



TEES VALLEY  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

TEES VALLEY MAYOR

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# ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK 2019-29



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# 1. Purpose of the Tees Valley Assurance Framework

## 1.1 The Assurance Framework sets out:

- How the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' shape the culture within the Combined Authority in undertaking its roles and responsibilities in relation to the use and administration of the Tees Valley Investment Fund, incorporating the Single Pot funding. This culture is developed and underpinned by processes, practices and procedures;
- The respective roles and responsibilities of the Combined Authority, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Section 73 Officer in decision-making and ways of working. Forming the published joint statement of the Combined Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership;
- The key processes for ensuring accountability including public engagement, probity, transparency, legal compliance and value for money;
- How potential investments to be funded through the Tees Valley Investment Fund, incorporating the Single Pot will be: appraised, prioritised, approved, signed off and delivered;
- The processes for oversight of projects, programmes and portfolios and how the progress and impacts of these investments will be monitored and evaluated.

1.2 The Assurance Framework sits alongside a number of other Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) documents – most notably the Constitution of the Mayoral Combined Authority, including the Financial Regulations ([click here](#)) the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan ([click here](#)), the Tees Valley Investment Plan 2019-29 ([click here](#)) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework ([click here](#)). This Assurance Framework replaces the last published Assurance Framework and continues to adhere to national guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government for National Local Growth Assurance Framework (September 2021).

1.3 The Assurance Framework covers all funds within the Tees Valley Investment Fund, incorporating the Single Pot under the Tees Valley Devolution Deal agreed with government, and funds added to the Single Pot since the Devolution Deal, together with other sources of income such as Enterprise Zone business rates and loan repayments. A separate Assurance Framework has been developed and agreed for the South Tees Development Corporation (STDC) which should be read in conjunction with the TVCA Assurance Framework.

## Review of the Assurance Framework

- 1.4 The Assurance Framework will be reviewed on an annual basis with any revisions in place for April of the following year. Any changes that require amendments to the Combined Authority Constitution will be agreed at the Combined Authority Cabinet.
- 1.5 The review will examine whether the assurance processes are operating effectively and identify any areas for improvement. Any changes to legal, funding, or other contextual changes that might require a change of assurance process will be taken into account, along with the impact on any other Combined Authority key strategies, policies or processes. Any changes with significant divergence from the approved local assurance framework will be agreed with MHCLG.
- 1.6 The remainder of this document is structured around the following sections:
  - **Section 2:** describes the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan, our Ten-Year Investment Plan 2019-29 and clarifies the content of Tees Valley Investment Fund and the role of the Assurance Framework;
  - **Section 3:** describes the accountability and transparent decision-making process and practices that we operate and the roles and responsibilities within it;
  - **Section 4:** describes how we make robust and evidenced decisions;
  - **Section 5:** explains the processes once programmes and projects are in the delivery phase; and finally
  - **Section 6:** explains how we will measure the success of our investments, realise the benefits of that investment and feed the evaluation outcomes back into the Investment Planning, and strategy and policy development processes.

## 2. Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan and Investment Plan 2019-29

### Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan

- 2.1 The Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan ([click here](#)) sets out the area's ambition to drive the transition to a high-value, low-carbon, diversified and inclusive economy, and sets out the ambition to unlock a net additional 25,000 jobs by 2026. It is essential that all Tees Valley residents can gain the skills and confidence they need and can travel to these job opportunities.
- 2.2 Our ambition incorporates economic, social and environmental priorities and will allow all partners to work towards a sustainable and socially responsible Tees Valley. Underlying this ambition is a commitment to improving the lifetime opportunities for local people, tackling some of the difficult challenges of social exclusion, providing opportunities across all the Tees Valley including rural areas and disadvantaged communities, thereby ensuring that all citizens are able to share in the benefits of economic growth.
- 2.3 The Strategic Economic Plan is focused around six growth generating themes and provides the strategic rationale and priorities for interventions and for investment:
  1. **Transport:** to improve connectivity within Tees Valley, with other town, cities and regions, the UK and the world;
  2. **Education, Employment & Skills:** to produce the skilled workforce that businesses need and increase lifetime opportunities for our residents and young people;
  3. **Business Growth (including enabling infrastructure):** to diversify the economy, support more business start-ups, develop high growth potential businesses and key growth sectors;
  4. **Culture:** to build cultural vibrancy in our communities and change external perceptions of Tees Valley through the arts, cultural and leisure offer whilst creating places that attract and retain businesses and business leaders and make the area more attractive to investors, workers and visitors;
  5. **Research, Development, Innovation & Energy:** to introduce new processes and practices which reduce carbon emissions, increase productivity and the availability of high value jobs; and
  6. **Place:** to accelerate the supply of good quality homes across the whole housing market, revitalise our town centres and urban cores, bring forward

surplus public and blighted brownfield land for development and strengthen our commercial property offer.

Investments will only be made if they can demonstrate that they will support the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan and our more detailed thematic strategies and plans (where they are in place).

## Local Industrial Strategy

- 2.4 In December 2018, the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy announced that Local Enterprise Partnership areas had been asked to develop a Local Industrial Strategy setting out, alongside a comprehensive Evidence Base, the sectoral strengths and opportunities for economic growth and increased productivity within their local area, aligned to the goals of the National Industrial Strategy.
- 2.5 A Tees Valley Local Industrial Strategy was agreed locally in July 2019. The Strategy outlines a set of long-term policy priorities to help guide industrial development in the Tees Valley, with a focus on increasing productivity. The Strategy was co-designed within consultation with local businesses and other stakeholders. A strategy was agreed by Cabinet following a formal consultation period and submitted to government.

## Tees Valley Investment Plan 2019-29

- 2.6 The Devolution Deal with Government in 2015, provided for the transfer of significant powers for employment and skills, transport, and investment. With the creation of the Combined Authority in 2016 and the Mayoral election in May 2017, Tees Valley established the first Mayoral Development Corporation outside of London. This devolution of powers and responsibilities has allowed the Combined Authority to create an Investment Fund, bringing together a £15million yearly allocation over 30 years to deliver a programme of transformational investment in the region.
- 2.7 The initial Tees Valley Combined Authority Investment Plan was agreed in March 2017 and set out our investment priorities for the period to 2021. A refreshed Investment Plan was agreed in January 2019 which set out the investment strategy for the period 2019-2029, with a one-year on update provided and agreed at Cabinet in January 2020 ([click here](#)). This one-year on Investment Plan update provided an overview of progress building on previous iterations and reaffirms our continued investment strategy for the period to 2029. The Investment Plan will continue to be reviewed annually in order to take account of changing economic circumstances, integrate new funding and investment opportunities, and determine the best use of our resources to maximise the potential of Tees Valley.
- 2.8 The overall sum of our Investment Plan over the period 2019-29 is £1.4bn which will see us deliver significant benefits to Tees Valley. The total impact of delivering the Investment Plan will be in the order of 16,475 direct jobs and

£1.48bn of additional cumulative annual output (GVA), over its lifetime. It is essential that our focus is maintained on delivering economic growth if we are to fulfil our ambitions for Tees Valley's economy.

- 2.9 Our Investment Plan sets out, at a high level, the transformational investments that the Tees Valley Combined Authority will commit resources to, subject to the detailed consideration and appraisal of project business cases. Our investments will tackle these challenges and drive growth in line with the vision outlined in our Strategic Economic Plan ([click here](#)). The productivity challenges and opportunities facing the region are detailed in our draft Local Industrial Strategy, which was agreed by the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet in July 2019.
- 2.10 Some of our proposed interventions, at this stage, are still project ideas and may not prove to be feasible, others are further advanced and well evidenced. The Investment Plan is not intended to be an exhaustive list of activity, as new opportunities will arise over the ten-year period of the plan. It does, however, identify the key activity that we know now could be transformational and is therefore deserving of investment. Prioritisation has been undertaken to ensure that our investment goes into projects that will unlock transformational change, specifically projects that will have a significant impact on growing the Tees Valley economy. The initial priorities within the thematic areas are detailed in the thematic sections of the Investment Plan 2019-2029 ([click here](#)) with current priorities identified in **Appendix 2** highlighted in ***Bold Italics***.

## The Tees Valley Investment Fund

- 2.11 As part of the devolution deal, the Combined Authority has responsibility for a 'Single Pot' of funding, including:
- Devolution Funds (the devolution deal £15m p.a. for 30 years);
  - Local Growth Fund (LGF);
  - Transforming Cities Fund (TCF);
  - Get Building Fund (GBF);
  - Brownfield Housing Fund (BHF);
  - Adult Education Budget (AEB);
  - Free Courses for Jobs Funding
  - Community Renewal Fund (CRF);
  - City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS); and
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (including Multiply).
- 2.12 However, the Combined Authority also has other sources of income, including Enterprise Zone business rates and loan repayments. The long-term security of the devolution funds, other income and the devolution deal powers means that the Combined Authority is able to borrow against future funds, to enable us to deliver transformational activity sooner rather than delivering smaller scale and less impactful activities based on a smaller annual allocation.
- 2.13 The Combined Authority does not distinguish between the different sources of funding for the purpose of Investment Planning, other than recognising that some



sources of funding are restricted in what they can be used for. All funds (with the exception of the Adult Education Budget) are within the Tees Valley Investment Plan / Fund i.e., the use of the term Investment Fund (which is used by some to define the devolution funding) in Tees Valley includes all funding sources and income currently available to the Combined Authority, not just the funds provided through the devolution deal. Whilst the Adult Education Budget and Free Courses for Jobs funding is not within the Investment Plan / Fund, it is covered within this Assurance Framework.

