adopted the 'Plan for Growth', **WMCA Aims and Objectives | WMCA** as a strategy to improve the quality of life for citizens of the West Midlands. Underpinning this strategy, and other strategies is the Inclusive Growth Framework, (**What we do (wmca.org.uk)**)

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, and 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

Appendix 2.6 (In 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 - Diversity

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. As of June 2022, the gender breakdown of the WMCA Board as a whole (Mayor, constituent authority representatives, non-constituent authority representatives) is 19 men (70%) and 8 women (30%). 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.

Members of the Transport Development Committee which has been carried over from the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority also receive an allowance which is currently subject to review by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

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 also 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.

The members of the Committee are nominated by the Constituent and Non-Constituent Authorities forming the Combined Authority. WMCA has established a Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee which has the same powers and functions in relation to transport decisions of the WMCA.

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 decisions in relation to proposals which are above the level of financial delegation to officers which is set at £5million for the Strategic Leadership Team and below the level of £20million above which all decisions are made by the WMCA Board.

The Committee has delegated authority to take decisions in relation to funding proposals as set out in its Terms of Reference.

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 Strategic Leadership Team 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.

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 in the CIPFA published document 'The Roles of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government' **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 Finance and Business Hub is a member of the Strategic Leadership Team 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 unlawfulness or maladministration or if any decision or omission 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 review all reports to ensure that legal implications are correctly identified before they are presented to the WMCA Board or other decision-making Committees.

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 investments and activities to consider the **eight fundamentals of inclusive growth**, and to ensure that social achievements are not achieved at the expense of the environment, and vice versa.

3.7.2 - Equality and Diversity

A procedure is in place to ensure that WMCA will take into consideration section 149 of the Equality Act, ensuring that any project considers: **Policies (wmca.org.uk)**

- 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 (wmca.org.uk)** 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 Process

A 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. This can be found here: (**Complaints**)

3.7.5 - Gifts and Hospitality

A Gifts and Hospitality policy and a procedure 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. It specifies that no gifts or hospitality shall be accepted by Members or Officers other than modest hospitality during their day-to-day business.

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

3.7.8 - Treatment of Risk

A key role of the SAF is to ensure that risk is identified, monitored and managed appropriately, in accordance with HM Treasury Orange Book, both at a strategic level (the risks facing the WMCA as an organisation) and at a programme and project level. A revised Strategic Risk Framework has been developed to provide visibility of risk at strategic, operational, and Programme levels and to ensure consistency across Directorates in how risks are identified, managed, monitored, and escalated.

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 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 (wmca.org.uk)** 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 More details can be found on **Investing with us, Commercial Development Funding - WMCA CIF - FDC (frontierdevelopmentcapital.com)**. **West Midlands Innovation Programme – Innovation Alliance for the West Midlands (innovationwm.co.uk)** 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 no more than ten working days after the meetings on the WMCA website. All WMCA Board minutes are signed at the next suitable meeting and published within ten clear working days.

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 project decisions made by the WMCA are recorded within a log accessible at: [Decisions](#) The WMCA maintains a live Activity Register to support the Strategic Leadership Team, this is in addition to a Contracts register which provides details of all contacts and agreements signed by the WMCA.

4.1 - Introduction

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 Business as Usual (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 'Business as Usual' (BAU). A Corporate Project should aim to address Corporate Aim six. (Develop our organisation and be a Good Regional Partner). A Corporate project can go through the Change Gateway, a sub-group of CMT 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 (one to five).

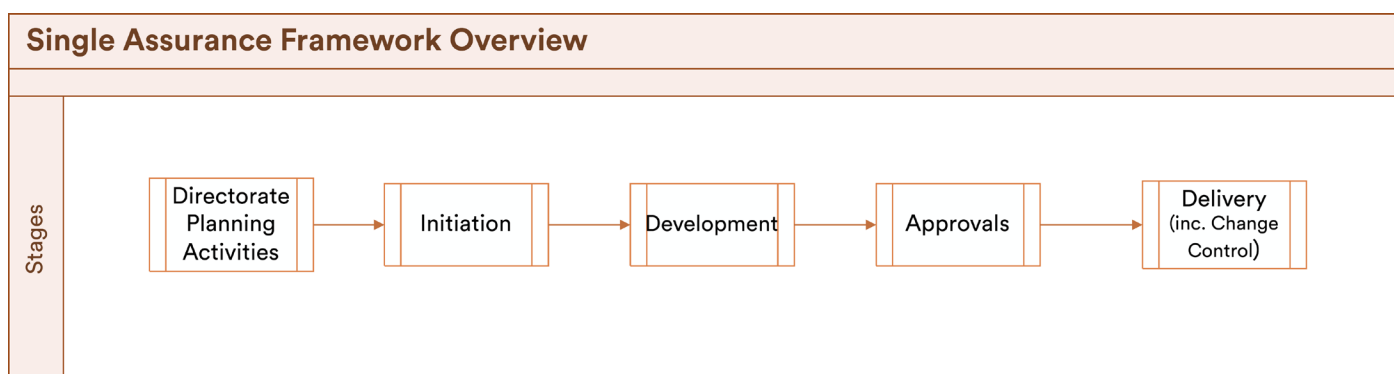
The SAF processes enables accountability, including public engagement, probity, transparency, legal compliance and Value for Money (VFM) to be applied, as well as the processes for oversight of projects, programmes and how the progress and impacts of these investments will be monitored, reported on and 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, templates and templates to drive consistency of approach. These are available on [Single Assurance Framework \(wmca.org.uk\)](http://wmca.org.uk) and on the intranet [here](#).

The following diagram demonstrates the end-to-end impact the SAF process.



4.2 - Value for Money

A key objective of the Single Assurance Framework is to support the WMCA in making judgements about the Value for Money (VFM) of potential investment and projects etc. All business cases seeking approval are assessed through the SAF process are evaluated against the HM Treasury's 5-case business model highlighted within **The Green Book (2022)**.

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 External Funding Application Register. Appendix 5.6 details the External Funding Application Process. This External Funding Application Process ensures that the Section 151 Officer and the Strategic Leadership Team 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 articulates a 'golden thread' from its overarching economic strategies and priorities through to its organisational objectives to Directorate plans and programme and project activity. The purpose of the Annual Business Plan is to:

- articulate the WMCA priorities for the year so that partners and stakeholders are 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 the Strategic Leadership Team 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:

