



East Midlands  
Combined County  
Authority

# Single Assurance Framework

2025

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Approver	Comments
Submissionv1.0	23 April	J Townsend	Submitting to lead contact at MHCLG for government review (MHCLG/ DfE/ DfT)

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# 1. Introduction

This is the Assurance Framework for the East Midlands Combined County Authority (the 'Combined County Authority'). The Assurance Framework sets out the arrangements that the Combined County Authority have in place to ensure that public money is managed effectively.

It explains how the Combined County Authority identify, appraise, and evaluate schemes to achieve value for money.

## 1. The East Midlands Single Assurance Framework

Good governance and accountability are central to the culture and ways of working with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA). The Combined County Authority is committed to ensuring decision-making is supported by evidence, is proportionate and transparent and justifiable, and works effectively to support the delivery of our ambitions for the East Midlands Region.

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.'

This document sets out how the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) will spend or invest public money responsibly, both openly and transparently, and optimise Value for Money (VFM). It provides a proportionate and consistent approach for the application and approval of all funding opportunities and the initiation, development and delivery of projects, programmes and activity that places a financial liability onto the Combined County Authority that is not classed as Business as Usual (BAU) or as a Corporate Project.

## 2. The purpose of the Single Assurance Framework

This document is the Single Assurance Framework for the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

This Single Assurance Framework sets out the robust decision making and delivery arrangements in place within EMCCA. This has been developed in line with the [English Devolution Accountability Framework \(Published 16 March 2023\)](#).

The Single Assurance Framework details the local systems and arrangements, employed by the Combined County Authority, for ensuring public money is allocated in an appropriate manner, in accordance with legal, fiscal and best practice requirements. In particular, the framework is required to show that suitable arrangements are in place to effectively manage the investment programme and that robust systems are in place to ensure resources are spent with regularity, propriety, and value for money, whilst at the same time achieving intended outcomes.

Specifically, the Single Assurance Framework describes:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the Combined County Authority Board, the East Midlands Mayor and other elements of the decision-making and delivery structure
- The key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency, legal compliance, and value for money
- How potential investments will be prioritised, appraised, approved, and delivered

- The process to monitor and evaluate projects and programmes to ensure that they achieve value for money and projected outcomes in accordance with the Mayor
- and Combined County Authority’s priorities
- How risk is effectively managed

The Single Assurance Framework sits alongside the following EMCCA governance and policy documents:

- [East Midlands Combined County Authority Constitution](#)
- [The Strategic Framework](#)
- [EMCCA Corporate Plan 2025-26](#)
- [The East Midlands Combined County Authority Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Combined Authorities \(Borrowing\) and East Midlands Combined County Authority \(Borrowing and Functions\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [The East Midlands Combined County Authority \(Adult Education Functions\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [Inclusive Growth Framework](#)
- [Risk Management Framework](#)
- **Procurement Strategy** [*in development for adoption 2025/26*]

The Devolution Deal between HM Government and the East Midlands Combined County Authority the area with greater local control, flexibility and responsibility over funding streams and their outcomes. The ‘Single’ approach to funding is a significant fiscal agreement in devolution deals which reduces ring fences and consolidates funding lines for which EMCCA is the accountable body.

The Assurance Framework provides a robust framework to enable EMCCA to maximise the impact of the Devolution Deal, it is applicable to all funds set out within the Devolution Deal and subsequently devolved since. It will be reviewed and updated to incorporate any subsequent funding as and when agreed within HM Government.

The Single Assurance Framework has been developed in support and accordance with:

- [Guide to developing the Project Business Case](#)
- [The Green Book \(2022\) - GOV.UK](#)
- [HMT Magenta Book.pdf](#)
- [The Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts](#)
- [Managing Public Money May 2023](#)

### **1.3 Supporting future devolution**

The SAF has been developed in response to the English Devolution Accountability Framework. It applies to all existing and new funding and projects that place a financial liability onto EMCCA. It provides consistency of approach and standards for business case development, programme assurance, appraisal and decision-making. It also enables a proportionate approach to be applied for the development of business cases.

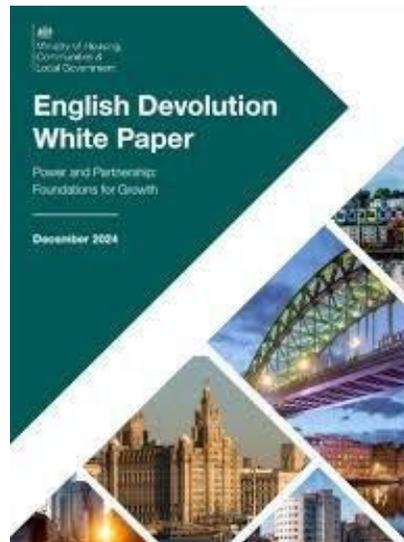
In updating the SAF annually, and in between annual reviews where there are major changes to the processes or the English Devolution Accountability Framework, the updated SAF will be sent to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for approval. It will then be uploaded to the Internet for use.

The Combined County Authority commits to adhering to the Scrutiny Protocol and additional governance, assurance and accountability requirements set out by Government.

The East Midlands Combined County Authority is committed to the delivery of good governance and accountability in everything that it does, striving to ensure that decision-making is effective, proportionate, open to test and challenge and taken to deliver benefits to the region in alignment with its agreed strategic objectives.

EMCCA is also committed to achieving future devolution for the region that will benefit its residents and regional business. The Combined County Authority recognises that in providing areas with more power and funding flexibility it becomes even more essential to strengthen governance, assurance and accountability arrangements to ensure that they are used appropriately to support regional and national priorities.

The English Devolution White Paper has been noted in the development of this Single Assurance Framework, which seeks to further embed best practice governance, assurance and accountability arrangements within the Combined County Authority.



This Single Assurance Framework will be reviewed as the English Devolution White Paper evolves into legislation.

#### **1.4 Updating and review of the Single Assurance Framework**

The Assurance Framework is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and signed off by the Combined County Authority, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 73 Chief Finance Officer.

The annual review will examine the effectiveness of assurance processes and consider any areas for improvement. Any changes to legal, funding, or other contextual changes that might require a change of assurance process will be considered, along with the impact of any other Combined County Authority key strategies, policies or processes.

## 2. About the East Midlands

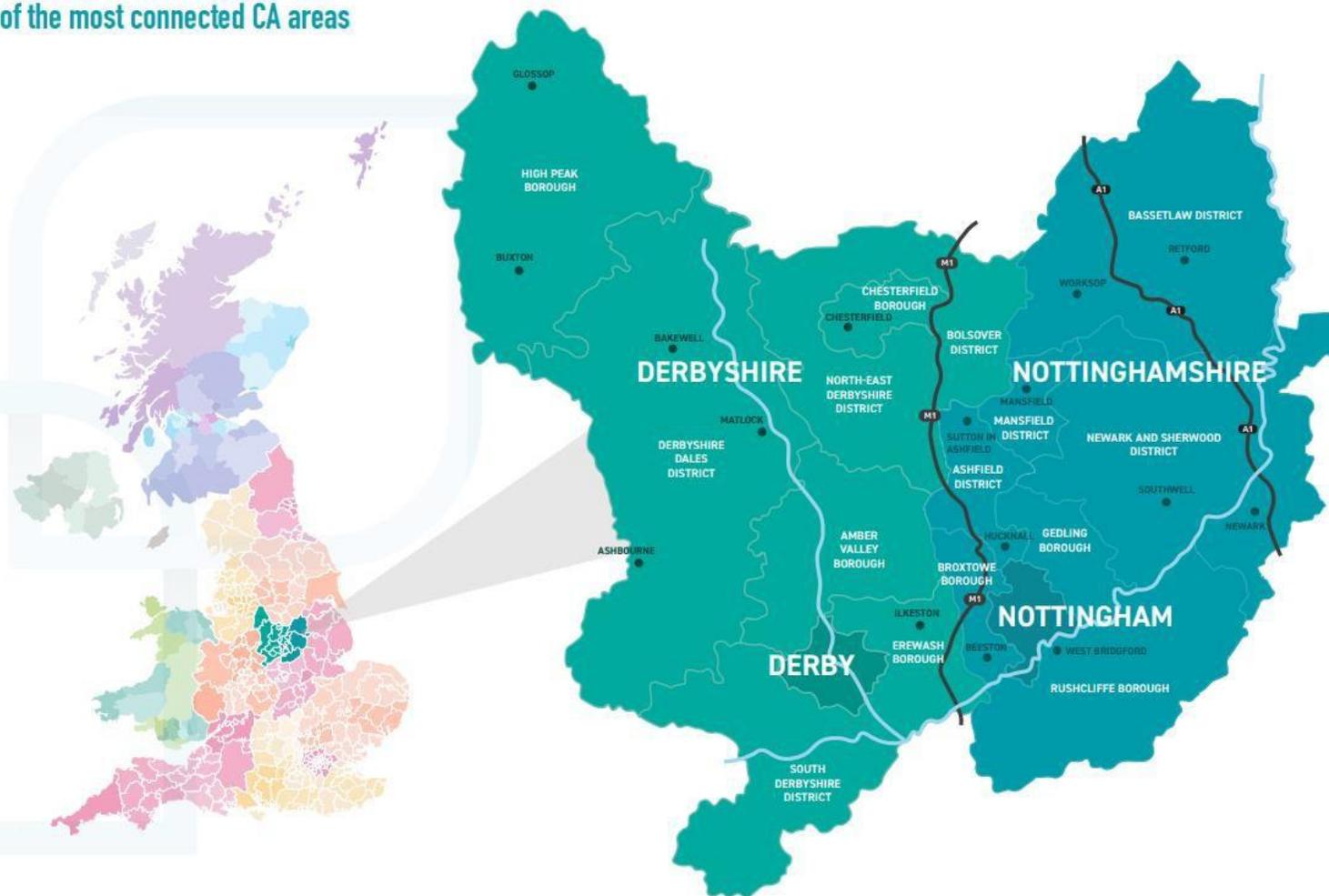
The East Midlands Combined County Authority is the first Combined **County** Authority in the Country.

The East Midlands is a vibrant and diverse area, with a rich industrial heritage and a modern business base aligned to the government's industrial strategy priorities. We are home to thriving cities, and a strong blend of market towns, employment hubs and rural communities. Our natural assets, including the Peak District National Park and Sherwood Forest, contribute to both the economy and our quality of life. Our growing economy continues to drive innovation and opportunity across the region.

With a population approaching 2.3 million and a geography covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres, the region offers a unique balance of urban innovation and rural. Our cities, Derby and Nottingham, serve as economic and cultural hubs, while market towns and rural areas play a crucial role in the wider regional economy, place-based regeneration and quality of life.

The establishment of EMCCA created from the East Midlands Devolution Deal was a key moment, providing new powers and funding to enable the area to release its potential by delivering inclusive growth. Having a Mayoral-led authority, gives our region access to a national and global platform to promote our region.

### One of the most connected CA areas



## 2.1 The Mayoral Combined County Authority

The East Midlands Combined County Authority came into being on 28 February 2024 as the country's first Combined County Authority. The distinction in our make-up that drives our ethos of partnership working makes us different to other Mayoral Combined Authorities. A Combined County Authority (CCA) is a type of local government institution in England, introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. It allows upper-tier authorities, such as county councils and unitary authorities, to collaborate and pool responsibilities.

The Regulations provide for the establishment, including governance arrangements, of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (the 'EMCCA'), of which the councils of Derby City, Derbyshire County, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County will be the constituent councils, and for a directly elected Mayor of the East Midlands.

The first meeting of the Combined County Authority took place on 10 March 2024 and the first Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority was elected in May 2024.