- 2.14 The Investment Plan identifies the ten-year investment priorities against all Combined Authority sources of income and applies the Assurance Framework consistently across all funds within the Investment Plan. The Assurance Framework clearly identifies the processes for securing funds from the Tees Valley Investment Fund and the requirements placed on delivery partners once their projects have been approved.
- 2.15 This means that any organisation seeking funding from the Combined Authority does not need to concern itself with the source of the funding and different rules and processes that will apply. These will be identified in the funding agreement with the delivery partner.

## 3. Accountability and Transparent Decision Making

- 3.1 Members of the Combined Authority are expected to act in the interests of the Tees Valley area as a whole when making investment decisions. A variety of controls are in place to ensure that decisions are appropriate and free from bias or perception of bias. Further details are provided in the following sections.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.2 The national Assurance Framework guidance requires a joint statement between the Combined Authority and the LEP which sets out their respective roles and responsibilities. This section sets out these roles and responsibilities, explains the relationship between the Combined Authority and the LEP and provides the clarity on accountability for public funding. This section therefore forms the joint statement.

### Tees Valley Combined Authority

- 3.3 The Combined Authority was established to further the sustainable and inclusive growth of the economy of the Tees Valley. As a statutory local authority our governance, decision making and financial arrangements are in line with local authority requirements and standard checks and balances.
- 3.4 The Combined Authority was established in April 2016 with the Mayoral election held in May 2017. It has been built on a strong history of collaboration between the five Constituent Authorities (Darlington, Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton on Tees and Middlesbrough) the private sector and other partners.
- 3.5 This effective joint working between the public and private sector that has been developed over a period of 20+ years, through various partnership models, and more recently through the Local Enterprise Partnership. In establishing the Combined Authority, the five constituent local authorities wanted to ensure that this collaboration was embedded within the way the Combined Authority works. It was therefore agreed that the Local Enterprise Partnership would be fully integrated within the Combined Authority. This position was reinforced with the formal submission of a LEP Integration Plan to Government in 2022, in accordance with national requirements. The role of the private sector Local Enterprise Partnership members is detailed further below.
- 3.6 For the purposes of this document all references to the Combined Authority apply to the Local Enterprise Partnership unless explicitly referred to **separately**.
- 3.7 The Combined Authority therefore incorporates the role and responsibilities of the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the roles defined in the

devolution deal (in particular the Transport Authority, and non-statutory responsibilities such as the administration of the Adult Education Budget).

- 3.8 The Combined Authority is its own accountable body and provides the accountable body role for the LEP and employs the officers that support it.

## **Combined Authority Membership**

- 3.9 The Combined Authority membership and status in our Cabinet is as follows:

Mayor (Chair) – voting.

Leaders of the five constituent local authorities:

- Darlington Borough Council – voting
- Hartlepool Borough Council – voting
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council – voting
- Stockton on Tees Borough Council – voting
- Middlesbrough Borough Council – voting.

Deputy Mayor – is held by one of the Local Authority Leaders on an agreed annual rotation.

Local Enterprise Partnership Chair – non-voting.

Local Enterprise Partnership Vice-Chairs – non-voting.

Local Enterprise Partnership other public and private sector members – associate members – non-voting.

## **The Role of the Mayor**

- 3.10 The Constitution provides for a directly elected Mayor of the Tees Valley, required by government as a precondition for meaningful devolution, and who is the chair of the Combined Authority. The Mayoral arrangements will only gain the confidence of the electorate if they secure support from across our diverse communities, meet the highest standards of democratic accountability and are subject to robust checks and balances. The Constitution therefore provides for the Mayor's role to be embedded in the Combined Authority's collective decision-making arrangements.

- 3.11 The Mayor chairs the Cabinet which is made up of the leaders of the five constituent authorities, who together form the Combined Authority's decision-making body (voting members of Cabinet).

- 3.12 The Constitution sets out arrangements to ensure the effective conduct of the Combined Authority's business in this spirit of collaboration, mutual respect and transparency. All members strive to work on the basis of consensus, taking decisions through agreement. The Constitution requires Strategic Plans and the Investment Plan / Fund decisions to be by consensus agreement. These principles apply irrespective of the statutory basis for the exercise of those powers: whether through the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor, the

Combined Authority, or the Local Enterprise Partnership. The powers of the Mayor are to be exercised through collaboration within the Combined Authority's Cabinet, and in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. The decision-making process for the use of all funds within the Tees Valley Investment Fund is described from page 43 onwards, including the role of the Mayor as the Chair of Cabinet.

- 3.13 The Mayor's term of office was initially for three years with the next election due to take place in May 2020 and then every four years thereafter. The Coronavirus Act 2020 delayed the Mayoral elections for one year to 6 May 2021, therefore extending the first term of office to four years. The current term of office of the Mayor elected on 6 May 2021 is three years. Following this, the Mayoral elections will take place every four years.

## **The Role of the Local Authority Leaders**

- 3.14 Leadership of the Combined Authority is driven by the Mayor and the five local authority leaders. The local authority leaders represent the views of their constituent authorities at the Combined Authority Cabinet whilst putting the needs and opportunities of the Tees Valley at the forefront of all decisions. In addition, they each take a portfolio lead covering the growth themes within the Strategic Economic Plan and the Tees Valley Investment Plan. These portfolio lead roles are reviewed annually and are confirmed at the Combined Authority AGM.

## **Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**

- 3.15 Tees Valley is a well-established and successful functioning economic area. This was recognised by government in establishing the Mayoral Combined Authority in 2016, covering the same geography as the Local Enterprise Partnership and which led to the Local Enterprise Partnership being fully integrated within the Combined Authority ahead of national requirements to do so. There are no dependencies with other Local Enterprise Partnerships. However, Tees Valley actively collaborates with areas beyond its boundaries where there are synergies and added value.

The Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership is the principal forum for collaboration between the public and private sectors, for improving the economy of the Tees Valley.

- 3.16 Private sector members of the Local Enterprise Partnership support the Combined Authority's work by:
- Providing specialist, business-led insights to critically influence, shape and review economic development activity in Tees Valley.
  - Providing a representative voice for all businesses in Tees Valley.
  - Developing innovative, business-led solutions to address challenges and opportunities, and deliver transformative change for the Tees Valley economy.

- Providing local business insights; drawing on data and intelligence; commissioning bespoke research and evaluation as required – to drive economic growth activity and maximise impact.
- Providing a clear voice for business, strategic connectivity and oversight across the business growth agenda, whilst working collaboratively and effectively with the Combined Authority.

3.17 Tees Valley continues to be an active member of the national Local Enterprise Partnership Network and the NP11 (network of Northern LEPs). This includes participation in both Local Enterprise Partnership Chair and officer level meetings.

3.18 Private sector Local Enterprise Partnership members are identified to take a strategic lead in a key sector or area of economic priority for Tees Valley, linked to their areas of expertise. These are identified on the Combined Authority website.

3.19 Meetings of the LEP are not public meetings and are therefore held in private.

## **Membership of the LEP**

3.20 The LEP comprises a maximum of 20 representatives of the local business community aligned, where possible, to the economic priorities outlined in the Combined Authority strategic documents.

3.21 Business Representative Organisations are represented by a nominated lead from networks active in Tees Valley.

3.22 Teesside University is represented as a key anchor institution, supporting sector development, business growth and development of skills.

3.23 Further Education is represented by one of the Further Education Colleges operating in Tees Valley, agreed collectively and rotating between the College Principals.

3.24 Subject matter experts can be appointed on an as needs and time limited, task and finish basis at the request of Strategic leads and the subsequent invitation of the Chair.

3.25 The Combined Authority Constitution sets out the role of the LEP within the Combined Authority, the principles of membership and the terms of office. This includes the process for appointing LEP Chair and Vice Chairs. The term of office for all LEP members is a two-year period (from appointment) with the option to extend for a further two years with the agreement of the Combined Authority Cabinet.

3.26 All LEP members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with 'The 7 Principles of Public Life.' This is set out under the Code of Conduct detailed at



appendix I in the Combined Authority Constitution and provided to all new LEP members in their induction information ([click here](#)). This induction information is reviewed on a regular basis with feedback from new members. In joining the LEP they sign up to the Code of Conduct.