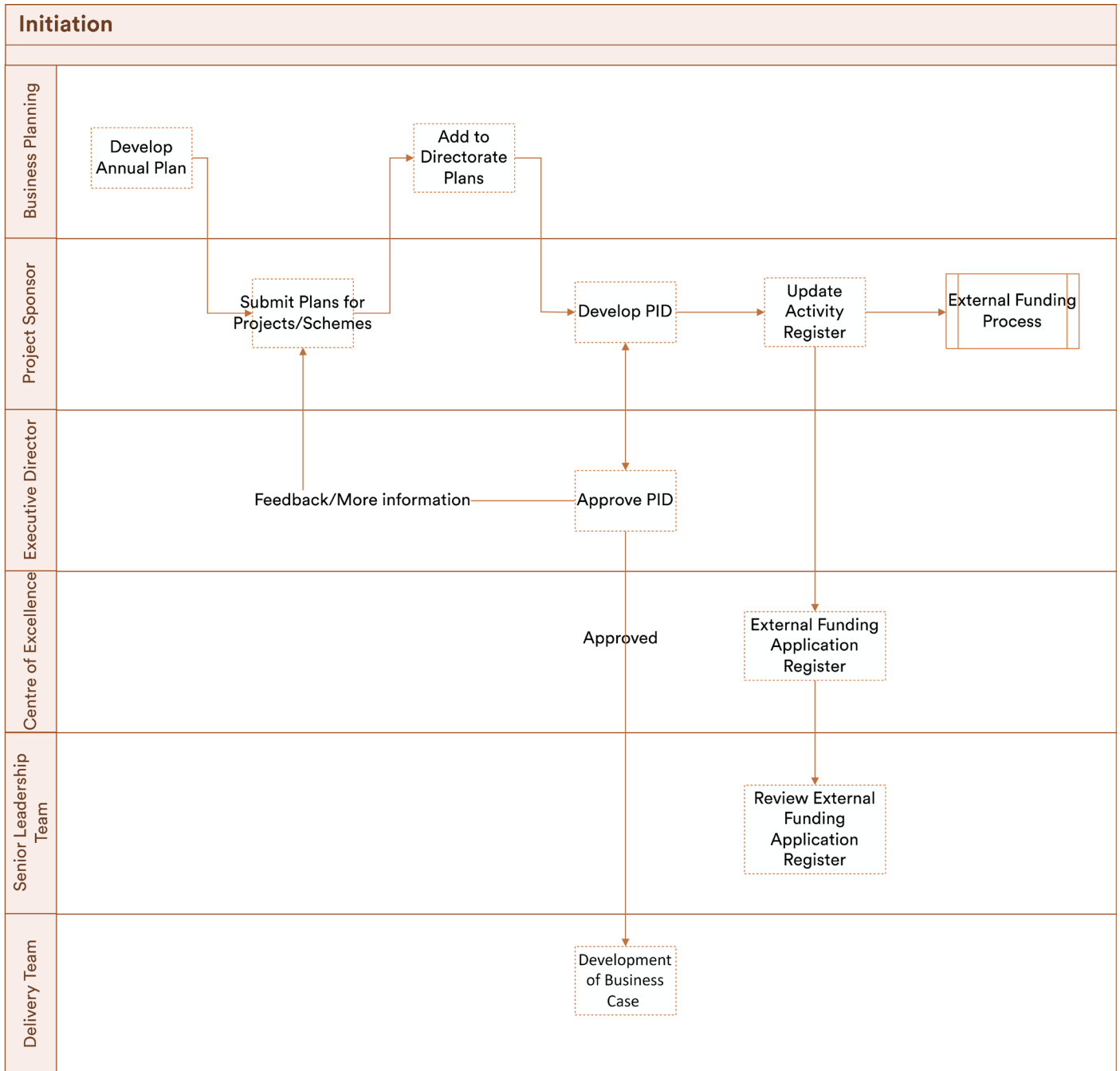
- enter the strategic planning stage, if it is an in-year submission not included in the Annual Business Plan. In such a circumstance the Executive Director can accept the principle of the proposal and submit it to the strategic planning process for consideration for inclusion in future Annual Plans, 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 WMCA's 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 - The SAF: Project Lifecycle Process



4.8 - Directorate Pipeline Meetings

Each Directorate records its project activity on the Directorate Activity Register. The purpose is to 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. At a Directorate Meeting with the Programme Assurance and Appraisal's Centre of Excellence (CoE), 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 CoE monitors the progress of projects through the stages:

- in SAF Stage 1: Initiation
- in SAF Stage 2: Development
- in SAF Stage 3: in or going through Approval
- in SAF Stage 4: Delivery: if there is a Change Control request

The Strategic Leadership Team receive a weekly 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.

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

4.9 - SAF Stage 2: Development

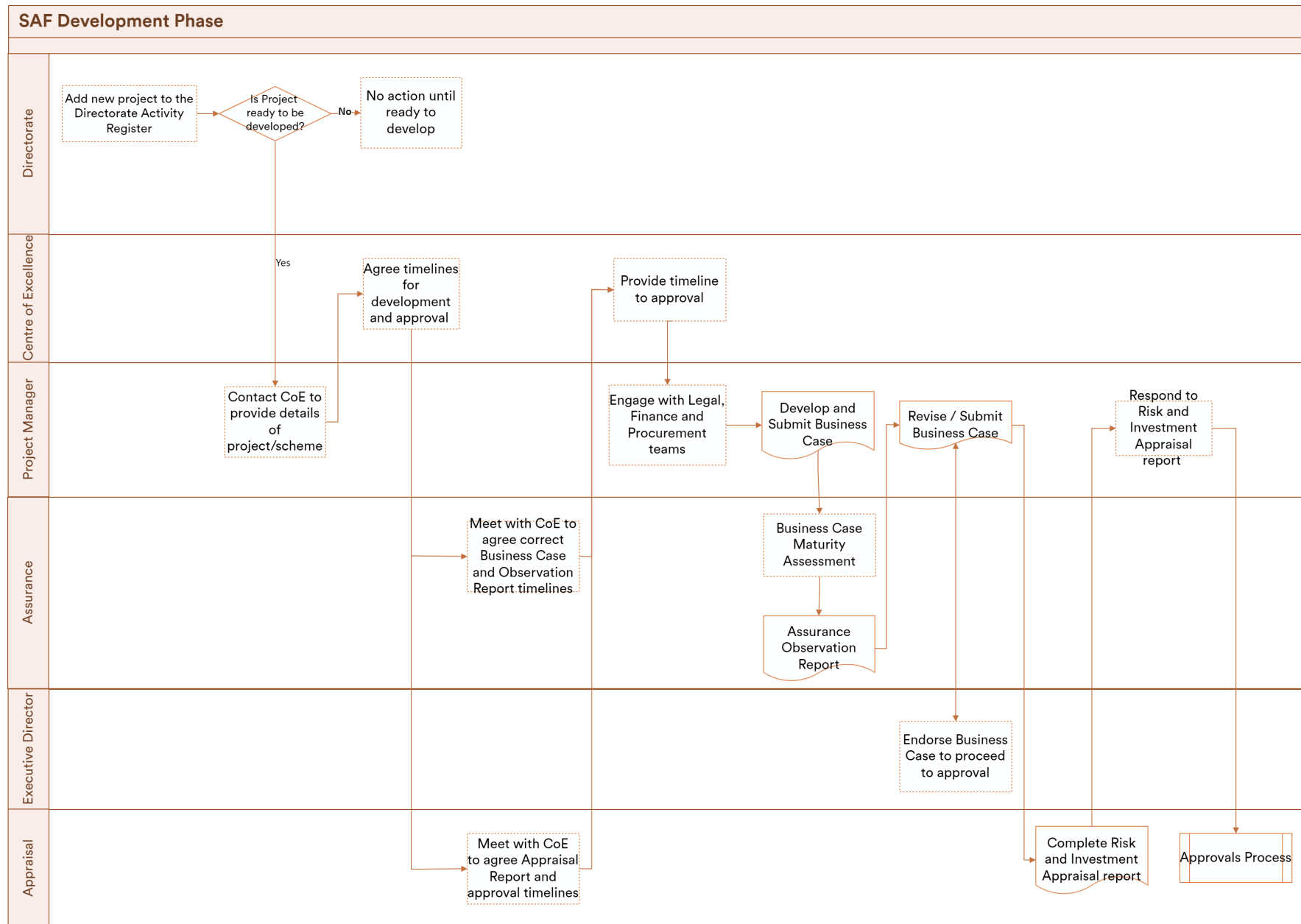
The Development Phase follows Initiation; this is the stage where the relevant business case(s) is/are developed, and where out of Directorate assurance activity takes place prior to the business case progressing onto the approvals stage. This stage needs to be repeated whenever a business case is developed 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, ensuring that its content, meets the required standard defined within WMCA guidance in addition to meeting the requirements of the SAF, HM Treasury's five case model is **Green Book** compliant as well as meeting WMCA specific requirements on Inclusive Growth and alignment to Policy Aims and Objectives, whilst meeting any funding requirements and/or other 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 will involve the appropriate business case guidance and templates provided. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and technical appraisers, using the appropriate proforma. SMEs to be engaged in the development stage include Programme Assurance and Appraisal, Finance, Legal and Procurement Business Partners who should all input into the business case, and it's review prior to approval.