Since its establishment through [the East Midlands Combined County Authority Regulations 2024](#), further legislation has been passed to provide additional powers and funding to the Combined County Authority on borrowing, economic development, visitor economy and adult skills.

As and when Government officially devolves further powers to the Combined County Authority, in order to deliver against its policy agenda, this will be reflected in revisions to the Single Assurance Framework at the appropriate review period.

The devolved functions exercised by the Combined County Authority and the Mayor cover:

- **Investment** - £38 million of capital/ revenue investment fund per year for 30 years (£19 million capital and £19 million revenue)
- **Adult Education and Skills** - enabling decision-makers to closer align spending on skills with the opportunities and needs in the local economy in order to engage adults and provide them with the skills needed for entering and sustaining employment, an apprenticeship, traineeship, or other further learning.
- **Transport** - setting and delivering a transport strategy for the region, maximising opportunities for transport investment, providing oversight and assurance of investment delivery, establishing a key route network comprising the most important local roads and a single asset management policy. Development of public transport services across the region, facilitating the delivery of public transport improvements including, bus services, information, infrastructure, incentivised ticket schemes, concessionary fares and smart, integrated ticketing. Influencing and enabling rail investment and powers relating to bus partnerships and franchising.
- **Land and Housing** - broad powers to acquire and dispose of land to build houses, commercial space and infrastructure, for growth and regeneration. Ability to invest to deliver housing for the area. Land assembly and compulsory purchase powers for housing purposes. The power to designate Mayoral Development Areas and to create Mayoral Development Corporations, which will support delivery on strategic sites across the region.

- **Net Zero, Energy and Environment** - enabling the region to establish heat network zoning, evolve waste management in the region and exploit opportunities to re-use waste heat, flood alleviation.
- **Business Growth and Innovation** - explore future trailblazer opportunities to secure greater private investment in local priorities, strengthen local innovation capacity to help realise the potential of local innovation assets and the innovation potential of small and medium enterprises, realise the global export potential of local businesses.

## 2.2 Regional and Local Leadership

EMCCA has two sets of function, Combined County Authority functions and Mayoral functions. The Combined County Authority (Board) is the principal decision-maker and provides the strategic direction of the Combined County Authority. The Mayor is the Chair of the Combined County Authority and provides regional leadership, alongside the four constituent authorities.

The Mayor is directly elected by the people of the East Midlands to not only chair the Combined County Authority but to also deliver upon their Mayoral priorities, this is considered within the EMCCA strategic planning process.

The Combined County Authority consists of constituent members, non-constituent members and associate members.

The Constituent Councils of the Combined County Authority who are all full voting members are:

- **Derby City Council**
- **Derbyshire County Council**
- **Nottingham City Council**
- **Nottinghamshire County Council**

The Non-Constituent Councils of the Combined County Authority are representatives of the District and Borough Councils, there are 4 non-constituent representative on the Board and each of the thematic committees and regulatory committees within the EMCCA governance structure. They are appointed by the Joint Committee arrangements that operate in Derbyshire and in Nottinghamshire, each of which appoint 2 representatives. Those nominations are made by:

- Nominated representatives of Derbyshire District and Borough Councils as nominated by the designated body (D2 Strategic Leadership Board)
- Nominated representatives of Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils as nominated by the designated body (N2 Economic Prosperity Committee)

The Combined County Authority has determined that it shall have 4 Associate members, they are appointed by the Combined County Authority to provide the following specialisms to the Board:

- Advocate for a specific sector.
- Ability to foster collaboration.
- Contribute specific expertise.
- Provide strategic input.
- Promote inclusivity.

The Associate Members of the Combined County Authority are:

- Associate Member for Business
- Associate Member for Higher Education and Further Education
- Associate Member for the Trade Union Movement
- Associate Member for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

Decisions will be made by the Mayor (in relation to mayoral functions) or the Combined County Authority (in relation to non-mayoral functions) in accordance with the 2024 Order and the constitution.

The Mayor will appoint a statutory Deputy Mayor pursuant to section 29(1) of the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act from one of the Constituent Council members of the Combined County Authority.

The Mayor and the Combined County Authority (Board), and its supporting governance framework will work together in collaboration, in the interests of the people of the East Midlands.

### **2.3 Accountability**

The Combined County Authority has a democratic mandate to invest in its local area. The directly elected Mayor with their own democratic mandate provides a single point of accountability for residents and is held responsible for their decisions and those of the Board through the local elections, as well as through the Combined County Authority's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

### **2.4 The Strategic Framework**

EMCCA is driven by the purpose established by our Board, to ensure long-term systemic impact created by and for the benefit of our residents, businesses and communities. This purpose is built on the foundation of systems leadership and partnership working.

By bringing decision-making closer to our region, we aim to deliver the vision for a region that is more prosperous, sustainable and fairer, helping our businesses to create and seize new opportunities.

Through our strong partnerships with key stakeholders across the region, we have developed a comprehensive set of investment priorities aimed at creating jobs, growing businesses and infrastructure improvements across the region. Our areas of focus will be transport, infrastructure development, housing, delivering on our Net Zero goals and economic development.

As a new organisation our strategic framework is set out in:

- The Strategic Framework
  - [Combined County Authority Strategic and Investment Framework.pdf](#)
  - [Towards a Strategic Framework](#)
- The Corporate Plan 2025/26
  - [EMCCA Corporate Plan 2025-26](#)

These objectives and priorities have been agreed through consensus between the Mayor and the Combined County Authority to reflect its position as a new organisation, the agreed long-term

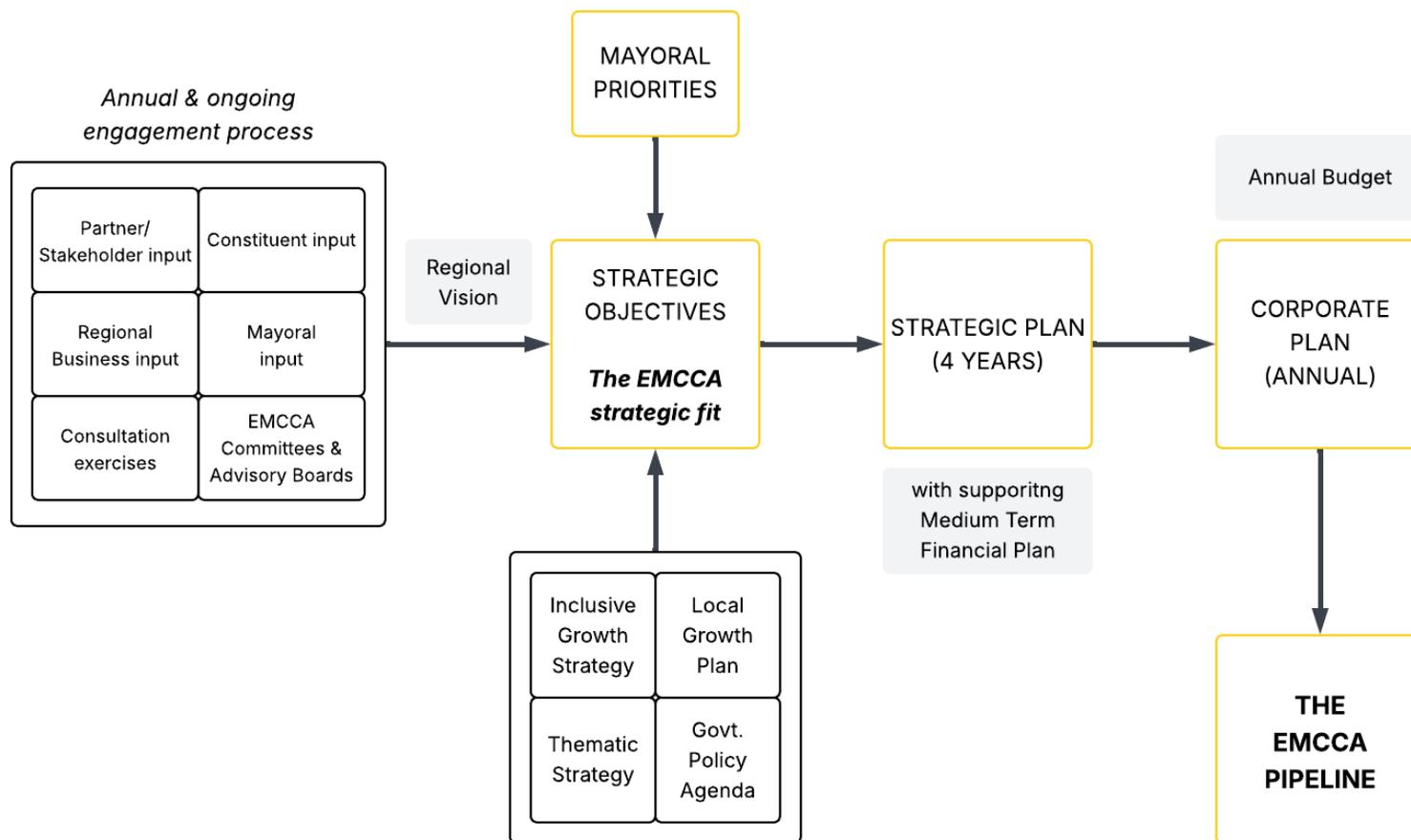
vision and the priorities that were agreed with Government through devolution requirements. The strategic framework creates the EMCCA strategic fit which all Programmes and Projects must demonstrate justification against.

**Strategic Planning Process**

The strategic planning process seeks to ensure that appropriate engagement, consultation and inputs have been considered when setting a strategic plan, given that EMCCA is a new start up organisation the first strategic plan will be produced from the next Mayoral term onwards. The process also seeks to ensure that national government policy drivers and the East midlands devolution deal are reflected in priorities.

The strategic planning process has been created to ensure that the strategic plan and annual corporate plan is the central entry point onto the pipeline and into the Single Assurance Framework, noting that there are in-year entry points into the Single Assurance Framework and onto the EMCCA Pipeline as well.