## **Wider Business and Public Engagement**

- 3.27 The Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership recognise that the private sector members cannot represent the views of all enterprises headquartered in Tees Valley. Therefore, a variety of engagement mechanisms are utilised to ensure that the broader business community has the ability to influence strategy and policy development, our investment priorities and to be actively engaged in the delivery of some of our activities, particularly around supporting careers development with schools. Each of the Local Enterprise Partnership members are identified as thematic and/or sector leads ([click here](#)) part of their role involves engaging with and representing the interests of the wider business community through the networks and forums they are involved with.
- 3.28 Strategy and policy documents are developed through engagement with partners and key stakeholders and are subject to consultation. Each consultation will vary depending on the topic but will meet any statutory requirements. However, drafts are formally considered in public at the Combined Authority Cabinet with papers published in advance of the meeting. Additionally, all relevant consultations are published on the Combined Authority website.

## **Decision Making for the Tees Valley Investment Fund**

- 3.29 Tees Valley Combined Authority is its own Accountable Body for all funds received from government and is the Accountable Body for the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership is a non-voting member of the Combined Authority Cabinet. Non-voting members of the Cabinet provide advice and guidance during the decision-making process.
- 3.30 The Tees Valley Combined Authority Constitution ([click here](#)) sets out the basis of how decisions will be taken within our Combined Authority, in keeping with principles of democracy and transparency and with effective and efficient decision-making. The Constitution was reviewed in 2022 to ensure that it is up to date and takes on board the changes relating to the Local Enterprise Partnership as a result of the national requirements for LEP Integration. The Constitution is reviewed at least annually to ensure it remains up to date.
- 3.31 In summary, our decision-making process and governance for the Tees Valley Investment Fund as set out in the Tees Valley Ten-Year Investment Plan 2019-29 is as follows:

## **Strategic Economic Planning and Investment Planning**

The Combined Authority **Cabinet** provides the overall strategic direction for economic growth in Tees Valley - *approves the Strategic Economic Plan, Local Industrial Strategy and associated thematic strategies and plans.*

The Combined Authority **Cabinet** sets out the investment priorities for the Tees Valley Investment Fund - *approves the Tees Valley 10-Year Investment Plan*, including:

- Thematic allocations
- Named prioritised programmes and projects (identified in bold italics in the Investment Plan); and
- Named programmes and projects without allocations agreed in the Investment Plan

### Decision process for:

Named prioritised programmes and projects (*identified in bold italics in the Investment Plan*):

- For these programmes and projects, the Combined Authority Cabinet has already agreed that the activity fits with our strategic objectives and has agreed a funding allocation to the activity. The detailed consideration of whether the programme or project represents value for money, has realistic delivery timescales and processes, will deliver the outputs and outcomes that we require etc., and is undertaken through the development of a Business Case.
- This is then appraised by Combined Authority staff (with external technical support if required). Consideration of Business Cases and the appraisal is delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive for approval in consultation with Tees Valley Management Group, the Section 73 Officer and the Monitoring Officer (unless the funding request exceeds the allocated funding in the Investment Plan by 10% or more). In the event the funding requested exceeds the original allocation by 10% or more the decision is referred to the Combined Authority Cabinet as this would have implications for the Investment Plan (with a recommendation provided by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Management Group, Mayor and Portfolio Holder);
- Decisions taken under delegation are reported to the Combined Authority Cabinet for information and to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for information;
- In considering the appraisal recommendations (including any conditions) on Business Cases the following supporting information will be provided:
  - The Business Case; and
  - The completed appraisal summary document.
- For projects or programmes over £5m, Business Cases and appraisal documentation will be published on the Combined Authority website.
- Where several individual projects contribute to shared overarching aims and objectives a Programme Business Case will be developed. A

Programme Management Framework will be included in the Management section of the Business Case, which will identify the delegated arrangements for the approval of expenditure on each of the individual elements or projects. This approval process will be agreed as part of the Business Case approval.

- Consideration of expenditure in advance of Business Case approval is delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive in liaison with the Mayor and the thematic portfolio holder.

#### **Named programmes and projects without allocations agreed in the Investment Plan:**

- An Expression of Interest will be required for all projects and programmes under the thematic level that **do not have a specific funding allocation** identified within the Investment Plan. The Combined Authority will support the project sponsor to develop the Expression of Interest.
- The Expression of Interest will be considered by the Combined Authority Chief Executive and reported to the Combined Authority Cabinet with a recommendation on the programme or project for Cabinet decision.
- Those programmes and projects that are accepted into the Investment Plan would then proceed to develop a full Business Case and go through the approval route for: **Named prioritised programmes and projects.**

#### **New programmes and projects not in the Investment Plan:**

- With a ten-year Investment Plan new opportunities or challenges will arise and programmes and projects to address them will need to be considered. If they cannot be accommodated within an existing Investment Plan programme, they will need to be considered for entry into the Investment Plan.
- An Expression of Interest will be submitted to the Combined Authority, which will be subject to various eligibility checks. This will then be considered by the Combined Authority Chief Executive, in consultation with the Tees Valley Management Group, the Mayor and the appropriate Thematic Portfolio Holder with the recommendation to accept a programme or project into the Investment Plan taken to the Combined Authority Cabinet for decision. Those programmes or projects not recommended to proceed will be reported to the Combined Authority Cabinet for information.
- Those programmes and projects that are accepted into the Investment Plan would then proceed to develop a full Business Case and go through the approval route for: **Named prioritised programmes and projects.**

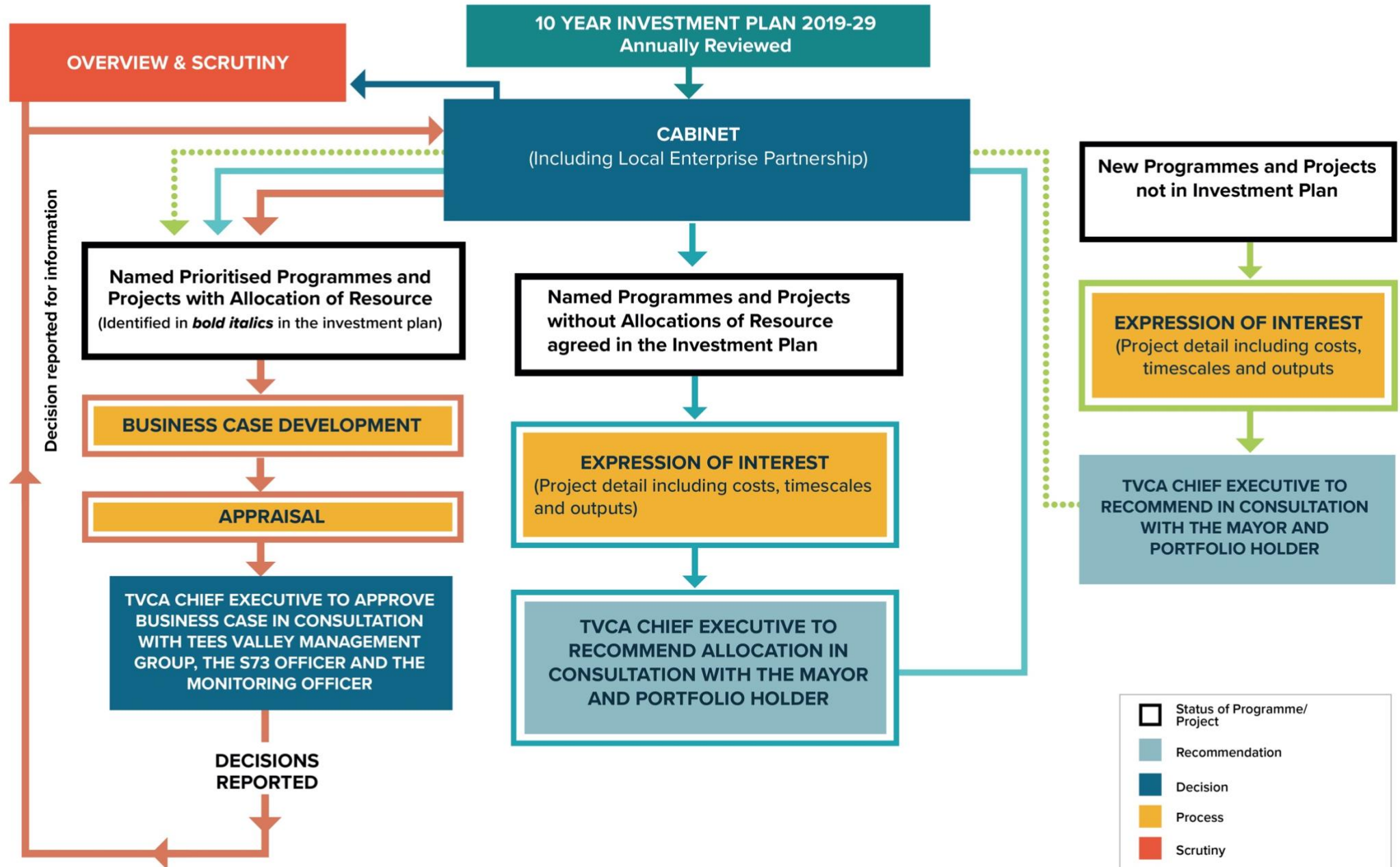
#### **Additional Delegations**

- The Chief Executive has delegated authority to authorise expenditure up to £1m in consultation with the Mayor and the relevant portfolio holder.
- Key decisions taken by the Combined Authority Cabinet and key decisions taken under delegated arrangements are published within two working days of being made and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sent a copy of all such decisions at the same time and have the ability to call in decisions for review and scrutiny.