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 - The SAF: Project Lifecycle Process



4.10 - SAF Stage 3: Approvals (Governance)

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

- appropriate initiation process that drives strategic fit
- 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
- utilises out of Directorate/second line of defence assurance principles and processes to assess the maturity of business cases and undertake risk & investment appraisal
- panel 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, and 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.

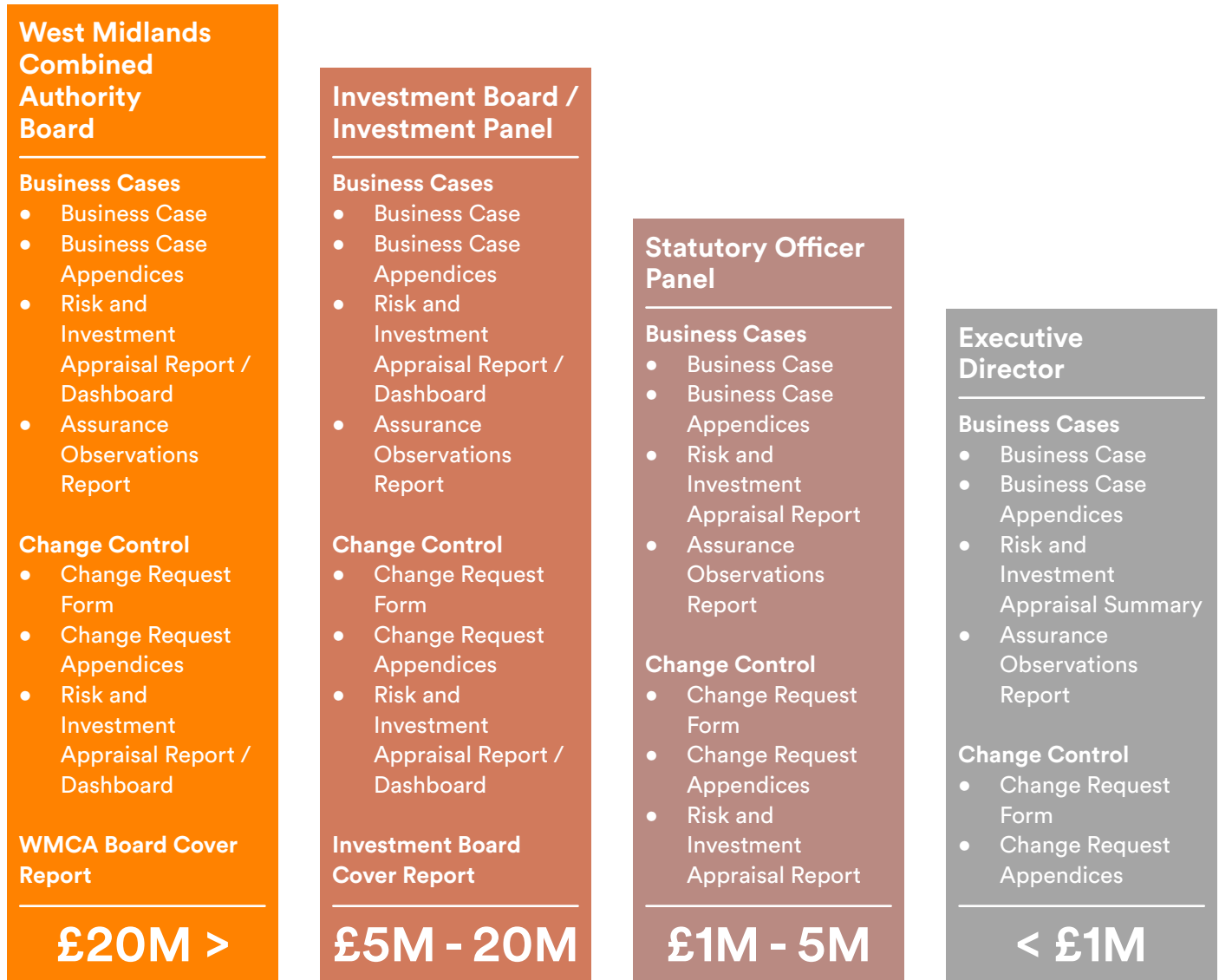
The process enables:

- decision-makers at all levels to base their decisions upon objective, evidence-based out of Directorate findings and recommendations- in turn driving better decision-making
- 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 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 template 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:

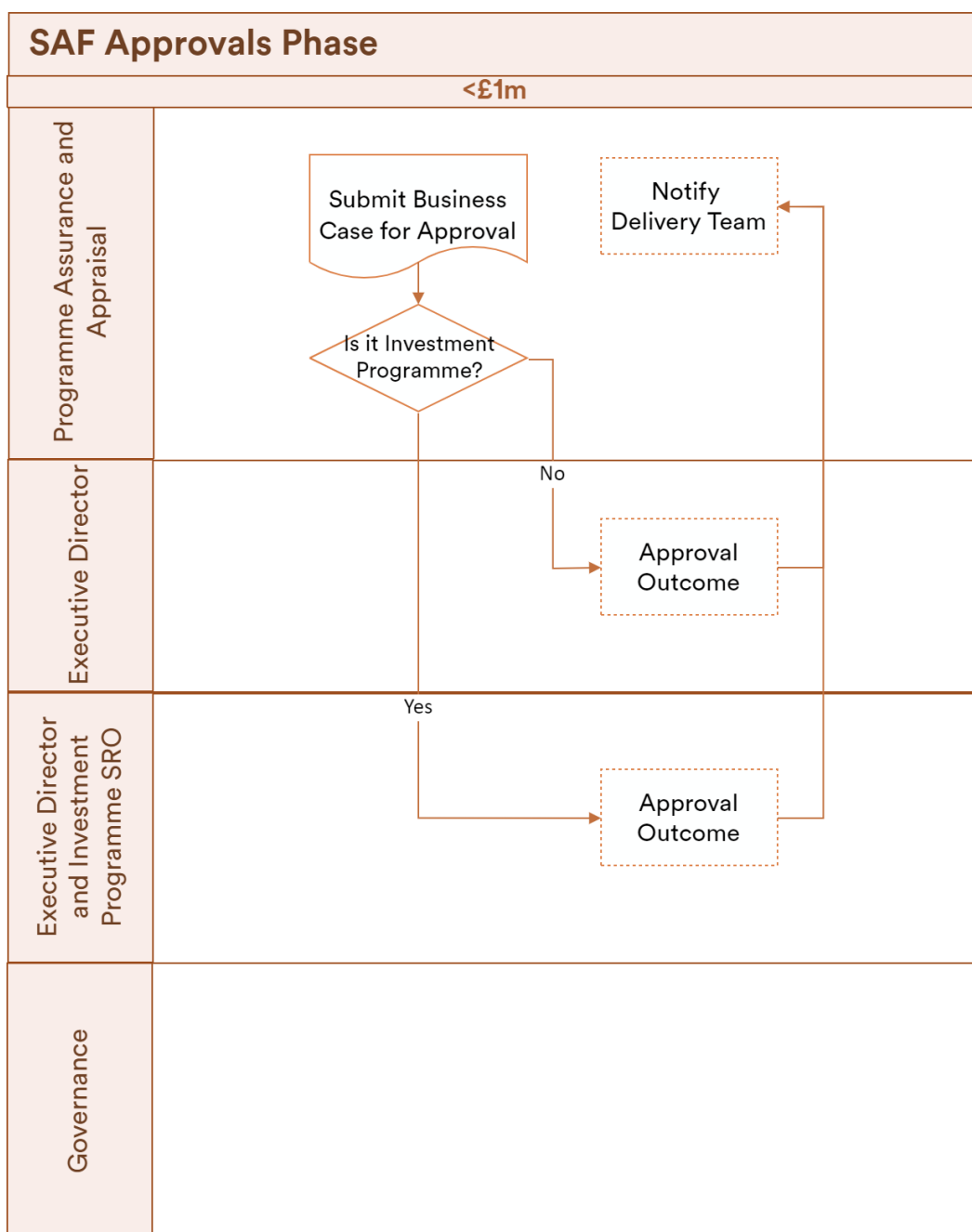
- an assessment of the level of risks and opportunities in approving that Business Case
- observations on how the level of risk could be mitigated, including cost, including the post mitigation risk level.