**Illustration A: Strategic Planning Process**



**2.5 Inclusive Growth**

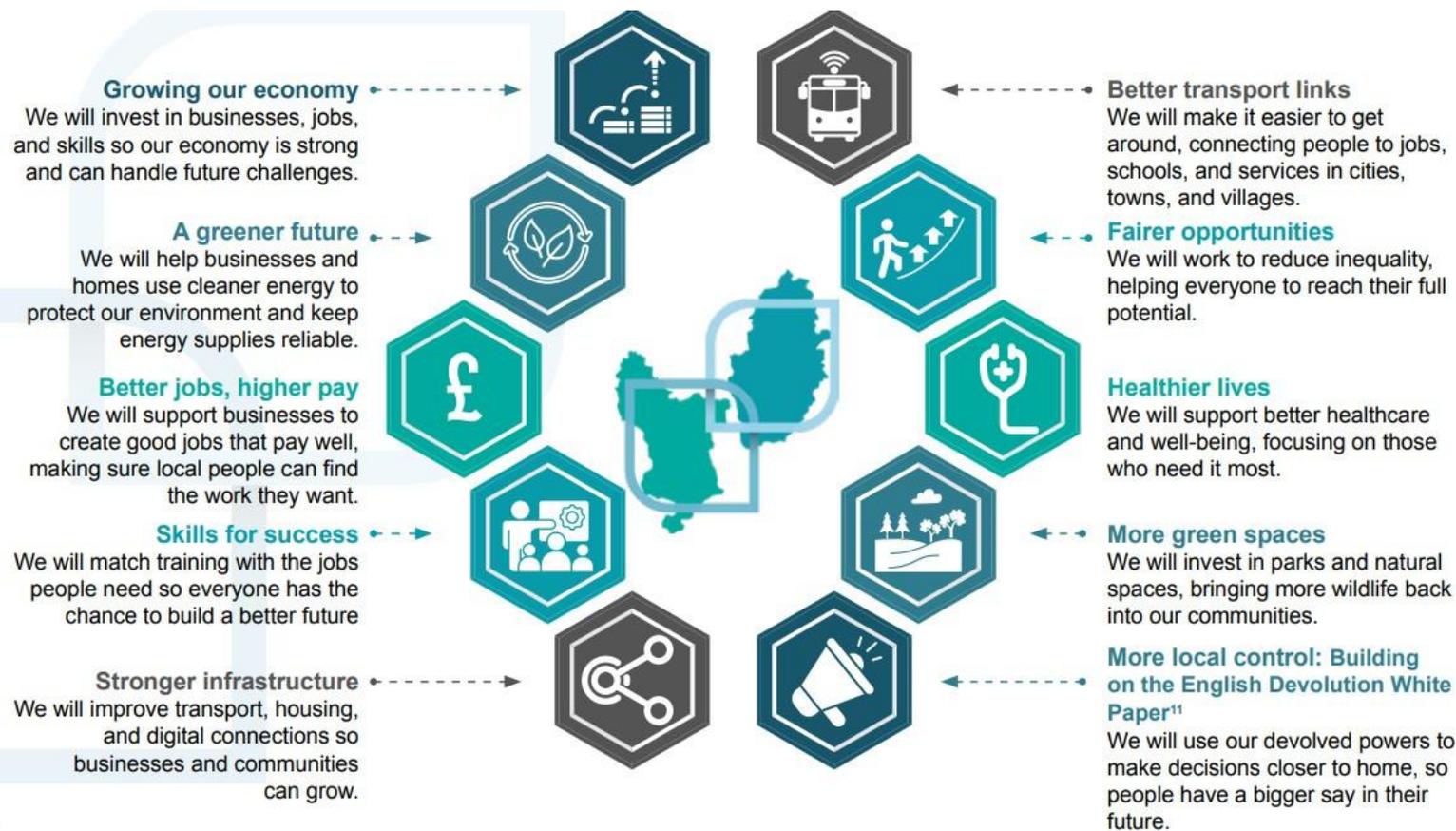
The Combined County Authority is developing an Inclusive Growth Strategy. It has launched an Inclusive Growth Commission that will see regional and national experts working together to provide knowledge and fresh perspectives to identify and put into action drivers to deliver

economic growth across the East Midlands. Details of the Inclusive Growth Commission can be accessed via this link:

- [The Inclusive Growth Commission – East Midlands Combined County Authority](#)

We want the East Midlands area to be the best place to live, work, and learn. To make this happen, we have ten objectives for inclusive growth that will guide what we do:

**Illustration B: Inclusive Growth key objectives**



The Combined County Authority is seeking to make inclusive growth considerations the key driver in determining investment decision-making. Once the Inclusive Growth Strategy has been developed EMCCA will seek to develop Inclusive Growth Investment Criteria which will direct focus on fostering equitable economic growth while addressing social and environmental challenges.

**Local Growth Plan**

In parallel, the Government’s work to develop the National Industrial Strategy, and work locally to underpin our regional strategy with a clear plan to grow the economy through the Local Growth Plan, is also moving along at pace.

We are designing a Local Growth Plan to simultaneously expand the availability and quality of economic opportunity by attracting investment, supporting business growth and creating better jobs. Alongside turning the dials on barriers to growth, we will realise ever higher aspirations for people living and working in the East Midlands.

Devolution presents an opportunity to chart our own course. For the first time, we have the power and the funding to take decisions here at home about our future for the benefit of local people and businesses. The East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) was established with a clear

mandate to pursue economic growth in the region. We are taking a first step with this plan to build on the work done locally by our councils, our universities, our partners and our businesses over many years to build a fair, sustainable and prosperous local economy.

We are able to think and act with a regional perspective, focusing on making the most of our polycentric geography comprised of two distinct areas that have not fully realised the opportunity of integration. We can close the gaps and make areas more productive that have been historically left behind.

This means taking a place-based approach to growth, overlaying a spatial perspective onto the high productivity sectors that will have the greatest impact and bring the most out of the region. By leveraging our polycentric geography into a single dynamic region, we are setting the stage for sustainable and inclusive prosperity.

This plan works alongside other pillars of our regional strategy. Taken together, we are simultaneously raising the ceiling of ambition through transformative investments in high-growth sectors and lifting the floor of opportunity by removing barriers to access.

Our Local Growth Plan will be supported by new data and insights from the Inclusive Growth Commission once it submits its interim and final reports. It is a plan to grow the regional economy by bringing together national policy and investment, our local levers and capability, and the particular economic and social conditions that exist here. In other words, the Local Growth Plan sets out how we apply and deliver the national growth mission in our area.

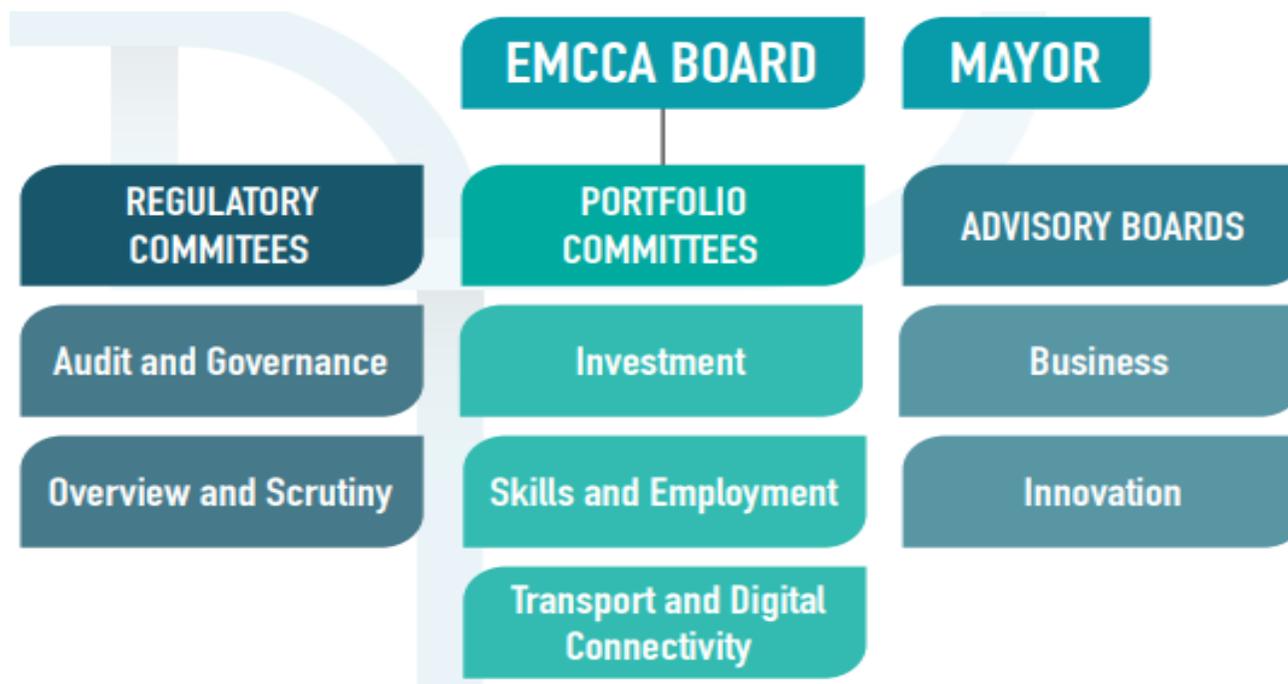
## 3. Governance

### 3.1 The Governance Framework

At EMCCA, we are committed to good governance and accountability in everything we do, which is central to achieving our goals. We make sure our decisions are transparent, effective, fair, and open to challenge, always aiming to benefit our region and meet our goals. We have strong systems in place to ensure effective delivery, manage risks, and handle finances properly. These systems are detailed in the Constitution and this Single Assurance Framework, which guide how we use the money given to us by the government.

The Combined County Authority adheres to the requirements of the Local Government Accountability Framework. It adheres to this framework and is supported by its governance framework, internal and external audit arrangements, assurance framework, annual reporting of its accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.

#### Illustration C: EMCCA Governance Arrangements diagram



The Combined Authority recognises and supports the English Devolution Accountability Framework and commits to building a culture of effective scrutiny and accountability through adherence to the framework.

The Combined County Authority has put in place this Single Assurance Framework in compliance with the English Devolution Accountability Framework, to ensure appropriate safeguards and standards are in place for the appropriate stewardship of devolved public funding as well as within the development and delivery of projects.

The Mayor and Members of the Combined County Authority are expected to act in the interests of the East Midlands 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 and/or the perception of bias.

The Combined Authority meets all the requirements relating to ensuring standards in public governance set out in the Localism Act 2011 (Part One Chapter 7). There is a robust Member-Officer Protocol in support of its Code of Conduct arrangements. All Members are expected to demonstrate the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.

## **3.2 The Mayor**

The Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority was directly elected by the whole region, on a manifesto of commitments and priorities. The Mayor executes certain powers and functions that have been devolved to EMCCA by the UK Government, to deliver their manifesto commitments and to enact functions reserved for the Mayor as detailed in the Combined County Authority Constitution [click this link to view Mayoral Functions: [Part 3.3 - Mayoral Functions.pdf](#)]

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

The Strategic Planning Process set out in 2.4 of this Single Assurance Framework sets out how the Mayoral Priorities automatically become part of the strategic objectives of the Combined County Authority and its golden thread.

Elections for the position of Mayor of the Combined County Authority are held every 4 years.

The Mayor can nominate Board Members for Portfolio Lead positions, nominations must be considered and approved by the Combined Authority Board.

The majority of voting arrangements at the Combined County Authority require a vote in favour that includes the Mayor within the majority in order to pass, full details on voting arrangements are set out in part 3 of the constitution.

## **3.3 The Combined County Authority**

The Combined County Authority is the legal and accountable body for funding devolved to it. It is responsible for a range of functions including transport, skills and economic development.

The Combined County Authority Board exercises all its powers and functions in accordance with the law and its Constitution. It sets the overall strategic direction for economic growth across the East Midlands combined county authority area, agreeing all strategies and frameworks and agreeing all delegated responsibilities to conduct business. Decisions will be made by the Mayor (in relation to mayoral functions) or the Combined County Authority Board (in relation to non-mayoral functions) in accordance with the constitution.

The Constituent Council Members represent the views of their local authorities at the Combined County Authority Board whilst also ensuring that they put the needs and opportunities of the East Midlands combined county area at the forefront of all decisions.