- If a decision is taken that does not meet the Assurance Framework it will render the decision invalid on the basis of non-compliance.

The decision-making process and governance arrangements described are illustrated in the diagram on the following page:

# DECISION MAKING





## Specific Grants

3.32 From time to time government awards TVCA with funding for a specific named project or programme. Where this is the case a business case will be developed then appraised by Combined Authority staff (with external technical support if required). Consideration of Business Cases and the appraisal is delegated to the Combined Authority Chief Executive for approval in consultation with Tees Valley Management Group, the Section 73 Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

3.33 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a place-based fund that was allocated by government to all areas of the UK via a funding formula. Tees Valley was allocated £46.3m (made up of £42.7m core and £3.6m Multiply) for the period April 2022 – March 2025.

3.34 TVCA has agreed a programme level investment plan with government. This sets out place-based challenges and opportunities, along with priority interventions relating to:

- Communities and Places;
- People and Skills;
- Supporting Local Businesses.

3.35 TVCA have set four out the way in which UKSPF will be administered, including proportionate governance and assurance requirements, in an implementation plan. The plan sets out in detail routes for delivery of UKSPF in line with this Assurance Framework:

- Open Call;
- Procurement;
- Partnership Development/Co-design;
- Direct Delivery.

3.36 UKSPF investment activity will be appraised, monitored and evaluated in line with the principles set out within this Assurance Framework.

3.37 TVCA also publishes a forward plan of activity proposed for investment through UKSPF which can be found here.

## City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)

3.38 City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding was allocated by government to Mayoral Combined Authorities. Tees Valley was allocated £310m for the period April 2022 – March 2027 and negotiated / agreed a delivery programme business case with government consisting of six investment packages:

- Making cycling & walking the natural choice for shorter journeys;
- Transforming the Tees Valley rail system;
- A shared commitment with the operators to transform the Tees Valley bus services and grow passenger numbers;
- Putting the Tees Valley at the heart of the digital transport revolution;
- Positioning the Tees Valley at the forefront of decarbonising transport; and
- Ensuring everyone can access opportunity.

3.39 TVCA have set out in the CRSTS Programme Business Case how the fund will be used to deliver the agreed project list, including proportionate governance and assurance requirements. Transport Advisory Group (TAG) and Transport Planning Officers Group (TPOG) as the relevant Thematic Advisory Groups were instrumental in the development of the programme of projects which was subsequently endorsed by Tees Valley Management Group and Chief Executives.

3.40 CRSTS investment activity will be appraised, monitored and evaluated in line with the principles set out within this Assurance Framework. CRSTS is also subject to on-going quarterly monitoring and evaluation by DfT and has in-built funding delegation and change control processes in recognition of the challenges of delivering the original programme in the current environment with high levels of construction inflation.

## **Role of the Tees Valley Management Group**

3.41 The Tees Valley Management Group is made up of members of the Combined Authority's Senior Leadership Team (Chief Executive and Directors) and the Directors of Economic Growth / Regeneration from the five constituent Local Authorities. The Management Group meets once a month and has an oversight role of the work of the Combined Authority in particular, the thematic advisory groups, and it also constitutes the Place Advisory Group (see below).

3.42 As detailed above the Chief Executive is delegated to approve Business Cases for named prioritised programmes and projects, in addition to those programmes and projects delegated by the Combined Authority Cabinet after a funding allocation has been agreed, in consultation with the Tees Valley Management Group, the S73 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, for programmes and projects, unless they exceed the agreed funding allocation by 10% or more. In this case they will be considered by the Combined Authority Chief Executive, in consultation with the Tees Valley Management Group and a recommendation will be made to the Combined Authority Cabinet by the Chief Executive.

## **Thematic Advisory Groups**

3.43 The Combined Authority utilises Thematic Advisory Groups made up of appropriate stakeholders from across Tees Valley and where appropriate including representation from the broader North East, north or national geographies. These thematic groups reflect the Strategic Economic Plan and

Investment Plan growth themes. The membership of these groups is reviewed annually and agreed at the Combined Authority AGM. These are not statutory or decision-making groups and are therefore not detailed in the combined Authority Constitution. These groups ensure that the Combined Authority's strategies, policies and investment plans are developed with a broad range of local stakeholders and delivery bodies that are involved in the theme, together with other statutory bodies and government officials. These groups support the development of strategies, plans and proposals for delivery which then feed up through the Governance mechanisms towards the Combined Authority Cabinet for approval.

3.44 As detailed in the previous sections, both the Cabinet local authority leaders, and the private sector members have thematic portfolio leads and are involved in the Advisory Groups. Details of the Advisory Groups, including current membership can be found on the Combined Authority website ([click here](#)).

## **Decision Making for the Adult Education Budget and Free Courses for Jobs Funding**

3.45 The Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Free Courses for Jobs Funding will be confirmed by DfE on an annual basis, no later than 31 January. A condition of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget is the requirement to continue to fund the AEB defined legal entitlements:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A\* to C or grade 4, or higher, and /or
- First full qualification at Level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and / or
- First full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- Digital entitlement (from 1 August 2020)

3.46 An open opportunity for providers wishing to access adult skills funding from academic year 2021/22 was concluded in 2021. This established a Framework of Adult Skills Training Providers that is and will be utilised to award annual Adult Education Budget provision, any additional devolved adult skills funding and any adult skills funding secured by TVCA. The initial AEB awards that were directed via the Framework enabled this funding to be allocated for up to 4 years (3+1), subject to the availability of the devolved budget.

3.47 Annual AEB funding allocations will be approved by Cabinet each year. Annual funding awards will remain subject to confirmation of the annual devolved budget from DfE.

3.48 The Employment and Skills Strategy and associated delivery plan will be reviewed annually and will aim to set out and define the future priorities for the Adult Skills Funding.

- 3.49 The Combined Authority will regularly review its provider base to ensure that it is fit for purpose to deliver the adult education and skills needs of the Tees Valley region. Where there are any gaps in provider types and ability to meet the skills needs, the Combined Authority will undertake additional commissioning/procurement activity in order to seek and fund those providers.
- 3.50 Any additional in-year changes, such as additional funding awards, commissioning or procurement activity will be undertaken in line with the HM Treasury Green Book conditions. Where required, in line with the constitution; either a delegated decision or, if required, full Cabinet approval will be sought.
- 3.51 The Combined Authority will continue to manage the performance of Providers in line with the Performance Management Framework and will continue to assess the following on an annual basis:
- Financial Health;
  - Quality;
  - Data Collection;
  - Audit and Assurance; and
  - Contract Compliance.
- 3.52 The Combined Authority will continue to review its provider base as part of the annual provider performance review process, with consideration given to further commissioning/procurement as required.
- 3.53 The Combined Authority will continue to undertake external evaluation of adult skills provision at regular points during the Investment Plan delivery timetable following the final provider data submission annually in December 2020.

## Statutory Committees

- 3.54 As a Mayoral Combined Authority, we are constitutionally required to have the following Committees within our Governance structures:
- **Overview & Scrutiny Committee:** Reviews, decisions made, to ensure they meet the needs of the people of the Tees Valley and are made in line with our agreed policies, making recommendations where necessary. It has the power to “call in” and delay the implementation of decisions made by Cabinet. The membership of the Committee comprises fifteen members, three nominated from each of the Constituent Authorities. Members of the Committee appointed reflect, so far as reasonably practicable, the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the Constituent Authorities collectively.
  - **Audit & Governance Committee:** Ensures we are spending public money properly and have the right systems in place to manage our finances correctly and meet our legal and regulatory responsibilities. The Committee also reviews the corporate risk register on a quarterly basis. The membership of the Committee is one member from each Constituent Authority. Members of the Committee appointed reflect, so far as reasonably practicable, the balance of

political parties for the time being, prevailing among members of the Constituent Authorities collectively.

- **Transport Committee:** Reviews our transport strategy and policy. Reviews local transport services and oversees our representation on external transport bodies. The membership of the Committee is the executive members with political responsibility for transport within each Constituent Authority. It is chaired by the Combined Authority Cabinet member for transport.

3.55 The terms of reference and membership of these Committees is detailed in the Combined Authority Constitution.

## The Role of the Statutory Officers

3.56 The Combined Authority appoints four Statutory Officers who each have a formal role of discharging the duties and obligations on its behalf. The roles are detailed in the Combined Authority Constitution but briefly comprise:

- **Head of Paid Service** – The TVCA Chief Executive fulfils the role of the Head of Paid Service. The Head of Paid Service discharges the functions in relation to the Combined Authority as set out in section 4, Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and act as the principal advisor to the LEP.
- **Section 73 Officer** – The Director of Finance and Resources fulfils the role of Section 73 Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 1985 to administer the financial affairs of the Combined Authority and LEP. The Section 73 Officer is responsible for ensuring value for money and providing the final sign off for funding decisions. The Section 73 Officer will provide a letter of assurance to government by 28th February each year regarding the appropriate administration of government funds under the Tees Valley Investment Fund.
- **Monitoring Officer** – The Monitoring Officer fulfils their role in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 to administer the Legal duties of the Combined Authority and LEP.
- **Scrutiny Officer** – to promote the role of and provide support to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.57 In addition to these statutory roles, the Combined Authority has nominated officers to ensure that we meet our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and information governance. These are:

- **Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO)** - The SIRO is the officer responsible in the Combined Authority for Information Governance. The SIRO is responsible for the Strategy, acts as an advocate for good practice and is required to provide a statement of assurance as part of the Combined Authority's Annual Governance Statement.