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). The Programme Assurance & Appraisal team will submit the required papers to the Investment Programme SRO for consideration. At this point, the Investment Programme SRO can request a comprehensive Risk & Investment Appraisal Report to be undertaken and/or that the item is considered by the Investment Panel to provide additional advice, if it is required by the Investment Programme SRO.

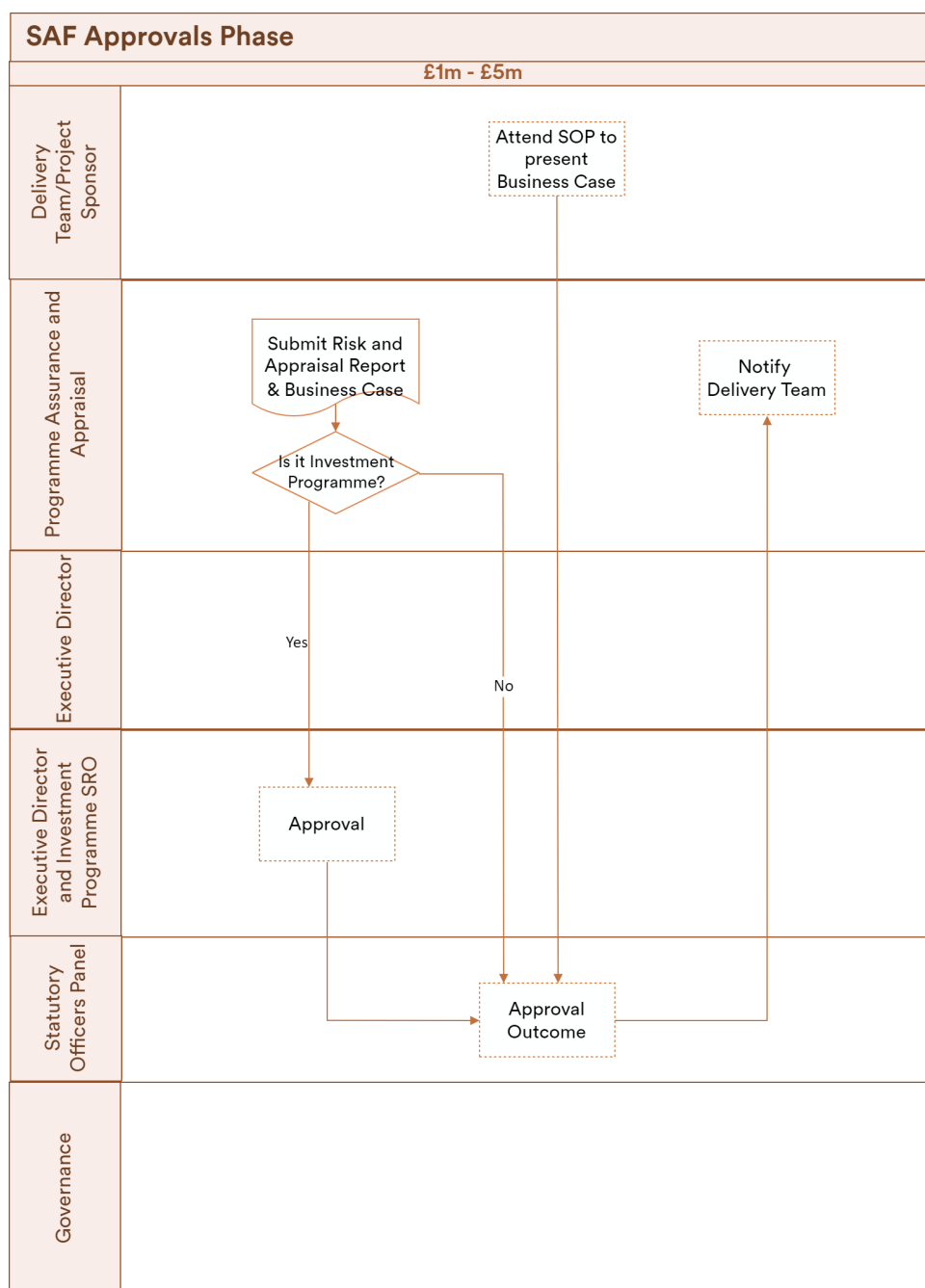


4.12.2 - Approvals Between £1million - £5million

Approvals between £1million and £5million are reviewed and approved by the Statutory Officer Panel, this consists of the following WMCA Officers:

- Chief Executive
- Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
- Head of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Non-Investment Programme funded business cases and approvals only require Statutory Officer Panel 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 sit on the Panel to provide input into the decision-making process. The Risk and Investment Appraisal report and the Assurance Observations Report highlight the key risks for consideration.