The Combined County Authority, through its Board, has set clear roles and responsibilities within its governance framework when it comes to decision-making in regard to strategy and budgets. This power sits within the Board and is supported through the following roles and responsibilities across its governance framework:

**Illustration D: Table of strategic responsibilities**

Strategic Role within EMCCA	Relevant Governance Body
Set the strategic objectives, vision and Corporate Plan	EMCCA Board
Approve strategy, key policy and frameworks	EMCCA Board
Set the budgetary framework and the Medium-Term Financial Plan	EMCCA Board
Develop strategy, framework and policy proposals	Portfolio Committees
Implement Board approved strategy	Portfolio Committees
Deliver operational and delivery oversight and provide operational decision-making	Portfolio Committees
Undertakes strategic level scrutiny	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Undertakes Mayor and Board accountability	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Provides oversight and assurance of standards and the Constitution	Audit & Governance Committee
Provides oversight and assurance of governance, assurance and supporting frameworks	Audit & Governance Committee

The Combined County Authority Board is responsible for delegating decision-making responsibilities to its Portfolio Committees. The Constitution details EMMCA 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 Part 3 of the [Constitution](#)

**Portfolio Lead Positions**

The Mayor can propose nominations to Lead Member Portfolio Positions and Deputy Lead Member Portfolio Positions for the Board to consider for approval. This must be done in line with part 7 of Article 2 within the constitution - [Part 2 - Article 2 - The Mayor.pdf](#)

### **3.4 Portfolio Committees**

The work of the Combined County Authority is supported by several portfolio committees (sometimes referred to as Thematic Committees), each led by a designated portfolio lead. They play a regional role in shaping strategic direction across key areas. Their aim is to develop strategies, policies and investment proposals that align with the overall vision for the region.

The terms of reference for each Portfolio Committee, including details of any delegated decision-making functions provided to them, are set out in the Constitution in Part 3.5 of the constitution - [Part 3.5 onwards - Terms of Reference](#)

The Board has stated that all Combined County Authority Committees will:

- Support the development of the Inclusive Growth Strategy, including the Local Growth Plan and Place Based Strategy
- Support the delivery of the Inclusive Growth Outcomes Framework, which will cover social, health inequalities, economic and environment outcomes, working across Thematic Committees and Portfolios to ensure maximum impact of these outcomes
- Support the delivery of Farming and Rural Communities outcomes, working across Thematic Committees and Portfolios to ensure maximum impact of these outcomes

All Committees within the governance framework have a Technical Officer Group (TOG) that consists of the key thematic/portfolio officers from within EMCCA and from each of the Constituent Councils that provide direct support and guidance to their respective committee.

#### **The Investment Committee**

The Combined County Authority has established an Investment Committee that is Chaired by the Portfolio Lead Member for Investment, with the Deputy Portfolio Lead for Investment acting as Deputy Chair.

The Committee has the delegated authority to make investment decisions in relation to proposals which are above the level of financial delegation to officers and below the level of financial delegation set to the Combined County Authority Board. The approvals process including delegation levels is set out in this Single Assurance Framework in [section 7.6 - SAF Phase 3: Business Case Approvals](#).

The Committee seeks to act in a regional capacity to support the development of the investment vision for the Combined County Authority area and make recommendations to the Combined County Authority, in consultation with wider portfolio committees who will develop thematic portfolio investment programme proposals.

The Combined County Authority Investment Fund and variety of devolved funding programmes represent a significant asset base through which the Combined County Authority can influence, enable, facilitate, and directly deliver a broad base of activities to support growth across the economy. This includes transport, clean energy transition, business support, walkable connected neighbourhoods/communities, business and economy, skills and innovation.

The Committee has the following key functions:

- In accordance with the Single Assurance Framework, consider new funding applications and project variations and approve or make recommendations to the Combined County Authority, or designated officer, on investment decisions.
- To provide the forum for facilitating strategic conversations and co-ordination between the constituent authorities, partners and EMCCA on investment matters
- To develop a collective understanding of the investment needs of the region and use this understanding to inform the development of the EMCCA pipeline of investment projects and programmes.
- To ensure alignment between EMCCA led strategies
- To commission and publish research on investment to inform decisions made by the EMCCA Board.
- To monitor and performance manage previously agreed investment decisions against their proposed outputs and outcomes.
- To manage the EMCCA Pipeline

The Technical Officer Group (TOG) for the Investment Committee is the Investment Panel, this consists of just EMCCA officers to avoid any potential conflict of interest. It consists of the Section 73 Officer and finance colleagues, the Monitoring Officer and legal and governance colleagues, Human Resources, Communications, Project Management Office and other EMCCA officers as and when required.

The Investment Panel supports the Investment Committee through 5 key roles:

- 1) Support the development and delivery of the Investment Committee Work Programme
- 2) Drive Communication between partners, particularly through the Devolution Leadership Group (consists of Place lead officers from EMCCA and Constituents)
- 3) Gather intelligence and undertake research
- 4) Act as the Lead Officer Forum on Investment
- 5) Drive the development and delivery of strategic investment responsibilities

The Investment Panel also has additional specific investment roles, these are detailed in its terms of reference which are attached at Annex F.

### **3.5 Advisory Boards**

The Combined County Authority has created two Advisory Boards that bring expertise from different sectors to inform our work. They provide strategic business advice on economic growth, skills, transport, employment, housing, and future devolution opportunities, as well as guidance on fostering innovation and drive progress across the region.

In full compliance with the English Devolution Accountability Framework (EDAF) EMCCA has created a governance framework that seeks to embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into our decision-making processes.

#### **Business Advisory Board Recruitment (Private Sector Membership)**

In response to EDAF we have established the Business Advisory Board which seeks to provide strategy advice and guidance through representation of the 'business voice' in support of the exercise of Combined County Authority and Mayoral functions.

The terms of reference for the Business Advisory Board can be found in the constitution at [Part 3.5F - Business Advisory Board Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

In line with EDAF requirements the private sector membership of the Business Advisory Board is recruited through an open recruitment process. The constitution includes at [Part 4.9 Business Board recruitment.pdf](#)

## 6. Statutory Officers

### **Head of Paid Service**

It is the role of the Head of Paid Service, also referred to as the Chief Executive, to ensure that all the Combined County Authority functions are properly coordinated, organising staff and appointing appropriate management.

At EMCCA the 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.

The duties and responsibilities of the post include but are not limited to:

- The statutory responsibilities of the Head of Paid Service to manage the budgets and funding allocations available to the Combined County Authority, in partnership with the S73 officer.
- Leading the Senior Leadership Team to deliver the strategic direction for the Combined County Authority as outlined by the Mayor and Board
- Co-ordinate strategy, development and delivery ensuring a joined-up partnership approach to deliver the aspirations of the Combined County Authority
- Champion the delivery of the strategic priorities of the Combined County Authority and its Corporate Plan and put in place the resources necessary to achieve the efficient and effective implementation of EMCCAs programmes and policies across all services and the effective deployment of the authority's resources to those ends.
- Advise the Combined County Authority Mayor and its Board on all matters of general policy and matters upon which their advice is necessary, with the right attendance at Board and other meetings as appropriate.
- Advising the elected Mayor on the delivery of strategic priorities
- Represent the Combined County 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 County Authority in jeopardy of unlawfulness or maladministration.
- Seek to protect the Combined County Authority against any reputational risks.
- Exercise urgency powers to make decisions in emergency situations.

### **Section 73 Officer**

The Combined Authority has appointed a statutory Chief Finance Officer (CFO) under section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985, to administer the financial affairs of the Combined County Authority. At EMCCA the Executive Director of Resources fulfils the role of the Section 73 Officer.

The Section 73 Officer is responsible for providing the final sign off for funding decisions.

The responsibilities of the Section 73 Officer reflect those documented in the CIPFA published document [The role of the chief financial officer in local government | CIPFA](#) which details 5 key principles:

- the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) 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 always safeguarded 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

The Executive Director Resources is a member of the Combined County Authority Senior Leadership Team and has oversight and an ability to influence all major decisions of the Combined County Authority.

The Executive Director of Resources has ensured that the Combined County 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 Combined County Authority's [Financial Regulations](#) and the Contract Standing Order. Other policies such as the Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy are also included in the Constitution and published on the EMCCA website.

#### **Monitoring Officer**

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

- Providing advice on, and maintaining an up-to-date version of the Constitution and ensuring that it is widely available for consultation by members, employees, and the public
- After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and Chief Finance Officer, report to the Authority if they consider that any proposal, decision, or omission would give rise to or has given rise to unlawfulness or maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the proposed decisions being implemented until the report has been formally considered by the Combined County Authority
  - 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 decisions 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 Combined County 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 Combined County Authority's legal affairs and arrangements, including compliance with the law.

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

The three statutory officers work together in an accounting officer capacity to ensure effective stewardship of public funds, value for money and legal compliance. They are involved throughout the Single Assurance Framework lifecycle as advisors, appraisers, reviewers and approvers.

### **3.7 Process and Procedure**

#### **Inclusive Growth**

EMCCA will develop and approve an Inclusive Growth Strategy and Inclusive Growth Investment Criteria following the conclusion of the work being undertaken by the Inclusive Growth Commission.

The Commission was established to inform the development of an Inclusive Growth Strategy to serve as the region's long-term route-map, guiding decision-making over the next decade to achieve a systemic transformation in the economic, social, and natural conditions of the region. This strategy will address the wider determinants of growth, including health inequalities, social justice, and environmental resilience, while setting clear priorities for the regional agenda.

It will include an Inclusive Growth Outcomes Framework to define the economic, social, and environmental outcomes needed to achieve the Board's vision. The Inclusive Growth Commission brings together regional partners and national experts to provide evidence-based recommendations.

#### **Decision-Making Principles**

The Combined County Authority has adopted decision-making principles to ensure that all decision-making is taken in alignment with key considerations. These principles can be found in the Constitution at [Part 2 - Article 6 - Decision-Making.pdf](#)

#### **Social Value in Procurement**

Social value refers to the broader impact of an organisation's activities on the well-being of individuals and communities. It encompasses the social, economic, and environmental benefits that can be generated through thoughtful and strategic actions. By prioritising social value, EMCCA can contribute to positive change and create lasting benefits for society.

This framework outlines our approach to embedding social value into sourcing, procurement, commissioning, and contract management. It aligns with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 ("Social Value Act") to secure the best achievable outcomes and value for money.

The Social Value Procurement Framework can be accessed via this link: [Social Value Procurement Framework](#)

#### **Treatment of Risk**

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

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

### **3.8 Partnership**

Working in partnership with stakeholders and the wider public is regarded as a central part of the process to develop, monitor and implement strategies, funding programmes and all other aspects of the work of the Combined County Authority.

Our role as the first Combined County Authority places a unique responsibility upon us to embed partnership working in our decision-making processes and procedures.

Partnership working with our Constituents, Non-Constituents, the Business Community and wider system partners is already embedded within our governance framework through the approach to membership within formal governance arrangements and throughout our informal governance arrangements such as Technical Officer Groups.

The Business Advisory Board has an embedded member within each Portfolio Committee to ensure the business voice is represented. Constituents and Non-Constituents make up the membership of our Combined County Authority and its Committees, supported by a Technical Officer Group for each body that consists of the lead officers from EMCCA, Constituents and Non-Constituents for that portfolio.

#### **System Leadership**

A key enabler of the regional strategy is the investment the Board wishes to make in developing a collective culture of systems leadership that extends out to key partners, anchor institutions and businesses across the EMCCA area.

The goal is to foster an environment where collaborative leadership thrives across different levels and boundaries by actively working with those partners to build that culture and, by prioritising solutions that address complex challenges holistically, build stronger, more resilient communities. Guided by a co-design group, we will offer learning and development opportunities to the Board, local authority leaders, and partners to strengthen shared leadership.

#### **System Governance**

Our goal is to establish a fresh model for systemic governance that drives the delivery of shared outcomes for the region with our partners and business. Learning from other MCAs and recognizing our unique status as the first Combined County Authority, we will continue to develop governance that embraces complexity, fosters partnerships across sectors, and prioritises outcomes-based decision-making – with a clear framework for accountability and strategic alignment. This will shape decision-making, investment, and scrutiny across the system

## **4. Transparency and Accountability**

The Combined County Authority is mindful of the need to build the trust and confidence of stakeholders and the public, in relation to the ability to take decisions for the investment of public money.