- **Data Protection Officer** – to provide advice and guidance on the Data Protection Act 2018.

3.58 All six appointments are agreed annually at the Combined Authority AGM.

## **Supporting Policies and Procedures**

### **Working Arrangements, Meeting Frequency and Transparency**

3.59 The Combined Authority is subject to a robust transparency and local engagement regime aligned to that of its constituent Local Authorities. The Combined Authority's constitution includes a publication scheme, which sets out how agendas, minutes and papers will be made available to the public and when. It also set out any exceptions to the standard scheme.

3.60 The Combined Authority Cabinet:

- Is subject to the Transparency Code applied to local authorities;
- Will ensure all meetings of the Combined Authority Cabinet and other statutory committees are open to the public and appropriately accessible;
- Will make sure all meeting agendas, papers (when not exempt), and minutes are published on the Combined Authority website, within the minimum statutory timescales – an agenda will be published five clear working days before the meeting. Draft minutes will be published within ten clear working days of the meeting taking place and final minutes within ten clear days of approval;
- Will make clear the approach to making investment decisions on the Combined Authority website;
- All business cases over £5m are published on the Combined Authority website. However, business cases for all transport schemes that represent functional standalone projects will be published on the TVCA website for 3 months prior to the decision being taken;
- Will publish (online) all funding decisions, including funding levels;
- Will receive regular dedicated updates on Investment Plan performance, which are published as dedicated papers for Combined Authority meetings - details of project progress – with links to the key documents for each project, are made available in an easily accessible / searchable way on the Combined Authority website; and
- As the accountable body for Local Enterprise Partnership funding will hold a record of all relevant documentation relating to this government funding allocated to the area.

- 3.61 For ease of access the Combined Authority website has a transparency section and a separate meetings section which contain all information on the Combined Authority governance arrangements, agendas and papers and the Combined Authority Cabinet Forward Plan.
- 3.62 The Combined Authority Cabinet meets quarterly but additional meetings are arranged where the need arises. The Combined Authority publishes a Forward Plan on the Combined Authority website, which is a legally required and published statement of key decisions we plan to take over the next **four months**. Confirmed items are published **28 days** in advance of a decision with indicative items listed for the following three-month period.
- 3.63 In addition to the Combined Authority Cabinet, the Local Enterprise Partnership meets every month, using the appropriate meeting in the Cabinet cycle as the Informal Cabinet meeting in addition. These monthly Local Enterprise Partnership meetings are not held in public as it enables commercially confidential items to be discussed and for open and frank exchanges of information and views to be expressed that might not otherwise be expressed in an open forum. This forms an important element within the Combined Authority governance arrangements. An agenda front sheet and minutes of these meetings will be published on the Combined Authority website in line with our publication procedures.
- 3.64 The Combined Authority believes in transparency and operates on the principle of making as much information publicly available as possible. However, very occasionally it may be necessary for specific details of an item on the Forward Plan to remain confidential, for example if they relate to information about particular individuals, ongoing legal proceedings, or are commercially sensitive. In this instance, the item must still appear on the Forward Plan, which will state that 'this item is confidential' as it will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant **paragraph of part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972**.
- 3.65 Information regarding activity being undertaken by the Combined Authority is available on the website. This includes the publication of key documents such as the Strategic Economic Plan, the Tees Valley Investment Plan 2019-29 (including its annual updates), and the Combined Authority Local Assurance Framework, as well as details of a regular programme of events to provide ongoing engagement with public and private partners across the Tees Valley area. Regular news updates on activity underway are also provided through dedicated pages on social media outlets including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Additionally, when investment decisions are taken, they are published through the use of press releases and social media.

## Publication of Financial Information

- 3.66 The Combined Authority is subject to the same financial arrangements as a Local Authority and is legally required to publish its annual accounts, external audit

letter and annual governance statement by the end of September each year. The required information is considered first by the Audit and Governance Committee and is then approved formally by the Combined Authority Cabinet, prior to publication. The annual governance statement is signed by the Mayor, LEP Chair and the Chief Executive for the Combined Authority. It is also used as part of the annual Local Growth Fund (LGF) Performance Review, to supplement the information provided and discussed on governance arrangements.

## Remuneration and Expenses

3.67 The Combined Authority publishes information about the following, on its website ([click here](#)):

- Confirmation of the allowance payable to the Mayor (agreed annually by the Cabinet);
- Members' expenses scheme (agreed annually by Cabinet);
- Confirmation of expenses paid to Members (published annually);
- Salaries of senior officers earning more than £50,000 (published annually);
- The Pay Policy Statement for the Combined Authority (agreed annually by Cabinet).

## Freedom of Information

3.68 The Combined Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004. As Accountable Body for the Local Enterprise Partnership the Combined Authority will also fulfil these functions on behalf of the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Combined Authority will hold records and will be the focal point for statutory information requests. Applicants are made aware of their right to access information through the Combined Authority, which will deal with the request in accordance with the relevant legislation ([click here](#)). As set out in this section, the Combined Authority aims to publish as much information as possible so that Freedom of Information requests are less necessary.

## Conflicts of Interest

3.69 The Combined Authority has a conflict of interest policy, which is available within the Combined Authority Constitution ([click here](#)). This policy applies to all members of the Combined Authority (incorporating the Local Enterprise Partnership) and all members of the Combined Authority governance mechanisms, including the Tees Valley Management Group and the Thematic Advisory Groups.

3.70 Each member of the Combined Authority is also required to complete a written declaration of interest for the purposes of their organisations and their individual personal interests covering a broad range of activities / ownership. Individual declarations of interest forms are completed annually following members' appointment at the Combined Authority AGM. The register of interests ([click here](#)) is published on Combined Authority website. However, recognising that these might change during the year, and to ensure that individuals are not

playing a role in decision making when they are conflicted, declarations of interest are requested at the start of each meeting, and declared and recorded within the minutes. The register of interests is updated, as appropriate, following each Combined Authority meeting.

## Gifts and Hospitality

3.71 The Combined Authority has a procedure for the declaration of gifts and hospitality which applies to both members and officers ([click here](#)). All offers of gifts and hospitality of £25.00 or more in value, including any offers of sponsorship for training or development, whether or not they are accepted, must be recorded promptly (and by no later than 28 days from the date of the offer) in a register held by the Combined Authority.

## Complaints and Whistleblowing

3.72 If it is alleged that the Combined Authority is:

- a. acting in breach of the law;
- b. failing to adhere to its framework, or
- c. failing to safeguard public funds

3.73 Complaints (from stakeholders, members of the public or internal whistleblowers) are to be directed to the Combined Authority's Monitoring Officer or the Governance Manager. They will address the allegation following the protocols set out in the Combined Authority's Constitution and detailed policy which is provided on the Combined Authority website. Anonymous reporting is also covered in the policy.

3.74 Where the Combined Authority cannot resolve the issue locally to the complainant's satisfaction, and the matter relates to the Tees Valley's Single Pot funding, the issue may be passed to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) or other relevant departments, such as the Department for Transport (DfT), as appropriate to the complaint in question. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response they can raise it with the Local Government Ombudsman.

3.75 The above complaints ([click here](#)) and whistleblowing ([click here](#)) procedures are set out in detail on our website.

## Diversity Statement

3.76 As previously detailed, the Combined Authority is fully committed to diversity and equality. This commitment is set out in our Diversity Statement ([click here](#)).