4.12.3 - Approvals of £5million and above

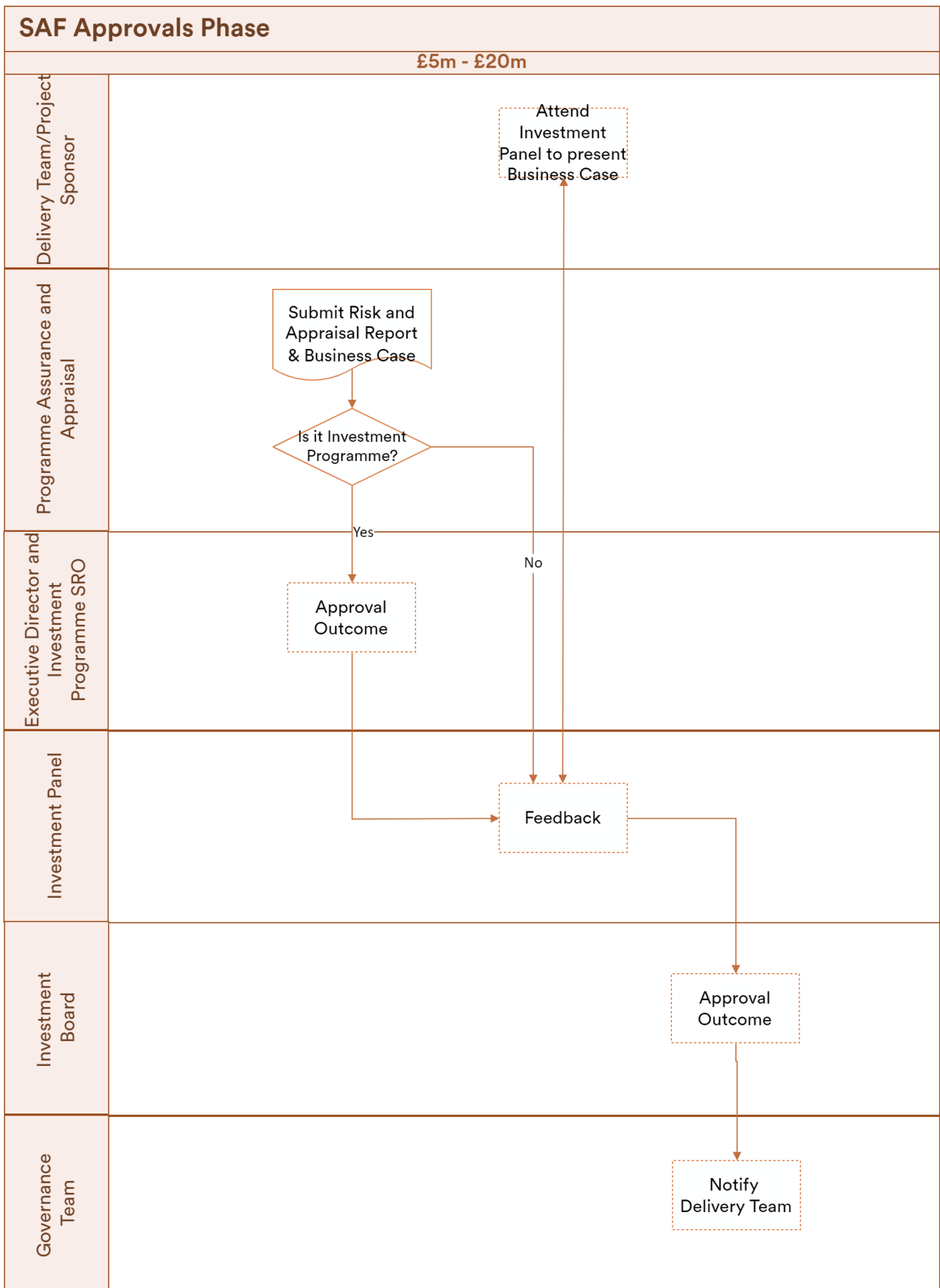
Approvals above £5million are above the levels of officer approval delegations and must therefore be considered and approved by Boards consisting of regional political representatives. Decision-makers are asked to consider the Business Case, Assurance Observations Report, and the Risk & Investment Appraisal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

To support decision-making Boards, advisory support panels will review a business case and supporting documentation and meet with the Sponsor/Executive Director before Board consideration. The Investment Panel supports the Investment Board by reviewing proposals and will 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 Assurance Observations Reports produced during development that incorporate an assessment of business case maturity against HM Treasury Green Book and WMCA requirements
- examining key risks and investment appraisal considerations and recommendations

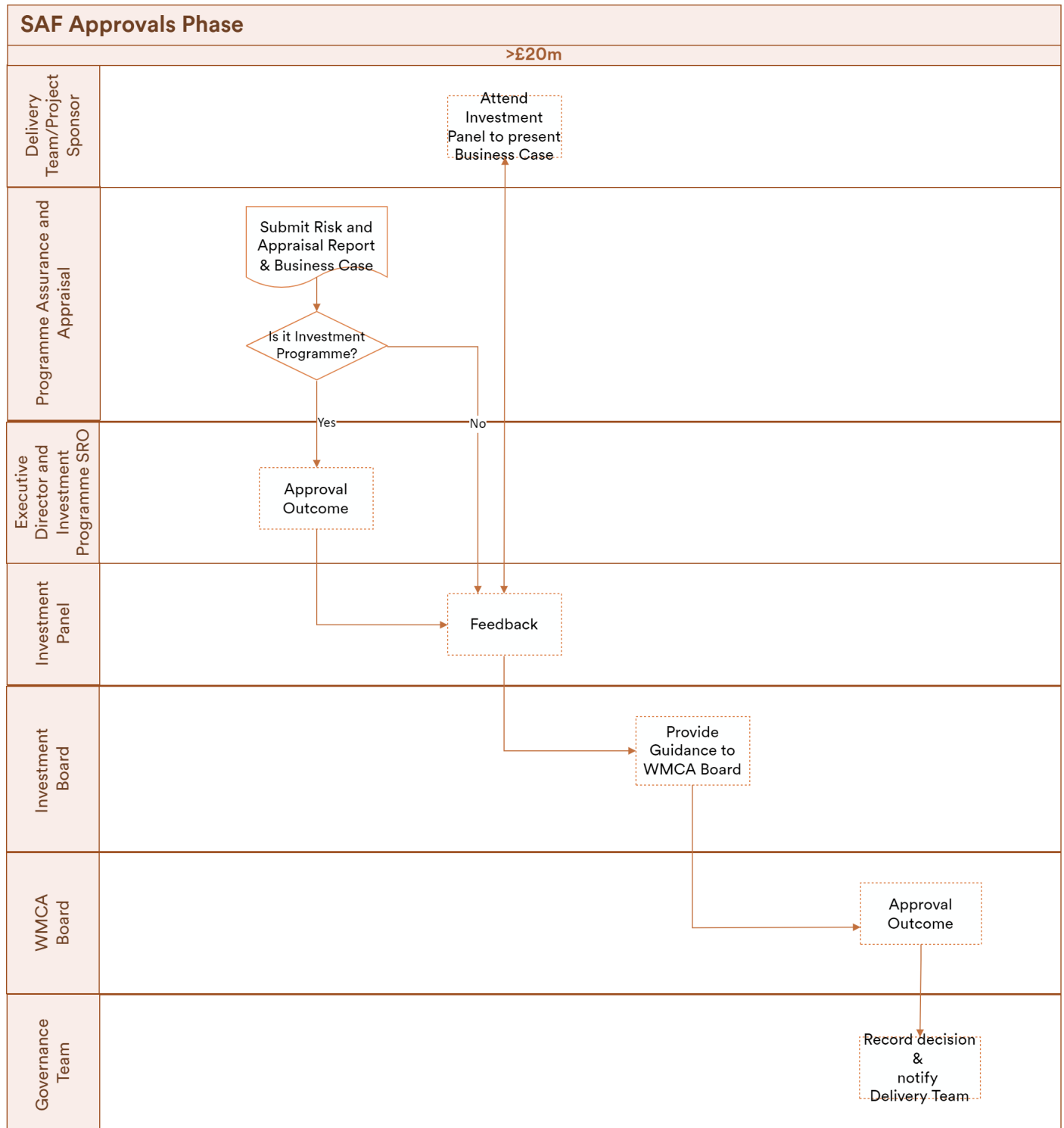
The Investment Panel will provide the Investment Board with a recorded discussion for each proposal, noting observations to consider, including the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal, observations on the level of investment risk and providing any recommendations for improvement or to mitigate risks.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

4 - The SAF: Project Lifecycle Process



4.12.4 - Approvals of £20million and above

Additionally, there is a further role for WMCA Board in approving Investment Programme approvals that are above £20million. For these, the proposal will first be considered by the Investment Board who will then make recommendations to the WMCA Board.