Promoting transparency in its decision-making is a key part of this. We are committed to keeping records which demonstrate that all legal obligations are met, and all other compliance requirements placed upon us, and these are accessible as set out below.

## 4.1 Remuneration and Induction

The East Midlands Combined County Authority Regulations 2024 set out requirements for the determination of allowable allowances and expenses, the regulations make it clear that no remuneration is to be payable by the Combined County Authority to its members, other than allowances for travel and subsistence paid in accordance with a scheme drawn up by the Combined County Authority.

EMCCA does not pay any allowances to Board Members other than the Mayor and Deputy Mayor whose allowance is agreed by the Board following the recommendation of an Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Independent Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee and the Member Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee are remunerated as agreed by the EMCCA Board following the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Members of both regulatory committees are also remunerated.

The Combined County Authority also remunerates its Independent Persons for standards matters. All allowances detailed above are set out in more detail in Part 6 of the Constitution: [Part 6 Members Allowances Scheme.pdf](#)

New Board members will undergo induction training covering the senior management structure and their roles, the governance structures including the SAF, how the Combined County Authority is funded, risk, and the annual aims and objectives.

All Committees, including Regulatory, as well as Advisory Boards will undergo induction training that covers the functions of the East Midlands Combined County Authority, the role of their respective governance body and the EMCCA strategic framework.

## 4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

The Combined County Authority has established Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in accordance with the regulations and in alignment with the best practice approach referred to in the English Devolution White Paper.

EMCCA has a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee to:

- review or scrutinise any decision made, or other action taken, in connection with any Non-Mayoral Function or Mayoral Function of the Combined County Authority.
- make reports or recommendations to the Combined County Authority, with respect to any Non-Mayoral Function of the Combined Authority.
  
- make reports or recommendations to the Mayor, with respect to any Mayoral Function of the Combined County Authority.
- make reports or recommendations to the Combined County Authority or the Mayor on any matter that affects the Combined County Authority's Area or the inhabitants of the Combined County Authority's Area
- make reports or recommendations to the Combined County Authority, with respect to any activity conducted by anybody incorporated by the Combined Authority for whatever purpose where such body receives public funding

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee leads in holding the Mayor to account and the Board to account for its decision-making. Specifically in reference to the Mayor it holds at least two sessions

per annum focused on Mayoral Question Time in which it seeks to hold the Mayor to account for the delivery of their priorities, as well as hold the Mayor to account as Chair of the Board for the delivery of the Boards priorities.

In appointing members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Combined County Authority must ensure that the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the Constituent Councils when taken together.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has the following key tasks to deliver in fulfilling its functions:

- hold the Mayor, Lead Members and the Combined County Authority Board to account for the delivery of priority objectives
- hold the Mayor to account for delivery of Mayoral Priorities
- undertake pre-Scrutiny of Board decision-making
- utilise the Call-In power if decisions have not been taken in accordance with the principles of decision-making set out in the Constitution
- undertake policy review when approached to undertake or if gap/ issue identified through performance review and decision-making accountability
- undertake Strategic Performance Review of Corporate KPIs
- hold focused meetings on cross-cutting matters and/or issues of significant concern
- undertake focused budget scrutiny on MTFP alignment/ delivery and consultation
- undertake deep dives or establish scrutiny task and finish or working groups as and when required
- appoint Rapporteurs to shadow lead member portfolios and/ or advisory committees and/or bodies corporate

The terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can be viewed here: [Part 3.5E - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

The Overview and Scrutiny procedural rules can be viewed here: [Part 4.5 Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.pdf](#)

### **4.3 Audit Committee Arrangements**

EMCCA has established an Audit and Governance Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny, Access to Information and Audit) Regulations 2017. This Committee fulfils the requirement to appoint an audit committee. By law this must include at least one independent person, the independent person on the Committee is the Chair of the Committee and is recruited through an open recruitment process.

This committee is a key component of the Combined County Authority's corporate governance arrangements and an important source of assurance regarding the organisation's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment, reporting on financial and annual governance processes and for the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by its Members.

The function of the Audit & Governance Committee is to:

- review and scrutinise the Combined County Authority's financial affairs
- review and assess the Combined County Authority's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements
- review and assess the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources have been used in discharging the Combined County Authority's functions

- make reports and recommendations to the Combined County Authority in relation to reviews conducted under paratha bullets above
- implement the obligation to ensure high standards of conduct amongst Members.

The term of reference of the Audit and Governance Committee can be viewed via this link: [Part 3.5D - Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference.pdf](#)

#### **Internal Audit**

Internal Audit services have been established to provide a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The internal audit provision will conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards which are intended to promote further improvement in the professionalism, quality, consistency and effectiveness of internal audit across the public sector.

#### **External Audit**

It is a requirement for the Combined County Authority to have independent external auditors appointed. As the Combined Authority has opted into the National Scheme (as do the vast majority of other Local and Combined Authorities), the appointment of the external auditors is undertaken by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association (LGA) which operates independently of both the LGA and PSAA's sole member and guarantor (the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA)) which is itself a subsidiary of the LGA.

PSAA is specified by government as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. As such it both appoints auditors and sets the scale of audit fees for principal authorities (such as the Combined County Authority) who have opted into the National Scheme.

The role of the external auditors is to:

#### **Express an opinion on:**

- The Authority's financial statements for each financial year audited.
- Conclusions relating to going concern; and
- The consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the narrative statement

#### **Reporting by exception:**

- If the Governance Statement does not comply with relevant guidance or is not consistent with their understanding of the Authority
- If they identify a significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- Any significant matters that are in the public interest.

## **4.4 Publication of Information (including minutes and decisions)**

The schedule of meetings for the calendar year is published on the Combined County Authority 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.

The Combined Authority 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.

Decisions of Combined County Authority meetings are published within five working days and draft minutes of meetings are published as soon as is possible after the meetings on the Combined County Authority website. All Combined County Authority Board minutes are signed at the next suitable meeting.

In the interests of increasing transparency and accountability the Combined County Authority has committed to publish a Forward Plan of key decisions that will be taken by the Combined County Authority at least 28 days before the decision is made, and up to 6 months in advance where possible, to enable members of the public the opportunity to view and comment upon them.

All decisions will be published in accordance with the transparency arrangements set out in the constitution.

## **4.5 Transparency Arrangements**

EMCCA is subject to the same Transparency Code that applies to Local Authorities - [Local Government Transparency Code | Local Government Association](#). The EMCCA website contains a comprehensive set of information and there are links to key documents, referenced within this document.

Specific statutory requirements apply to the Combined County Authority in relation to transparency. Additionally, the Combined County Authority also complies with a number of good practice recommendations. The key arrangements in place are:

- The public's right to attend meetings and inspect documents of the Combined County Authority as set out in its Procedure Standing Orders.
- Meetings of the Combined County Authority are live streamed, enabling the public to watch the meeting over the internet.
- Agendas and reports of meetings of the Combined County Authority and its Committees are available to the public on its website, five clear days before a meeting here.
- Minutes of meetings are published on the Combined County Authority website here.
- Business case summaries of all schemes coming forward for a decision are published on the Combined County Authority website, as part of the Agenda.
- Reports of meetings of the Combined County Authority and its Committees, which are available to the public on its website.
- Key decisions taken by officers are published on the Combined County Authority website.
- The Combined County Authority adheres to the Local Government Transparency Code which requires the publication of additional data.

Notice of any proposed key decision is published on the Combined Authority website 28 days in advance of the decision, in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.

## **4.6 Nolan Principles and the Code of Conduct**

The Seven Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan principles') underpin this Assurance Framework to ensure that the Combined County Authority, their Mayor and Members and their officers, are

upholding the highest standards of conduct and ensuring robust stewardship of the resources they have at their disposal.

Statutory provisions require the Combined County Authority to adopt a Members' Code of Conduct (the 'Code') which applies to Members of the Combined County Authority, including the Mayor, and to voting Members of committees appointed by the Combined County Authority. The Code sets out the conduct expected of Members, including procedures for declaring and registering:

- Acceptance or receipt of a gift or hospitality.
- Disclosable pecuniary interests, which are defined by the Code.

The Code of Conduct is set out in Part 5.3 of the Constitution: [Code of Conduct](#)

## **4.7 Register and Conflicts of Interest**

The Combined County Authority's codes of conduct for members and for officers set out clear procedures for dealing with any conflicts of interest which may arise when carrying out the business of EMCCA. All Members and Officers are required to declare interests they are aware of, and this is recorded centrally on a register. This information is reviewed and updated annually.

Board Members are required by law to make a declaration of any interest they have in an item of business at meetings. The Combined County Authority's code of conduct sets out when a Member's interest requires that they should leave the meeting while the item is considered. In addition, Constituent County Authority members will have completed their Local Authority's Register of Interest. All EMCCA officers are required to declare any interests they have in contracts. It is a criminal offence to fail to declare a relevant Interest and it is the personal responsibility of the member to consider their own position in relation to any item to be decided.

## **4.8 Gifts and Hospitality**

A Gifts and Hospitality policy and a procedure is in place to ensure that no EMCCA Member or officer receives remuneration or expenses in relation to its activities, other than their salary and in accordance with policy.

The constitutions states that as a Member or Officer:

- I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the Combined County Authority or from persons who may apply to the Combined County Authority for any permission, licence, or other significant advantage.
- I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.
- I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

## **4.9 Conflicts of Interest**

Combined County Authority officers must comply with the Combined Authority's Code of Conduct for Officers, which also reflects the Nolan Principles of public life and requires officers to register personal and prejudicial interests and failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action. Officers also need to comply with a Gifts and Hospitality policy.

The Combined County Authority's codes of conduct for members and for officers set out clear procedures for dealing with any conflicts of interest which may arise when carrying out the business of the Combined County Authority.

#### **4.10 Complaints**

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. The Combined County Authority's Code of Conduct for Members also includes a process for dealing with complaints of alleged breaches of the Code.

#### **4.11 Whistleblowing**

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

#### **4.12 Freedom of Information**

As a public body, the Combined County Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Data Protection Act 2018, which includes the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Combined County Authority will hold records and will deal with statutory information requests. Applicants are made aware of their right to access information through the Combined County Authority, which will deal with this request in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Combined County Authority aims to publish as much information as possible, reducing the need for Freedom of Information requests.

#### **4.13 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. However, as a Combined County Authority, we'd like to have a Board that reflects the population of our diverse East Midlands region and so we support constituent and non-constituent authority efforts to have elected representatives reflective of their constituent population.

This also applies to the Committees of the Combined County Authority.

The Combined County Authority is fully committed to complying with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty and to fulfilling its statutory duties towards its employees and residents with regards to equality and inclusion. Before making and implementing decisions, policies, plans, practices and procedures, EMCCA will show due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Where decisions have the potential to impact people differently based on protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

#### **4.14 Corporate Policy**

Other corporate policies such as Modern Slavery can be found on the Combined County Authority website.

## 5. English Devolution

### 5.1 Introduction

The Single Assurance Framework must demonstrate robust assurance, project appraisal and value for money processes that satisfy the requirements set out in the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This Single Assurance Framework is a significant part of the overall Accountability Framework for the Combined County Authority.

Part 1.3 of this Single Assurance Framework sets out how EMCCA is committed to adhering to the English Devolution Accountability Framework and further development through the English Devolution White Paper. This section draws further attention to EMCCA compliance with EDAF.

EMCCA is also committed to achieving future devolution for the region that will benefit its residents and regional business. The Combined County Authority recognises that in providing areas with more power and funding flexibility it becomes even more essential to strengthen governance, assurance and accountability arrangements to ensure that they are used appropriately to support regional and national priorities.