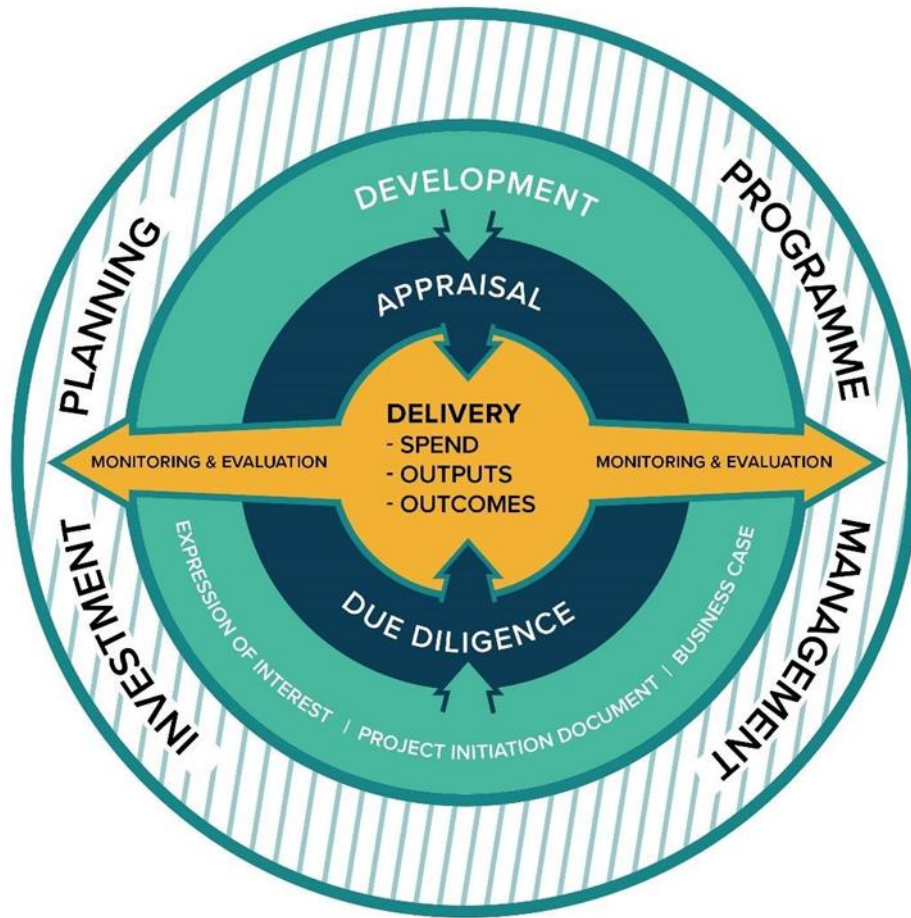
# 4. Robust Decision Making

## Principles

4.1 This section details the processes and procedures that are in place to ensure we make robust investment decisions. These are in addition to those identified in the Accountability, Openness and Transparency section above. The processes and procedures will:

- Achieve best value in spending public money – recognising that sometimes the best investments offer long-term outcomes – with the expectation that only in exceptional circumstances will proposed investments not offer at least a Benefit Cost Ratio above 2 and taking into account significant non-monetised impacts and key uncertainties, and in all cases the benefits exceed the cost of intervention over the projected timeframe. Exceptional circumstances will include where the wider economic benefits are of significant economic importance to the area (for example a transport intervention which has significant benefits in terms of supporting another Strategic Economic Plan priority such as enabling access to an economic development site, educational access or a cultural / tourist venue) and they cannot be adequately reflected in the wider economic benefits BCR;
- Ensure an appropriate separation between project development and project appraisal;
- Appraise projects in a way which is consistent with the Green Book ‘five cases’ model and proportionate to the funding ask in terms of processes required;
- Ensure that the money spent results in delivery of outputs and outcomes in a timely fashion, and in accordance with the conditions placed on each investment, and by actively managing the Investment Fund to respond to changing circumstances (for example, scheme slippage, scheme alteration, cost increases etc.);
- Implement effective evaluation to demonstrate where programmes and projects have achieved their stated aims and using feedback appropriately to refine the priorities and the decision-making process; and
- Ensure that the use of resources is subject to the usual local authority checks and balances as well as normal local government audit accounting and scrutiny requirements.

4.2 The diagram below illustrates the process of investment planning and programme management for the Investment Fund, with the stages for programme and project development through to appraisal delivery and monitoring and evaluation:



## Prioritisation of the Investment Fund, Programmes and Projects

- 4.3 The Combined Authority approved the ten-year Investment Plan 2019-2029 in January 2019, with a one-year on plan approved at Cabinet in January 2020. The Investment Plan was adopted as part of the budget setting report in January 2021. The Plan outlines the thematic allocations across a £1.4bn Investment Fund over the ten-year period. These allocations are based on strategic need and opportunity and the outcomes that the area need to be delivered, to achieve our Strategic Economic Plan outcomes through a series of key transformational investment programmes and projects. The allocations were determined using both a bottom-up (project demand / need) and a top-down strategic view.
- 4.4 The ten-year Investment Plan is to be reviewed annually to reflect any changes in the local environment, new opportunities and challenges, together with lessons learnt from monitoring and evaluation of activity and good practice from elsewhere.
- 4.5 Programme and project prioritisation is based on those schemes which can contribute the most to the growth of the economy, deliver outputs aligned to the

SEP objectives and provide good value for money and to do this in a way that is objective, consistent and transparent.

- 4.6 The process is founded on the principles of HM Government's Green Book and prevailing guidance for the type of investment that is to be made. The process for prioritisation was agreed by the Combined Authority Cabinet at an informal meeting during 2018.

## **Investment Planning**

- 4.7 The Combined Authority Investment Planning Team will work with colleagues in the Thematic teams, Development and the Project Performance Monitoring teams to prepare quarterly investment plan performance reports. These will monitor performance at the overall plan level, at the thematic level and will report by exception the highlights (good news and bad news) about programme and project performance.
- 4.8 This performance information will enable the Combined Authority to ensure that activity is on track and where it is not, include actions to address this. It will identify if programmes / projects are falling out of the Plan (for whatever reason), give consideration to deallocating resources linked to underperformance, and consider new activity to enter the Plan to replace any deallocations. Where a business case needs re-visiting it will be referred back to the Development and Delivery team for review.

## **Separation of Development and Appraisal Functions**

- 4.9 The responsibility for supporting programme and project sponsors (including within the Combined Authority) to develop their proposals through to the appraisal process is separated within Combined Authority functions. The Development Team is responsible for supporting programme and project sponsors to develop their proposals whilst the Investment Planning Team (within the separate Finance and Resource Directorate) is responsible for the appraisal of programmes and projects.

## **Expressions of Interest and Open Calls**

- 4.10 Expressions of interest are required for all programmes and projects that do not already have a funding allocation within the Investment Plan – this includes programmes and projects named within the Investment Plan without an allocation and programmes and projects not covered within the Investment Plan.
- 4.11 The Combined Authority may elect to use an Open Call process where appropriate within the Investment Plan, and where new funding is secured Expressions of Interest will be invited through an Open Call. An Open Call would be publicised on the Combined Authority website and promoted through the appropriate Advisory Group. The open call documentation will set out the selection criteria and the decision-making process and timescales that will be followed. The Combined Authority will not normally provide officer support for the development of Expressions of Interest at this stage. The appraisal of the

Expressions of Interest will be coordinated by the Investment Planning team, with inputs from the appropriate policy lead, legal, procurement and financial officers.

## Business Cases

- 4.12 All programmes and projects with approved allocations within the Investment Plan, including those programmes and projects that have been approved in principle, with an indicative allocation through the Expression of Interest process are required to complete a detailed Business Case.
- 4.13 The Assurance Framework is designed to provide assurance that the appraisal and evaluation of programmes and projects is done in a way that is proportionate to the size of the investment required. This is crucial so that project sponsors are not put off by an overly burdensome and costly application process when applying for a small amount of investment for a low value project.
- 4.14 Similarly, it is crucial so that large investments are scrutinised and tested appropriately. The Combined Authority's approach to proportionality is to build some flexibility into its funding application process by setting thresholds to determine the timescales involved and the information required. The thresholds are based on scale of funding and level of risk (assessed by degree of innovation):
- Comprehensive business case (£5m and above or programmes and projects classified as high risk); and
  - Proportional business case (Low risk and/or £5m or less).
- 4.15 The development and delivery team work in a collaborative way with projects applicants to develop Business Cases. In line with the HM Treasury Green Book guidance, business cases cover:
- **The Strategic case:** contribution to Tees Valley strategic objectives and contribution to national policy objectives and assessment of the need;
  - **The Economic case:** impact on local growth (and for larger schemes the UK level impact, accounting for displacement), plus social, distributional and environmental impacts, options analysis and assessment of the value the project adds;
  - **The Financial case:** cost estimate, financial model, sources of funding e.g., identified scheme promoter, private sector and other contributions;
  - **The Commercial case:** proven marketplace for the project, certainty in outcomes, procurement processes and commercial viability; and
  - **The Management Case:** demonstrates the project is capable of being delivered successfully, including delivery plans, statutory processes, programme, risk management (with appropriate mitigation plans) and benefit realisation. Depending on the nature of the scheme, the Business Case document will also be required to meet with best practice in the



relevant thematic area including any requirements of the appropriate government Department.

- 4.16 Additional Department for Transport (DfT) guidance for transport schemes is available: [\(click here\)](#).
- 4.17 The Business Case is developed collaboratively with the Development Team supporting the Project Sponsor before the final Business Case is submitted to the Combined Authority. Specialist external support is commissioned where it adds value to the development of a project or programme.
- 4.18 On receipt, the Investment Planning team review the funding source and provide an initial check as to which element of funding within the single pot would be most appropriate. The purpose of this is to provide a check to ensure that the funding requirements of the component elements of the Single Pot are being met, and also to enable the effects and outcomes of the component elements of funding within the Single Pot to be tracked.
- 4.19 The Business Case is then appraised with other internal colleagues involved as appropriate. Appraisal will be proportionate to either the estimated scale of budget and/or the level of innovation/risk associated with the programme and in line with established guidance, where appropriate, as set out by HM Government, including:
- HM Treasury Green Book [\(click here\)](#)
  - MHCLG Appraisal Guide [\(click here\)](#)
  - HM Treasury Magenta Book [\(click here\)](#)
  - Infrastructure UK Route map [\(click here\)](#)
- 4.20 Where a conflict of interest exists, full independent due diligence will be sought. Additionally, the Combined Authority will appoint an independent organisation, through appropriate procurement, to undertake external due diligence when required. The independent organisation works directly with the project applicant to undertake due diligence which then follows the decision-making process detailed in the: **Decision Making for the Tees Valley Investment Fund** section.
- 4.21 In cases where the investment is to match central government funding, the assessment and due diligence will be undertaken by the relevant government department. The Combined Authority will in these cases, complete an Assurance Summary which sets out what assurance has taken place, and this will be published on the Combined Authority website.