4.13 - Subsidy Control

WMCA will ensure that all projects meet Subsidy Control law. Formerly termed as State Aid is at present primarily governed by the United Kingdom's commitments as set out Chapter 3 of Title XI of Part 2 of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and the United Kingdom as given effect by the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020, including commitments on subsidies arising from the UK's membership of the World Trade Organisation (including but not limited to the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures, the General Agreement on Trade in Services and the Agreement on Agriculture).

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. (Example is in Appendix 5.4.) 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 Monitoring and Evaluation 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:

- Reporting requirements are locally defined and reported to our Strategic Leadership Team in a consistent fashion
- Evaluation is meaningful and proportionate
- Data is collected once and used many times to inform other critical documents, such as the Annual Business Plan
- Baseline information is consistent across key initiatives
- Monitoring and evaluation is a core part of all activities
- Lessons learned are used to inform future projects and programmes, especially at the pre-initiation stage

All projects that go through our SAF, will have an effective monitoring and evaluation 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. The monitoring plan will guide the collection of data from individual projects 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.

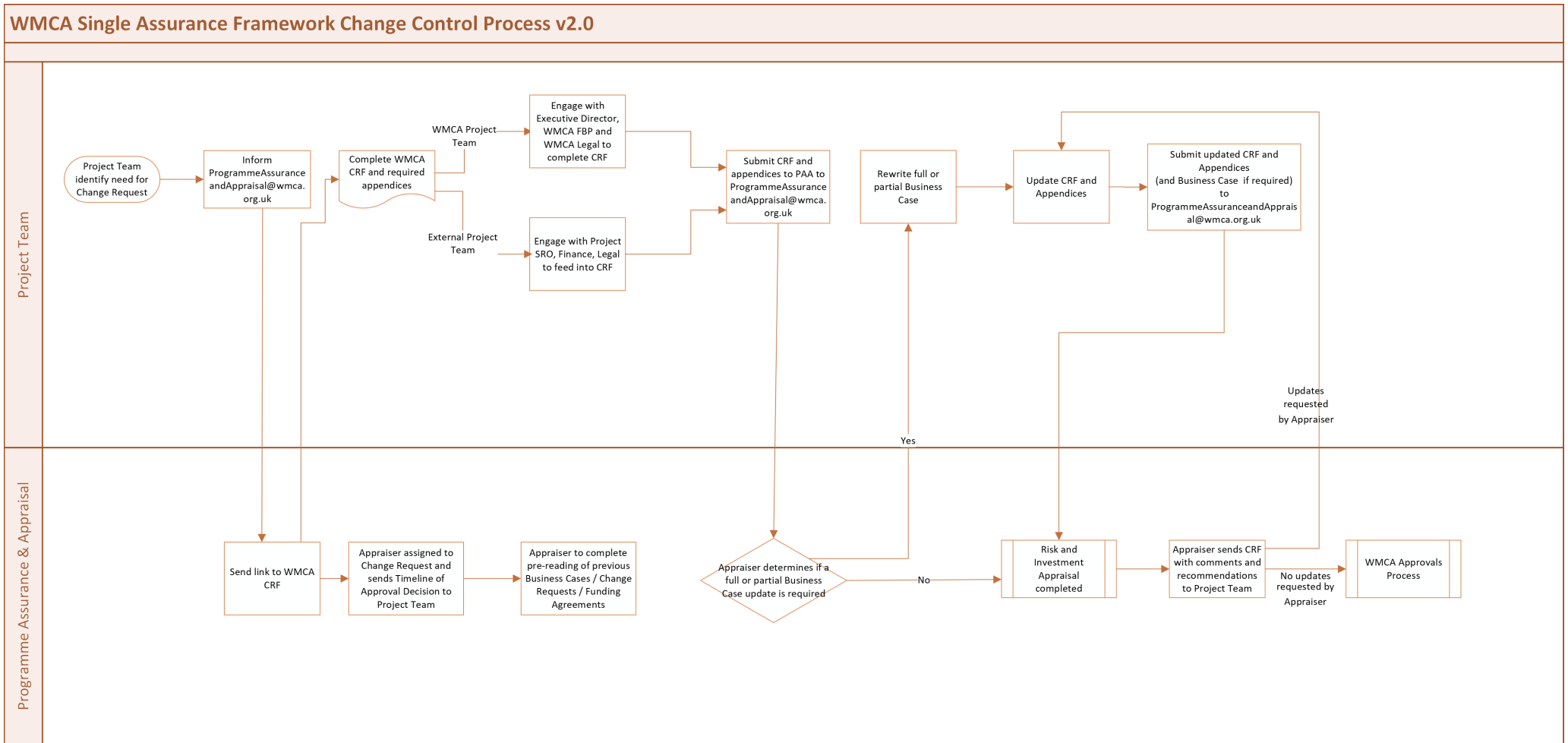
To manage the Investment Programme, AKA West Midlands Investment Fund, WMCA has a Commercial and Investment Monitoring and Evaluation team to perform portfolio monitoring, in accordance to HM Treasury's Green Book and **Magenta Book**; Team liaising with the relevant Programme Management Offices of our constituent authorities. Monitoring activities are conducted using the Project Development Plan, Annual Delivery Update and the subjacent M&E plans.

The Investment Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Team also liaises with Project Sponsors, our Appraisal and Assurance, Legal and Finance Teams to develop relevant, actionable information to help us monitor, evaluate, and react to changes on any projects funded through the investment programme.

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 WMCA Board it does not need to go back to Board. The reason for this is that for example, there is a Change Request for a minor time extension and no additional funds have been requested. Although the original OBC was approved by Board, there is no need for Board to be sighted on a 'minor' change as this could delay project progress and cause further time delays whilst awaiting the bi-monthly Board meeting. Rarely the change is deemed contentious, for example, the scope of the approved initiative has changed dramatically or more than 10% of the original funding is being requested these may need to be reviewed by Board.

4 - The SAF: Project Lifecycle Process



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.

- 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.

The Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team have developed a Post Implementation Review tool which is being tested with Performance Monitoring and Evaluation leads to ensure a consistent approach is implemented following the closure of a project. The intention of the Post Implementation Review process is to ensure lessons are learnt and applied across the organisation regarding project and programme management practice and that at the end of a project lifecycle, effective systems and controls are implemented to ensure the successful delivery of stated benefits and outcomes.