This section also sets out further detail of EMCCAs commitment to review and enhancement of its governance, assurance and accountability arrangements.

### 5.2 Local Checks and Balances

The Combined County Authority meets all the requirements set out in chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and has in place a robust Code of Conduct.

The Combined County Authority meets the requirements set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and is committed to continuing to review and improve our approach, consulting with other MCAs to identify best practice.

The Combined County Authority's approach to Overview and Scrutiny builds upon the statutory guidance, the Scrutiny Protocol and guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, and best practice from other MCAs.

#### **Enabling the Business voice**

The Combined County Authority has a Business Advisory Board that is integrated into its governance arrangements. This is an advisory committee to the Combined County Authority and the Mayor; it seeks to provide strategy advice and guidance through representation of the 'business voice' in support of the exercise of Combined County Authority and Mayoral functions.

The Business Advisory Board has the ability to appoint members to the Committees of the Combined County Authority to ensure wider business voice representation across portfolio and thematic areas.

#### **Value for Money**

The Combined County Authority has appropriate arrangements in place to independently verify its accounts through external audit to ensure it is compliant the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These arrangements are supported through the Audit and Governance Committee that

review and scrutinise the Combined County Authority financial affairs, ensure appropriate corporate governance and risk management, and assess whether it is delivering value for money.

This Single Assurance Framework sets the framework for the Combined County Authority in making value for money judgements of potential investments. All business cases seeking approval are assessed through the Single Assurance Framework process and are evaluated against HM Treasury's 5-case business model set out in HM Treasury's Green Book.

EMCCA through this framework seeks to use public resources in a way that creates and maximises public value while achieving policy objectives.

Arrangements regarding Value for Money for Department of Transport projects and TAG compliance are set out in an Annex B

### **5.3 Accountability to Government**

This Single Assurance Framework sets out the Combined County Authority approach to ensuring appropriate safeguards and standards are in place in the development and delivery of programmes and projects, and to ensure appropriate stewardship of devolved funding.

Many of the funds available to EMCCA originate in grants and loans made available by Government, each of these carries specific conditions, some of which have evolved over time. EMCCA Finance function operates a range of processes and controls to ensure these funds are spent in accordance with relevant conditions.

Where funds are distributed to external parties, including through open competition, decision-making criteria are published in advance. Decisions about running funds in-house or via external fund managers are based upon criteria set out in the funding agreements and an assessment of internal capability. In some circumstances EMCCA has made the decision to use funding received to deliver investment funds with the intention that the funding is recycled. In doing this the funds adhere to investment strategies which evolve over time but are always focused at least on achieving the conditions within government funding agreements. Expenditure may be subject to regular audit, both internally and through the work of funding departments.

### **5.4 Accountability to the Public**

The Governance Framework of the Combined County Authority is designed with clear roles and responsibilities to enable transparency and understanding of the Board, Advisory Board and Committee activity. Multiple levels of accountability exist to enable and support the strategic objectives setting, performance, decision-making accountability, and operational delivery and oversight.

In addition to providing assurance through the governance arrangements outlined above in the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, the governance framework, and Checks and Balances above, additional measures are in place to provide transparency and maintain accountability to the public.

EMCCA and the Mayor are committed to regular and transparent communication around strategies, delivery and decision-making. Comprehensive information is available on the EMCCA website, alongside regular news items which are also transmitted on multiple channels of social media. The Communication function within EMCCA works to ensure messaging is consistent and accurate.

Directly elected Mayors provide greater democratic accountability by having a single leader directly accountable to the public at the ballot box for their performance and the decisions they make.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeks to hold in public a Mayoral Question Time at least twice a year to hold the Mayor to account for delivery of their Mayoral Priorities and the CCA Strategic Objectives. Moving forward the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be widening this accountability approach out to cover Combined County Authority Portfolio Leads.

In line with the principle of transparency in government and compliance with legal requirements, records of key meetings and foundational documents are available on the EMCCA website. Specific examples of documents available include:

- Meeting Agendas & Papers
- Financial Statements & Annual Reports
- Annual Assurance / Governance Statement & Assurance Framework
- Application Guidelines for specific Funds
- Registers of Interest, Gifts & Hospitality
- Remuneration of officers and members
- Policies, including those relating to Complaints, Whistleblowing, Confidentiality and Freedom of Information
- Code of Conduct

## **5.5 Commitment to continual enhancement of Accountability Arrangements**

The Combined County Authority will continue to review and set out how it will further strengthen its accountability arrangements for future devolved funding and powers. EMCCA already has in place plans to enhance its governance, assurance and accountability arrangements on an annual basis through the annual review of its governance framework and assurance framework.

EMCCA is additionally committed to delivering on requirements within the English Devolution White Paper once they advance to legislation. This includes:

- Assurance Framework development
- Overview and Scrutiny function development
- Integrated Settlement readiness

### **Assurance Framework Development Plan**

The environment in which EMCCA operates is dynamic, and its assurance framework requires continuous improvement to ensure it is best in class, supported appropriately and effectively and responds to new requirements and asks. 2025/26 will be the first year of operation of this Single Assurance Framework, as a result its operations, governance, templates will all be reviewed on a continual basis to ensure they are operating as intended and fit for purpose.

This continuous review will also include senior roles, governance routes and directorate structures, and alignment of business case guidance, with particular reference to consistency across the thematic areas and formal thresholds for proportionate levels of detail within these cases.

The Risk Management Framework, Performance Management Framework and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will all be in the first year of operation too and so will also be subjected to continuous review by officers and the governance framework.

### **Overview & Scrutiny and the Scrutiny Protocol**

EDAF sets out how the institutions with devolved powers are accountable to local people and the UK government, and how their decisions will be scrutinised and made transparent for local politicians, business leaders and local communities of their area.

EDAF introduced a Scrutiny Protocol as a key part of making sure that institutions' overview and scrutiny arrangements are of the highest possible standards for holding them to account for delivery as well as for playing a critical role in policy and strategic development.

The Combined County Authority is committed to strengthening its accountability arrangements, the Overview and Scrutiny function and delivering on the Scrutiny Protocol as it currently is and how it may develop as a result of the English Devolution White Paper.

The Monitoring Officer and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer will work with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop a Scrutiny Protocol action plan which will be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The intention being to set out as an annex to this Single Assurance Framework in 2026/27 full details of how EMCCA has adhered to the Scrutiny Protocol and further developed its accountability arrangements.

One specific requirement of the government's Scrutiny Protocol is that the Mayors of Combined Authorities make themselves available to take questions from the public, chaired by an independent person (examples can include a local journalist or businessperson). The EMCCA Communications Team will be looking to put in place such arrangements at the earliest opportunity in 2025/26.

#### **Integrated Settlement Readiness**

EMCCA is already working on an Integrated Settlement readiness plan to support its ambition to achieve further devolution for the region at the earliest opportunity. This plan covers putting in place additional governance, assurance and accountability arrangements as well as evidencing an early track record of delivery through its investments.

It also includes ensuring that EMCCA adheres to and delivers on the principles within the Scrutiny Protocol.

## 6. Single Assurance Framework Entry Points

### Introduction

EMCCA aspires to a consistent business case lifecycle to guide the development of projects from concept initiation, through development (covering the business case, options appraisal, analysis), into approval, delivery/monitoring and evaluation. The aim is to provide clarity to partners and stakeholders on the process and its requirements, officers preparing cases and members responsible for decision-making, approval and scrutiny.

The Single Assurance Framework (SAF) sets out the framework to be applied throughout the lifecycle of programmes and projects. It sets out the key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency and legal compliance, also ensuring value for money is achieved across its investments. It provides assurance to decision-makers and Government that all investment proposals meet the expected standards.

The SAF will be applied across the lifecycle of all projects and programmes that will incur a financial liability on the Combined County Authority. Where financial liability is placed onto the Combined County Authority, the SAF is applicable throughout all stages of the project or programme lifecycle: concept initiation, development, approvals, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

It will remain appropriate to apply proportionality in the development of cases and based on the size of spend involved, the degree of flexibility in the funding supporting the case and the risk associated with the programme/ project.

The Single Assurance Framework has been developed to a set of principles agreed with the EMCCA Investment Committee. The **core principles** that must be delivered through a SAF are as follows:

- a) Appropriate protection for the stewardship of public funds
- b) Consistency, control, and clarity across all processes
- c) Appropriate and proportionate levels of assurance
- d) Management of political and reputational risk
- e) Appropriate levels of delegation.

The identified **EMCCA specific design principles** for this Single Assurance Framework are as follows:

- a) **The Principle of Approval must apply** – Board must decide what is included on the pipeline, with no resources spent on business case development until it is on a Board approved pipeline, supported by the MTFP (with access to a concept development fund/ business case feasibility funding to support feasibility considerations pre-Board).

This principle is core to the overall operation of the Single Assurance Framework. It ensures early front-loaded political buy-in to programmes, projects, and schemes through strategic justification and deliverability considerations which then allows additional pace and focus by specialised officers when developing business cases (not having to come back and forth to political forums).

- b) **EMCCA Directorate led** - Directorates are responsible for business case development (this could be via oversight) and engaging SMEs and delivery organisations. They control the pace of project initiation and the development of proposals

- c) **Proportionality is key** - A proportionate approach is applied to development and approval of proposals, dependent upon their nature and complexity.
- d) **Delivers a consistent and streamlined approach** - All projects will go through the SAF, regardless of their funding stream(s) as it is a 'single' approach. It should not be onerous but should ensure requirements are delivered
- e) **Aligned to HM Treasury 'Green Book'** - Aligned to HM Treasury Green Book requirements; ensuring a consistent standard is applied to the development, appraisal and approval of Business Cases and ongoing monitoring of deliverables.

Training and development in HMT Better Business Cases will be a requirement within the Combined County Authority.

- f) **Drive standards in development, delivery and outcomes** - well considered concepts that lead to well-developed business cases that lead to well informed decision-making to drive outcomes and the realisation of benefits

### **Definitions**

The SAF works to the following definition of programmes and projects:

**A SAF Programme/Project** – Projects and Programmes which follow the SAF are focused 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 Investment programme, where EMCCA is the accountable body.

The SAF is applied flexibly and proportionately, dependent on the level of risk associated with the Programme/Project. The SAF enables an independent assessment and appraisal of an investment opportunity. Programmes and Projects following the SAF route should ensure a strong strategic fit to the Corporate Plan.

SAF does not apply to Corporate Projects

**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 an organisation. Risk management should be considered with risks reviewed as part of the activity.

Once a corporate project is complete it may become BAU. Corporate projects will be supported by specialists across EMCCA including Finance, Project Management, Human resources and Legal as appropriate, to strengthen the case for funding and, the identified benefits and support effective delivery.

The SAF sets out the rising scale of assurance that is required against an increasing scale of value in business case approvals, alongside appropriate processes for risk profiling of a project, guidance on business case development and the documentation required for approval consideration.

Out of Business area second line defence assurance and appraisal is incorporated into the SAF alongside guidance, templates and criteria to ensure a consistency of approach, development and consideration through the lifecycle.

### **Value for Money**

As an investor of public funds, the Combined County Authority has a responsibility to ensure that its decisions deliver best value for the taxpayer, and therefore all investment opportunities and Business Cases must include an assessment of Value for Money.

The SAF has been developed in line with HMTs Green Book guidelines, which require project managers to build in Value for Money processes throughout the development and approval stages. In addition, the Combined County Authority requires all Business Cases be developed in line with HMTs Five Case Model.

Proportionality will be reflected within the Business Case templates required to be completed.