## Relationship with Project Sponsors – Development to Decision

- 4.22 The Combined Authority will keep in regular contact with project sponsors throughout the development of Business Cases and through the appraisal process. A named development manager will be assigned to each programme/project and they will work with the project sponsor and keep in contact with them to gain any further information to feed into the appraisal

process. If a Business Case is approved the Project Sponsor will be advised and the recommendations, including the appraisal summary, will be published on the TVCA website.

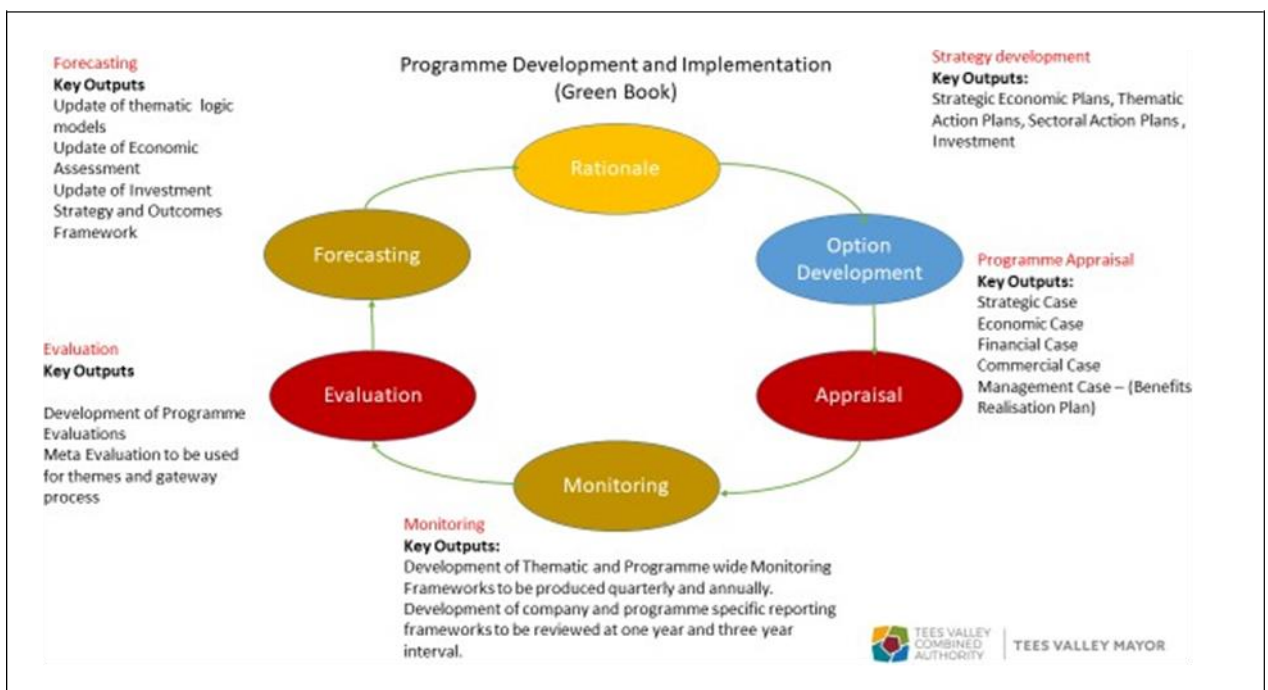
**4.23** If the Business case is not approved the Project Sponsor will receive feedback. The decision made under delegation or through the Cabinet process is final and there is no appeal process. All decisions are subject to the scrutiny process as detailed in Section 3: **Accountability and Transparent Decision Making**.

## Ensuring Value for Money

4.24 The Combined Authority has developed this Assurance Framework in line with HM Treasury Green and Magenta Book Guidelines, specifically the whole life assessment of value for money across its entire portfolio of investment in line with the Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback (ROAMEF) life cycle model.

4.25 As applied in the Tees Valley, the ROAMEF model not only stresses the importance of demonstrating the additionality and value for money of specific programmes / projects at key milestones in their own delivery, but also provides a critical means of assessing the complementarity and cumulative impact of the entire suite of support enabled by investment from the Combined Authority.

4.26 The following diagram demonstrates the application of the ROAMEF model:



Source: HM Treasury Green Book Guidelines on Appraisal 2018

4.27 The key objective of the Assurance Framework is to support the Combined Authority to make judgements about the value for money of potential investments and to accept or reject investments accordingly. However, it is just

one of a range of complementary strategic guidance developed by the Combined Authority to inform decision making, which also includes:

- The Strategic Economic Plan 2016-2026
- Local Industrial Strategy 2019
- Investment Plan 2019-2029
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework 2020
- Economic Assessment 2021 and
- Thematic Strategies and Action Plans

4.28 This documentation is used as supporting evidence in the development of the Expressions of Interest, and Business Cases. The Assurance Framework specifically assesses value for money using the following three criteria: Economy (i.e. minimisation of resource usage or “spending less”); Efficiency (i.e. the relative level of outputs and the resources used to produce them, or “spending well”); and, Effectiveness (i.e. the relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending, or “spending wisely”).

4.29 As detailed earlier, the Section 73 Officer has the specific responsibility for ensuring value for money in all funding decisions.

## Value for Money Transport Schemes

4.30 For transport infrastructure schemes, the Department for Transport requirements [\(click here\)](#) will be met. This includes the use of WebTAG [\(click here\)](#) which will be applied proportionately, based on the cost of the scheme and the scale of the impacts. To facilitate this, an Appraisal Scoping Report will be developed, comprising: Level of analytical detail to be applied to approve a scheme against overarching government transport objectives (proportional to the scheme’s impact) and the rationale for this, the modelling tools to be applied; clear fit with strategic objectives and the long-term strategic plan; alternative interventions considered; timescales for business case development and transport requirements, including;

- Use of WebTAG for all transport schemes will be applied to appraisal and scrutiny (but with a proportionate approach to low-cost schemes) by scheme promoters in business case development and by the organisation appointed to undertake independent due diligence is mandatory;
- Use of NTEM (Department for Transport’s planning dataset) as the basis for core forecast in scheme appraisal / due diligence;
- Production of a value for money statement at each approval stage (which is undertaken by an independent organisation), which will be in line with Department for Transport requirements and is signed off by the Combined Authority Chief Executive and the Section 73 officer (In the instance that this presents conflict of interest concerns, another senior officer, either from a constituent authority or a separate part of the Combined Authority, will sign off value for money statements);

- Transport schemes will represent a Benefit Cost Ratio above 2 and accounting for significant no-monetised impacts and uncertainties (as defined by Department for Transport guidance), and this will be ensured through business case development and due diligence processes. Only in exceptional circumstances will projects not meeting this Benefit Cost Ratio be approved (see para 4.1); and
- All transport schemes (over £5m) will have the economic case assessed at each approval stage.

## **Project Approval – Funding Agreement**

- 4.31 Following approval of a Business Case it may be necessary to complete a range of statutory processes to ensure the project is actually ready to start. For example, planning permission, a Compulsory Purchase Order, or it may be necessary to satisfy a number of conditions agreed as part of the Business Case appraisal. Where this is the case, they will be incorporated into a funding approval, in limited cases a full approval to enter into a funding approval will be carried out as a separate stage. Due diligence of such processes and/or conditions will then be carried out by the Investment Planning Team as required prior to the Combined Authority issuing a Funding Agreement letter (formal legal contract).
- 4.32 Funding agreement letters set out the monitoring, claims, branding (to meet the government branding for each element of funding within the Tees Valley Investment Fund) and evaluation requirements. Funding agreements also set out the clawback arrangements in the event of underperformance.
- 4.33 In the case of projects being delivered by the Combined Authority, a Service Level Agreement will be issued to the officer with overall responsibility for delivery of the project. The agreement will set out the expectations of the responsible officer including the monitoring and evaluation requirements.

## 5. Delivery Phase

### Release of Funding, Cost Control and Contract Management

- 5.1 Once a formal funding agreement or service level agreement is in place, the programme or project enters the delivery phase. Funding to project sponsors will be capped and any overspend beyond the approved amount must be met by the project sponsor.
- 5.2 The Combined Authority's Section 73 officer must certify that funding can be released under the appropriate conditions. Each funding claim is crosschecked against the approved project baseline information as part of the regular project monitoring processes. Payments will be released quarterly in arrears unless otherwise agreed. Any variation to funding agreements or service level agreements must be agreed by the Combined Authority.
- 5.3 A mechanism for 'claw-back' provision is in place to ensure funding is only to be spent on the specified scheme and linked to delivery of outputs and outcomes. Payment milestones are agreed between the project sponsor and the Combined Authority based upon the complexity, cost and timescales of the scheme. This forms part of the programme management role of the Combined Authority, which is subject to audit.