5.1 - Transport Projects

For the CRSTS programme (and other transport led projects, regardless of funding streams) there is a requirement that all schemes follow the WMCA SAF. For the CRSTS fund there is a further requirement that an annual review and report to the WMCA Board is completed of the Programme Business Case. This will be informed by a series of quarterly monitoring and evaluation reports undertaken throughout the year and submitted to DfT, Investment Board, Strategic Transport Board and others groups as required. Similar quarterly reporting is expected of other transport capital grant programmes such as Transforming Cities, Active Travel Fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Once a funding programme benefits from a developed and agreed Programme Business Case approved through the SAF process, most schemes will also require a standalone Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) business case to be developed. This document(s) should provide any necessary context and evidence required to support approval, clearly addressing the key questions within the Transport Specific Additional WMCA SAF Appendix. This WMCA SAF appendix provides as a 'checklist' of information which should be provided either with the WebTAG compliant business case, or as separate documents.

This business case will produced in a format and structure which is appropriate to the individual scheme, but should then be used as the basis from which to complete the appropriate Board templates or additional documentation checklists.

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

To ensure that the scope of the business case meets the requirements of relevant funding streams, the Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) will acting as subject matter experts (and advise when further expertise should be bought in for peer review) to support the Programme Assurance and Appraisal Team. Working will ensure that the project meets strategic and funding requirements.

The Business Case will clearly articulate how the project/programme will be monitored and evaluated, following WMCA guidance relevant to transport schemes and in collaboration with the national fund evaluator (noting that DfT typically appoint an independent evaluator for its grant funding programmes).

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. Within the WMCA SAF Transport Appendix, there is a table showing the questions to be addressed at each stage of the business case cycle. This does not preclude earlier completion of these if the information is available. Information entered in previous stages should be retained and updated where necessary for subsequent stages.

5.2 - Housing Projects

For the Housing Property and Regeneration Programme (and other Housing, Property and Regeneration led projects, regardless of funding streams) the programmes and projects will be required to develop an Annual Programme Business Case. This Programme Business Case will be subject to local assurance arrangements – in WMCA's case, the SAF. The Programme Business Case will also be updated when new funds become available and individual projects will also be aligned to the Programme Business Case will be required to produce a Project Case, which will be subject to the SAF<

Individual Housing, Property and Regeneration projects will also be subject to the **Single Commissioning Framework (wmca.org.uk)** 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. Project cases going forward will be subject to a maturity assessment against HM Treasury Green Book requirements and Assurance Observations Report will be produced with the aim of driving improvements to the maturity of a business case prior to a risk and investment appraisal prior to approval. The Project Case should be clear about how the scheme will be monitored and evaluated. It will then be subject to Approval at the appropriate level, as outlined above.

5.3 - Adult Education Budget Programme

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) will be subject to independent bi-annual assurance health checks (target dates of March and September) undertaken by the Programme Assurance and Appraisal team. The health check process is an objective, evidence-based review and will:

- give confidence to senior managers and decision-makers on AEB programme performance
- share best practice, insight, and information
- help drive continuous improvement across the AEB programme
- provide evidence of compliance with ESFA requirements and inform annual Assurance letter(s) contents

A customised health check tool has been developed for AEB utilising the Association of Project Managers (APM) Measures for Assuring Projects, APM Conditions for Project Success and bespoke lines of enquiry taken from Department for Education (DfE) Devolution of adult education functions, from Academic Year 2019/20 Memorandum of Understanding.

The first health check undertaken will be a comprehensive review of the full lifecycle of AEB. The findings will help to establish a more proportionate, efficient and lean process for subsequent health checks, which will include a review of progress against any recommendations previously raised. In addition the Skills Directorate will develop a Programme Business Case detailing all funding streams and delivery arrangements for adult education provision across the region. This Programme Business Case will be subject to local assurance arrangements – in WMCA's case, the SAF., (as detailed above). It is expected that monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be implemented across the Skills Directorate to ensure outcomes and benefits are effectively monitored with performance reported through to the realisation of benefits.

5.3.1 - Health Check Format and Approach

An introductory meeting will be held with the AEB Lead/representative and the Programme Assurance Specialist to run through the health check process, agree timings and gain an understanding of the programme and processes in place.

During the health check the Programme Assurance specialist will conduct:

- desk-based reviews of documentation and background evidence, including the skills three-year planning proposal approved by WMCA Board. (Updated annually to reflect Government Policy, and local need).
- stakeholder engagement meetings

Documentation to be reviewed and names of Stakeholders to meet will be identified and agreed during the introductory meeting with the AEB Lead/representative. Should any additional evidence or stakeholders be required during the process of the health check, the Programme Assurance Specialist will inform the AEB Lead/representative.

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

5.3.2 - Governance

Findings and recommendations following the health check will be detailed within a draft Assurance Observations Report for consideration and agreement by the AEB Lead/representative. There will be no finding/comment attributed to specific individuals and all recommendations made will be in the spirit of ensuring continuous improvement.

The AEB Lead/representative will be required to review the draft Assurance Observations Report and confirm their agreement with it within a suitable timeframe (usually one week), with the aim being to agree a final Assurance Observations Report.

If findings and recommendations cannot be agreed, there will be an opportunity for the AEB Lead/representative to record their response(s) and rationale.

The final/agreed Assurance Observations Report, following each Health Check, will be an agenda item presented to Economies Skills & Communities Payments and Performance Meeting(s). The purpose of the Health Check process is to drive continuous improvement across all AEB project and programme activities.

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 - Typical Funding Letter

Applicant Address

Dear Sirs,

Project Name:

Applicant:

Maximum Funding Contribution:

Tranche 1 Payment Payable within 28 days of completion of Milestone 1

Tranche 2 Payment Payable within 28 days of completion of Milestone 2

Tranche 3 Payment Payable within 28 days of completion of Milestone 3

Tranche 4 Payment Payable within 28 days of completion of Milestone 4

Tranche 5 Payment Payable within 28 days of completion of Milestone 5

Eligible Expenditure: See attached Business Justification Case & Schedule 1

Project Details: See attached Business Justification Case & Schedule 1

Availability Period: The period starting on the Funding Commencement Date and ending on the:

Funding Completion Date:

Funding Commencement Date:

Funding Completion Date:

I write to confirm that West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will provide the Funding Contribution for the above Eligible Expenditure for the Applicant to conduct the activities in accordance with the Business Justification Case and the Terms and Conditions overleaf.

To drawdown the Funding you will be required to submit your claim to [email address] with evidence of the milestone delivery and details of expenditure.

Yours sincerely

Authorised Signatory

For and on behalf of

West Midlands Combined Authority

I can confirm that [Applicant] will use the Funding Contribution in accordance with the Terms & Conditions stipulated within this letter.

Authorised Signatory:

Name:

Position:

5.5 - SAF Templates

5.5.1 - 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).

5.5.2 - 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.

5.5.3 - 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.

5.5.4 - 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.