A range of toolkits (HMT Green Book, DfT TAG, MHCLG, Appraisal Guidance etc) are used by partners to demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits, and costs, over an appropriate appraisal period, in order to assess the Value for Money of a scheme. In line with recognised Value for Money guidance, the assessment will consider:

- **Economy:** Minimising the cost of resources used.
- **Efficiency:** The relationship between the output from goods or services and the resources to produce them.
- **Effectiveness:** The relationship between the intended and actual results of public spending (outcomes and meeting objectives).
- The methodology used to assess Value for Money will be in line with the established guidance prescribed by the relevant Government department.

EMCCA will always consider value for money when considering whether or not to approve an intervention. EMCCAs assessment process includes consideration of CBA outputs, most notably the Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR), and an assessment of any non-monetised impacts that should be brought into an overall assessment of value for money.

Preference will be given to schemes which offer at least 'High Value for Money', accounting for significant non-monetised impacts and key uncertainties. The justification for a recommendation for a scheme to proceed with a Value for Money position less than 'High' will be set out in the reports seeking approval from the relevant decision-makers.

However, interventions that deliver lower value for money may still be funded in certain circumstances, if there is a compelling strategic case. For instance, the broader strategic value of potential investments should be considered, particularly with regard to their potential to deliver equality objectives and/or social benefits that are challenging to monetise (e.g. improved social mobility), or to contribute to inclusive growth and social value priorities. These decisions are set out clearly and transparently and fully evidenced across the business case as a whole.

Additionally, project interventions that deliver a lower value for money case may enable another project to deliver higher value for money through a programme approach.

SAF requires:

- The delivery, and costs, of outputs must be quantified within all applications for funding. Assessing Value for Money will be done in accordance with Government guidance.

- The use of options consideration for Value for Money is key, to assist a do minimum option will always be included in business cases to provide an essential benchmark that can help reveal the real value of additional changes.
- The Senior Responsible Officer responsible for programme/project development will review and document that they are satisfied with the Value for Money assessment within in a business case. This element will also be scrutinised by the Section 73 Officer as part of the SAF process prior and to final approval of funding and award of contract.

To help establish Value for Money considerations and assessment the Combined County Authority follows the new Green Book advice and reviews the following as they apply within a proportionate approach:

- **Objectives:** That a number of SMART objectives and Critical Success Factors are used to ensure short-list options, that will be assessed in fuller detail at business case stage, are aligned with the strategic objectives of the organisation and as a result is likely offer VfM to society.
- **Benefits:** The net present value to society of all social, economic and environmental benefits (not always proportionate to consider for lower-level investments). The benefits may be monetised, quantitatively or qualitatively. This is carried out in greater detail within the business case stage.
- **Costs:** The net present public resource costs and societal costs following whole life costing method. This includes capital costs, operating and maintenance costs and as well as opportunity costs (if appropriate). This is carried out in greater detail at the business case stage.
- **Risk:** Any risk costs associated with managing and mitigating identifiable and significant risks. This is carried out in all stages with increasingly detailed analysis as the scheme progresses through different business case stages. Residual 'hard to quantify' risk and uncertainty, where it is likely to be significant, are also considered as part of the value for money judgment. For example, the impact on public transport fare revenue due to increased levels of working from home and online shopping.
- **Wider Impacts:** That any additional wider impacts, which are not readily or credibly quantifiable or monetisable, but which are considered decisively important enough to be considered, are considered. The Combined County Authority requires an economic narrative or other ways of justification for such impacts. This is carried out in greater detail at the business case stage.
- **Equality and Diversity:** That the distribution of the likely impact on different parts of society, and across protected characteristics, are considered in the VfM judgement.

For transport schemes, the Combined County Authority will ensure that modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration, and that modelling, and appraisal meets the guidance set out in DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG), this is further set out in Annex B

#### **Estimating wider Inclusive Growth benefits**

All schemes will be expected to have a positive (direct or indirect) impact on inclusive growth through job creation, skills improvement, increased productivity, and improved connectivity, and wider, to ensure that the inclusive growth aspirations articulated by the Combined County Authority are realised.

The Combined County Authority is developing a robust set of Inclusive Growth Investment Criteria to aid concept approval, business case development and approval to support these wider considerations.

#### **Bids and Funding Opportunities**

The development of external funding opportunities is Directorate-led and co-ordinated/managed using the External Funding Application process. Annex A details this Process. The process ensures that the Section 73 Officer and the wider Senior 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.

**Single Assurance Framework Entry Points**

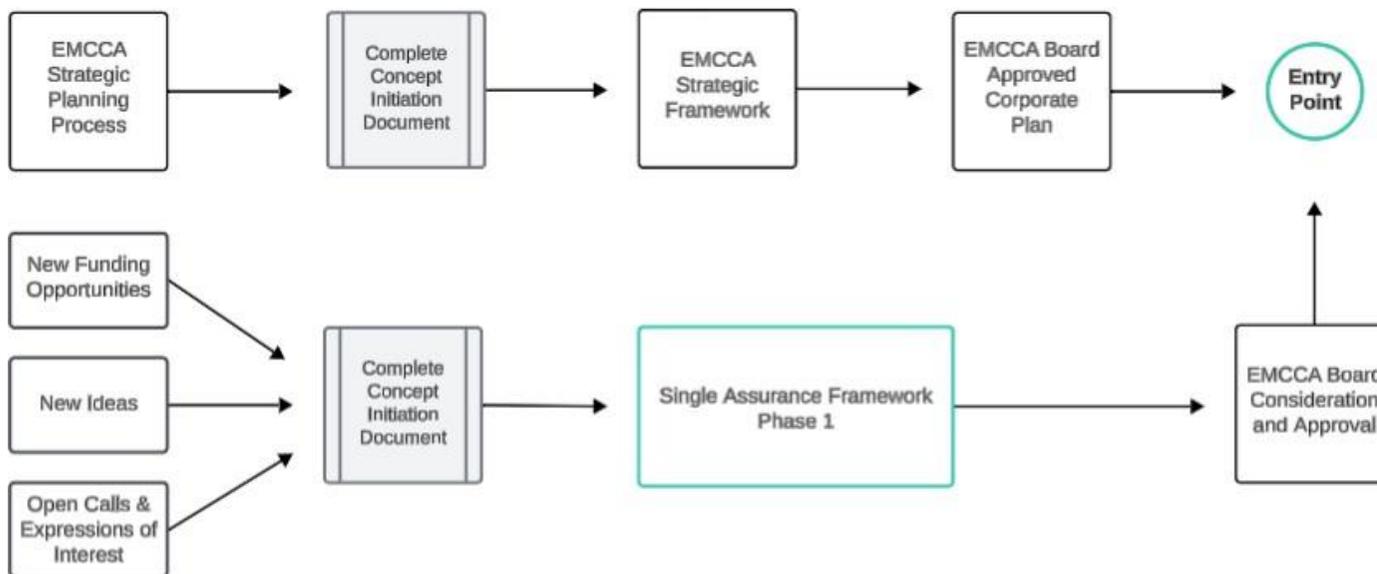
There are four potential entry points into the SAF:

1. Strategic Planning Process – The Strategic Framework
2. In Year Concepts
3. New Funding Opportunities
4. Open Calls/ Expressions of Interest

Regardless of entry point into the Single Assurance Framework and onto the EMCCA Pipeline, all proposals require the completion of a Concept Initiation Document of CID. This ensures that there is a consistent set of focused information for every proposal to be considered against, which enables standards to then be consistently applied to that information and how it is considered.

A CID must be completed for items considered in the strategic planning process as well as items considered in Phase 1 of the Single Assurance Framework.

**Illustration E: Single Assurance Framework Entry Points**



**6.1 Strategic Planning Process**

The Combined Authority Corporate Plan is developed through an extensive strategic planning process, these robust processes that are in place to develop the strategic objectives (that aligns with the long-term vision) help ensure the central entry point onto the EMCCA Pipeline is through the strategic planning process.

The Strategic Planning Process seeks to engage all relevant parties, reflect Government missions and objectives and agree the strategic fit of the Combined County Authority. Mayoral Priorities set out their election manifesto will be automatically incorporated into the strategic objectives of the Combined County Authority.

The Corporate Plan sets out the 'golden thread' from the strategic objectives and Mayoral priorities, through its overarching strategies, organisational objectives and Business Area Plans to programme and project activity directed through annual business plan activity.

Mayoral Priorities therefore become part of agreed 'golden thread' of the organisation and are therefore automatically included in the pipeline to be drawn down and developed as and when required.

The purpose of the Corporate Plan is to:

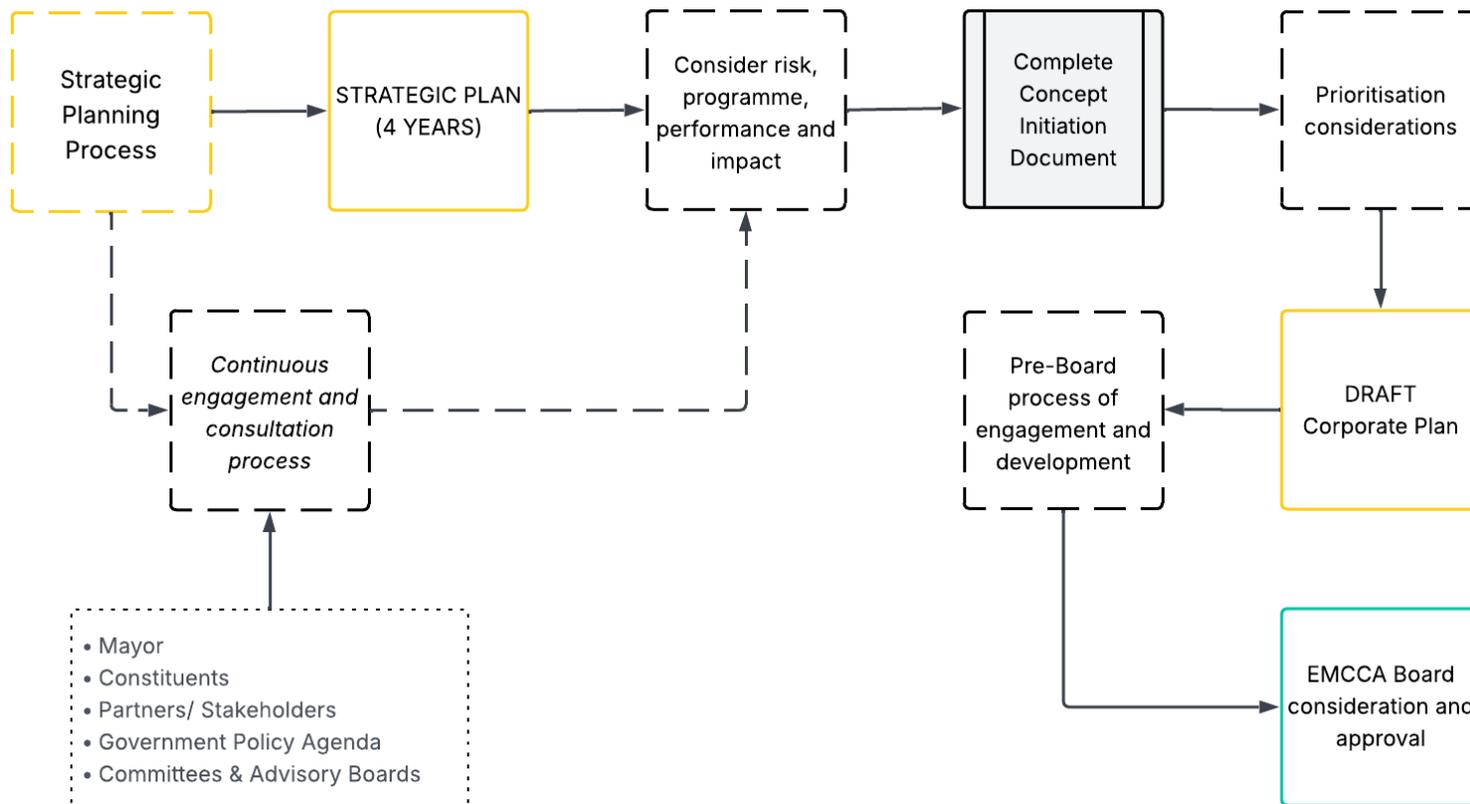
- Articulate the Combined County Authority's priorities so that partners and stakeholders understand the key areas of focus.
  