### Performance Reporting

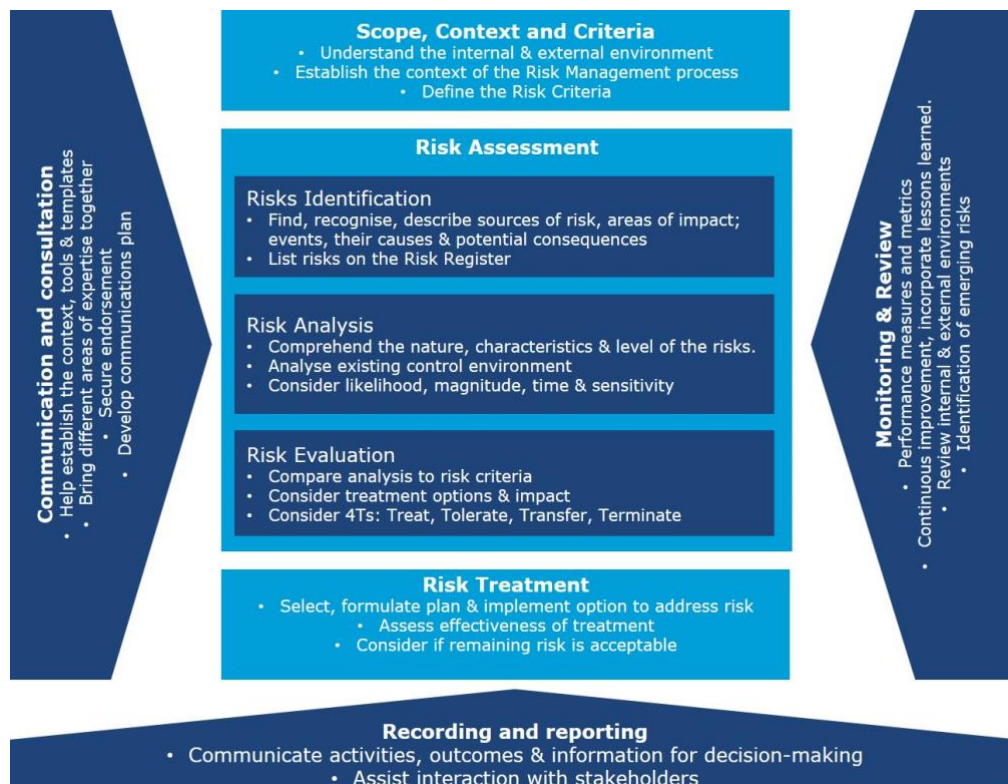
- 5.4 In line with reporting guidelines specified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, all programmes and projects must develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan at the Business Case stage, detailing the mechanism, responsible officer and reporting frequency for all attributable outputs and outcomes.
- 5.5 All programmes and projects are monitored, and quarterly Investment Fund performance reports are considered by the Combined Authority Cabinet. These performance reports detail the performance against spend and outputs / outcomes at the Investment Fund level, the thematic level, consideration of the risk rating and reporting by exception on projects where appropriate.

### Risk Management

- 5.6 The Combined Authority has a comprehensive issue and risk management approach, with risk identification, mitigation, escalation and reporting templates written into its Business Case Development Guidance. This has been developed in accordance with Government Green and Orange Book guidance and other project management guidance.
- 5.7 It is important that the level of risk taken on any project and programme is understood from an early stage alongside the associated cost implications. Through our robust approach to risk, the Combined Authority will reduce the need to remove schemes from the Investment Plan because of cost overruns.

Project sponsors are required to include risk / contingency as part of funding requests, which should reduce as a proportion as the project case is developed.

5.8 Throughout the Investment Fund management lifecycle risk will be managed in accordance with the three-stage process illustrated below. A key element of our approach is that all parties have a responsibility to contribute to the management of risk.



5.9 The corporate risk register incorporates all Strategic risks, including those associated with the Investment Fund, which is reviewed regularly by the Combined Authority Senior Leadership Team and is considered by the Audit and Governance Committee quarterly.

5.10 Senior Officers of the Combined Authority may choose to delegate the management of those risks to appropriate owners to progress remediation and/or controls to reduce threat levels across the organisation. As well as the Corporate Risk register a high-level risk register is maintained for the Investment Plan. The Investment Plan high-level risk register is used as the basis for discussions with our local Relationship Manager from the Cities and Local Growth Unit on a regular basis and is also provided regularly as part of a wider programme update.

5.11 At the project level, all projects are expected to outline in detail any identified risks during the business case development and due diligence processes. Once in delivery, projects maintain an ongoing risk register which is reported to the Combined Authority during the financial claims process and is also reported in the wider programme update.

# 6. Measuring Success

## The Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

- 6.1 The Combined Authority is committed to implementing effective monitoring and evaluation so that it is able to:
- **Provide local accountability to the public, partners and local stakeholders by demonstrating:** how devolved funding is spent, ensuring value for money and that all benefits are identified, tracked and achieved in line with the Strategic Economic Plan (2016) the Local Industrial Strategy (2019) and the Tees Valley Investment Plan (2019);
  - **Comply with external scrutiny requirements:** to satisfy conditions of the Devolution Deal, ensuring that all Combined Authority and partner resources can demonstrate value for money and appropriateness of use at both the appraisal and evaluation stages.
  - **Provide both a summative and formative function:** by assessing the impact of the overall programme and all supporting projects, in order to assess additionality. Conducting the ongoing review of the programme in order to determine overall viability together with developing recommendations for future activity and delivery.
- 6.2 Our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework ([click here](#)) was initially prepared in relation to the Combined Authority's devolution deal monitoring and evaluation requirements. However, the approach set out in the Framework will be utilised for all sources of funding within the Tees Valley Investment Plan, accepting that some government departments will have slightly different requirements which will be met. The Framework builds on the National Evaluation Framework for devolution funds, prepared by SQW and agreed with devolution areas and government.

## Programme and Project Monitoring

- 6.3 Funding agreement letters set out the programme or project spend and output profile together with the monitoring arrangements (financial, benefits and risk), including a clear timeline for the delivery of the following monitoring activities:
- **Project Delivery Meetings:** Once the funding agreement is issued, a meeting is set up between the Development Manager, Project Performance Officer and representatives from the project delivery organisation. The purpose of this meeting is to hand the project over from development stage into delivery stage. At this meeting, details of the project delivery plan and the monitoring requirements are discussed ensuring the delivery organisation has procedures in place to manage the project appropriately;



- **Project Monitoring:** During the delivery stages of the project the delivery organisation shall submit regular monitoring reports to the Authority the frequency of which will be determined on a risk basis. These reports shall give updates on financial and output performance, progress against milestones and an updated risk register. Project Performance Officers will keep in regular contact with the project delivery representatives throughout the delivery stage of the project and where required, monitoring visits may be undertaken. The requirement for monitoring visits will be assessed by the Investment Planning Manager and the Group Risk Manager.
- **Financial Completion Audit:** Will be undertaken once the project has achieved full spend. This will involve verifying evidence of spend/defrayal and any outputs achieved to date, along with checking that procurement processes have been adhered to, milestones achieved, and evidence is maintained (if applicable) to satisfy approval conditions;
- **Practical Completion Audit:** A follow up practical completion audit will be required if the project had outstanding outputs to be claimed/achieved following the financial completion audit; and
- **Marketing and Promotional Activity:** A shared Communication and Marketing Plan is developed as part of the Business Case and articulates all proposed marketing and promotional activity in support of delivery and will be monitored throughout the period. Project sponsors will be required to inform the Combined Authority of the planned publicity of the completion of any key milestones two weeks prior to publication. All social media and publicity around the project will need to acknowledge the role and support of all key funders including the required government branding, the Combined Authority and the Mayor and be accessible to all target groups.

6.4 The Project Performance Monitoring team will identify and report any significant changes or variances to programmes and projects to the Investment Planning team. The project sponsor will be asked to complete a change request form and submit this to the Project Performance Monitoring team. The change request will then be considered by the Investment Planning team and the required course of action agreed which could be further monitoring, approval of the change request or referral back to the development and delivery team for a business case review. Dependent upon the outcome of any business case review, any significant changes to a project will be reported to the Combined Authority Cabinet as appropriate. A variation letter to the Funding Agreement will be issued where appropriate.

## Project Evaluation

6.5 The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan agreed between the Combined Authority and the project sponsor, clearly defines those outputs which may be captured through routine monitoring. The plan goes on to specify the remit, timing and funding for any independent evaluation, usually to capture wider impacts for

summative evaluation purposes and to inform subsequent policy design/implementation through formative evaluation.

- 6.6 Evaluations of programmes and projects will be reported to the Combined Authority Cabinet as part of the Investment Fund performance reporting and where appropriate, will be published on the Combined Authority website.





TEES VALLEY  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

TEES VALLEY MAYOR

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