5.5.5 - Strategic Outline Case (SOC)

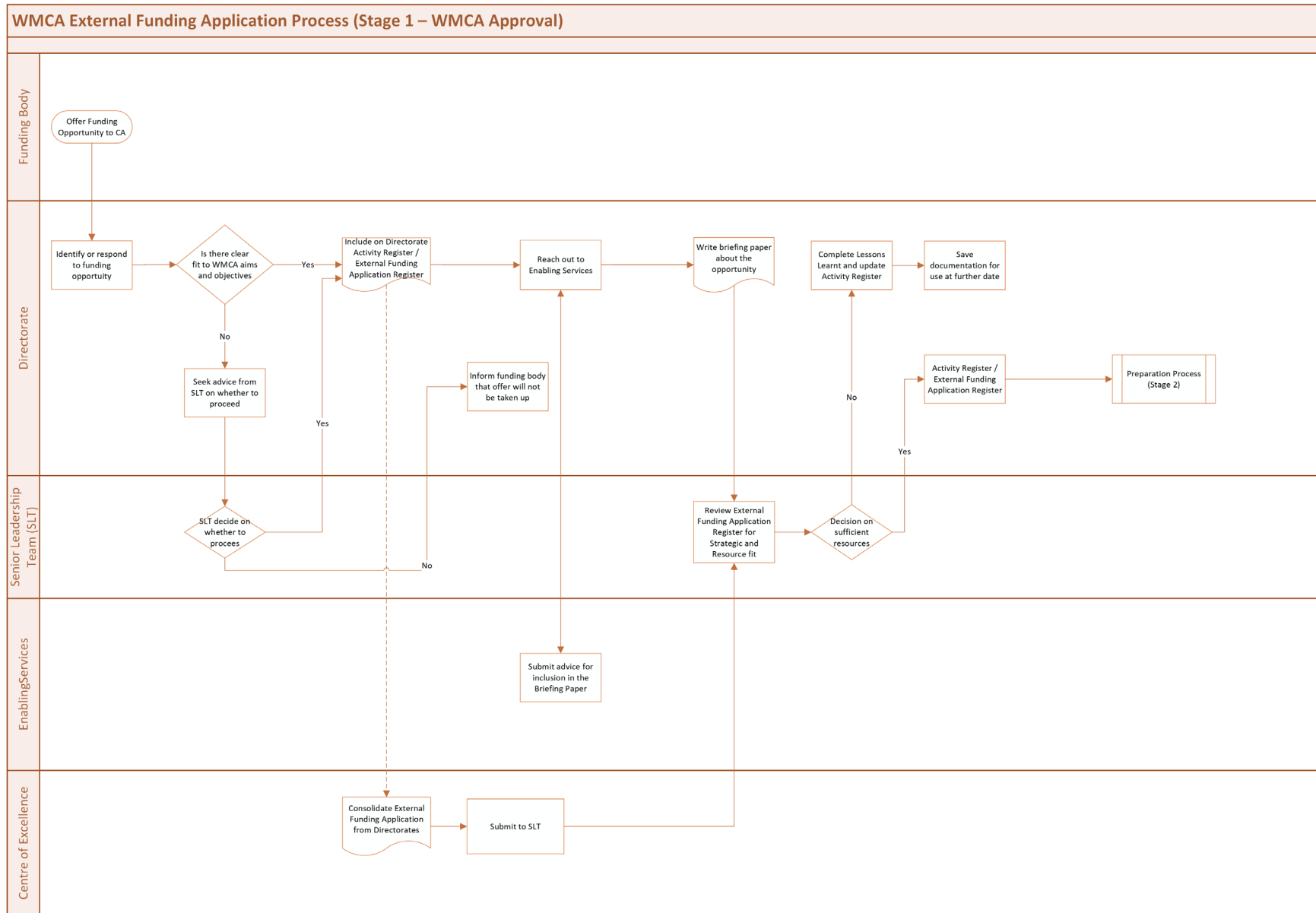
The SOC or the Strategic Outline Business Case provides the strategic rationale for the intervention and identifies the critical success factors. The preferred option is derived via an options analysis to demonstrate how optimum VFM and social value will be achieved. Stakeholders will understand the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

5.5.6 - Outline Business Case (OBC)

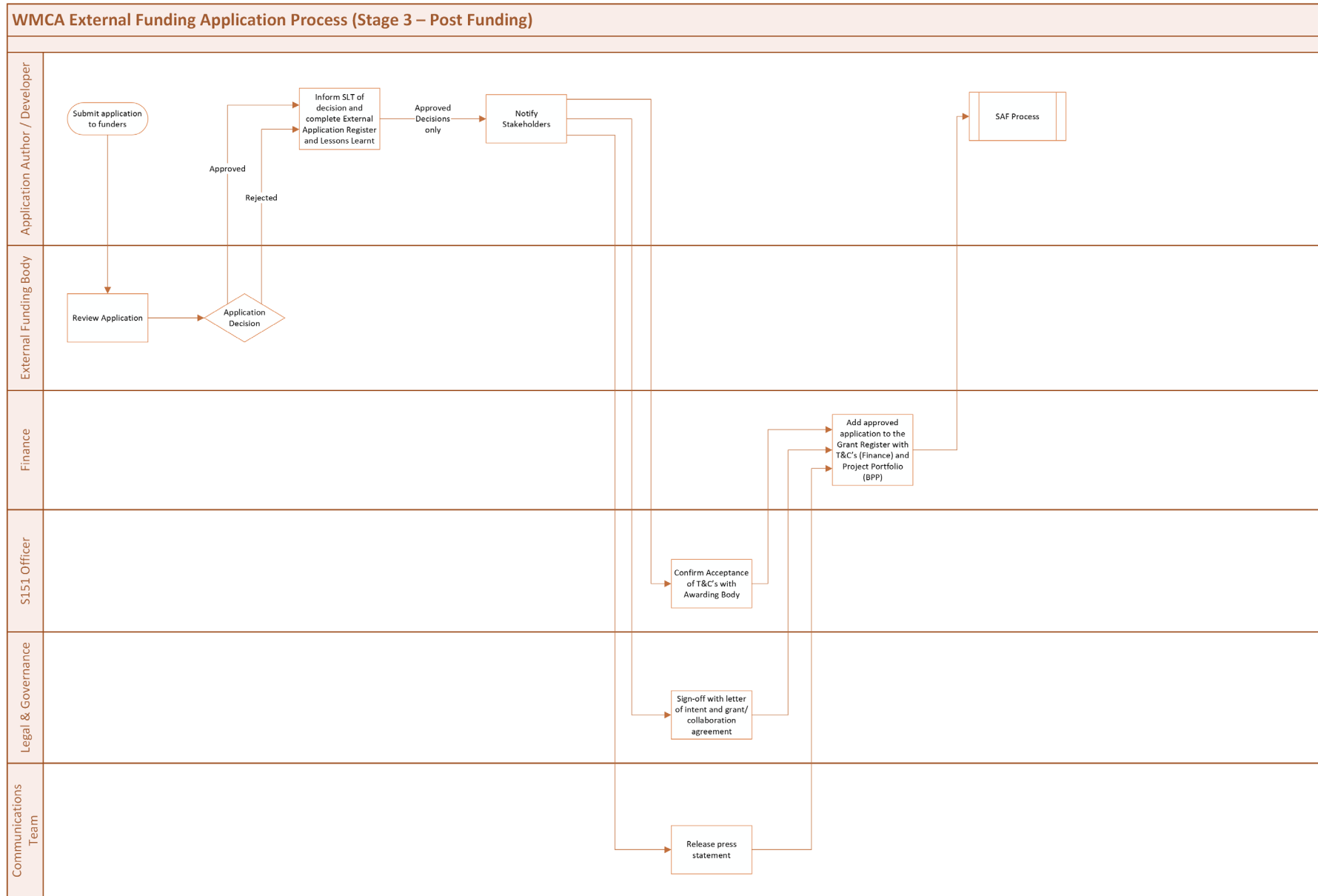
The OBC determines VFM and prepares for the potential procurement by ascertaining affordability, the procurement proposal and funding requirement. At the conclusion of the OBC stage consent should be able to be established for the procurement phase of the project to go ahead or not.

5.5.7 - 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 - Appendices





West Midlands
Combined Authority