- Provide strategic context for the Combined County Authority as an organisation so its plans and operational activity are aligned to the overall vision and priorities agreed by its Board
  
- Enable oversight and review of performance against priorities. To support this the Corporate Plan seeks to demonstrate how deliverables contribute towards delivering the overarching Combined Authority policy aims.
  
- To attempt to drive a 'programme' approach to investments

EMCCA operates a 'principle of approval' that means no item is approved to the EMCCA pipeline for development unless it has been approved to do so by the Combined County Authority Board.

Items included within an approved Corporate Plan are automatically added to the EMCCA pipeline, as a result these items enter the Single Assurance Framework in phase 2.

The Corporate Plan is to be the standard method of entry onto the EMCCA pipeline and therefore into the Single Assurance Framework, this is to drive the agreed golden thread of the organisation.

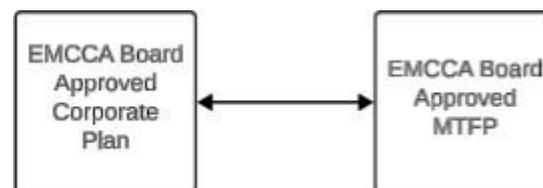
**Illustration F: Strategic Planning Process - Corporate Plan**



The Pre-Board engagement and development process ensures that the developing content of the Corporate Plan is discussed and supported by EMCCA's Senior Leadership Team, by wider regional Constituent and Non-Constituent Chief Executives and senior officers, the Mayor and wider Constituent and Non-Constituent Leaders.

The process simplified in the illustration above ensures political and officer input into prioritisation considerations.

Board approves the Corporate Plan and a Medium-Term Financial Plan to support its delivery.



**6.2 In Year Concepts**

EMCCA Officers, Constituent and Non-Constituent Authorities, Partners and the Combined County Authority can submit in-year concept proposals that are not included within the Corporate Plan for consideration.

These in-year proposals will require the completion of a Concept Paper that is designed to drive strategic alignment of proposals with the agreed EMCCA Strategic Priorities, as well as ensuring appropriate key elements of EMCCA are engaged early in the process to provide guidance on finance, legal, communications, procurement and other considerations.

In Concept proposals must enter phase 1 of the Single Assurance Framework for consideration before they can be included within the EMCCA pipeline.

### **6.3 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 Strategic Leadership Team meetings. Where such opportunities arise, the proposer will complete a Concept paper in line with phase 1 of the SAF.

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

The purpose of an Open Call proposal/ Expression of Interest would be to confirm that the proposal is consistent with the strategic context set out in the Combined County Authority Vision and the strategic objectives within the Corporate Plan, outline the rationale for intervention, set out the primary benefits associated with the intervention and identify a proposed preferred option with costs based on an appraisal of the available options.

There may be instances where items drawn down from the Corporate Plan for business case development require the approach of issuing a call/ expression of interest prior to Business Case development.

Similarly in certain circumstances, the Combined County Authority may ask applicants to complete an Expression of Interest or issue an Open Call for proposals as to how to deliver a particular objective, prior to completion of a Business case in support of In year concepts.

### **6.5 Commissioning**

Other avenues for schemes to be developed could be through a commissioning process with specified deadlines for submissions. Any commissioning will aim to address specific gaps to help the Combined County Authority achieve its overall outcomes.

## 7. Single Assurance Framework Phases

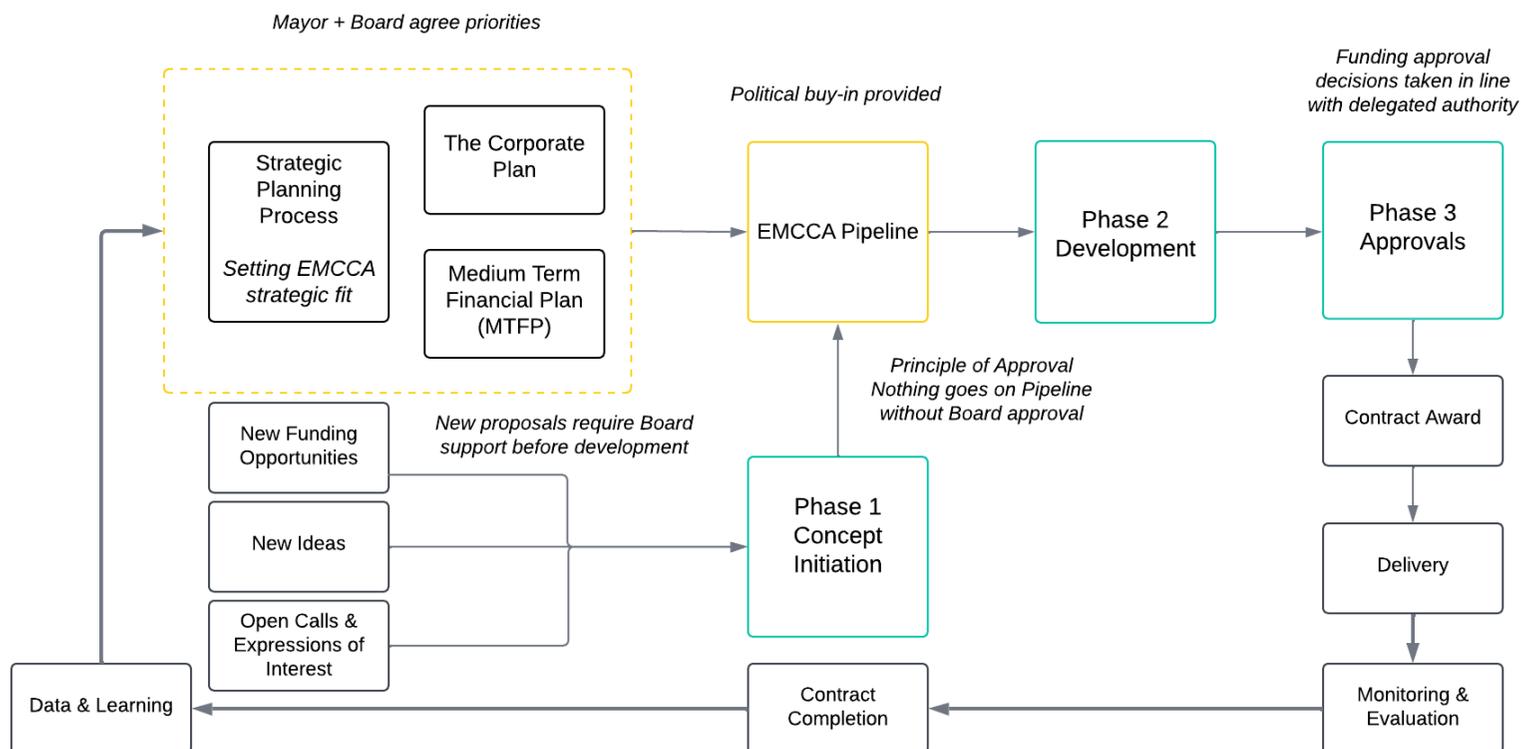
### 7.1 Overview

The Combined County Authority has developed the Single Assurance Framework phases to deliver key benefits:

- **Enhance Risk Management:** It will help identify, assess, and mitigate risks more effectively, ensuring that potential issues are addressed before they become significant problems.
- **Improve Governance:** By providing clear oversight and accountability, it ensures that decision-making processes are transparent and well-structured.
- **Increase Efficiency:** Streamlining assurance activities can reduce duplication of efforts and improve the coordination of various assurance functions, leading to more efficient operations.
- **Deliver Better Performance Monitoring:** It enables continuous monitoring and evaluation of performance, helping organisations to meet their objectives and deliver value for money.
- **Enhance Stakeholder Confidence:** A robust assurance framework provides stakeholders with confidence that the organization is well-managed and compliant with relevant regulations and standards.
- **Support Strategic Objectives:** It aligns assurance activities with the organisation’s strategic goals, ensuring that all efforts contribute to achieving these objectives.

The entry points into the SAF are set out in section 6. The diagram below provides an overview of the Single Assurance Framework phases.

**Illustration G: Single Assurance Framework overview**



As set out above in 6.1, the central entry point into the Single Assurance Framework and onto the EMCCA Pipeline is via the Strategic Planning Process.

## **7.2 Value for Money**

As an investor of public funds, the Combined County Authority has a responsibility to ensure that its decisions deliver best value for the taxpayer, and therefore all investment opportunities and Business Cases must include an assessment of Value for Money.

**Section 6** of this framework sets out value for money considerations and process.

The delivery, and costs, of outputs must be quantified within all applications for funding. Assessing Value for Money will be done in accordance with Government guidance.

The use of options consideration for Value for Money is key, to assist a do minimum option will always be included in business cases to provide an essential benchmark that can help reveal the real value of additional changes.

The Senior Responsible Officer responsible for programme/project development will review and document that they are satisfied with the Value for Money assessment within a business case. This element will also be scrutinised by the Section 73 Officer as part of the SAF process prior and to final approval of funding and award of contract.

For transport schemes, the Combined County Authority will ensure that modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration, and that modelling, and appraisal meets the guidance set out in DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG), this is further set out in Annex B

## **7.3 SAF Phase 1: Concept Initiation**

The central and therefore standard entry point into the Single Assurance Framework is via the strategic planning process set out in section 6.1 above. This ensures Corporate Plan approved proposals automatically enter the EMCCA Pipeline. The strategic planning process is separate from SAF Phase 1 which therefore applies to proposal outside of the strategic planning process.

The first phase outside of the strategic planning process is the Concept Initiation Phase, this is the first step towards developing a concept into a business case. This is where ideas, proposals or ambitions are developed into concepts for consideration

The purpose of this phase is to provide early assurance that investment proposals meet strategic objectives, have sufficient resources and appropriate input from EMCCA core enabling services (Legal, Finance, Investment, HR, Comms)

### **Phase 1:**

- The key focus here is on justifying the strategic fit of the 'concept' against the EMCCA strategic framework.
- An understanding of the size, shape and impact of the change – this includes further validation of the strategic alignment, potential costs and benefits. High level risks and assumptions should also be understood.

- Concepts' will be reviewed by EMCCA Officers who will make a recommendation to the Board on approval/ rejection.
- Board will consider all 'concepts' and make the decision as to whether the 'concept' advances onto the EMCCA pipeline for further development.

The Concept stage ensures that consistent information is required and then considered to develop a proposal or idea into a 'concept' that can be considered and evaluated against the EMCCA strategic fit. It provides the opportunity for early engagement across the Combined County Authority, providing the appropriate support and guidance to ensure high quality project/programme development in line with agreed standards.

All proposals require the completion of a Concept Initiation Document (CID), this is regardless of whether they come from within or outside of the Combined County Authority.

The CID provides a consistent entry point and focuses on strategic fit of any proposal against the EMCCA strategic objectives to enable early assessment, prioritisation and consideration of the investment proposal.

The Concept Initiation Document (CID):

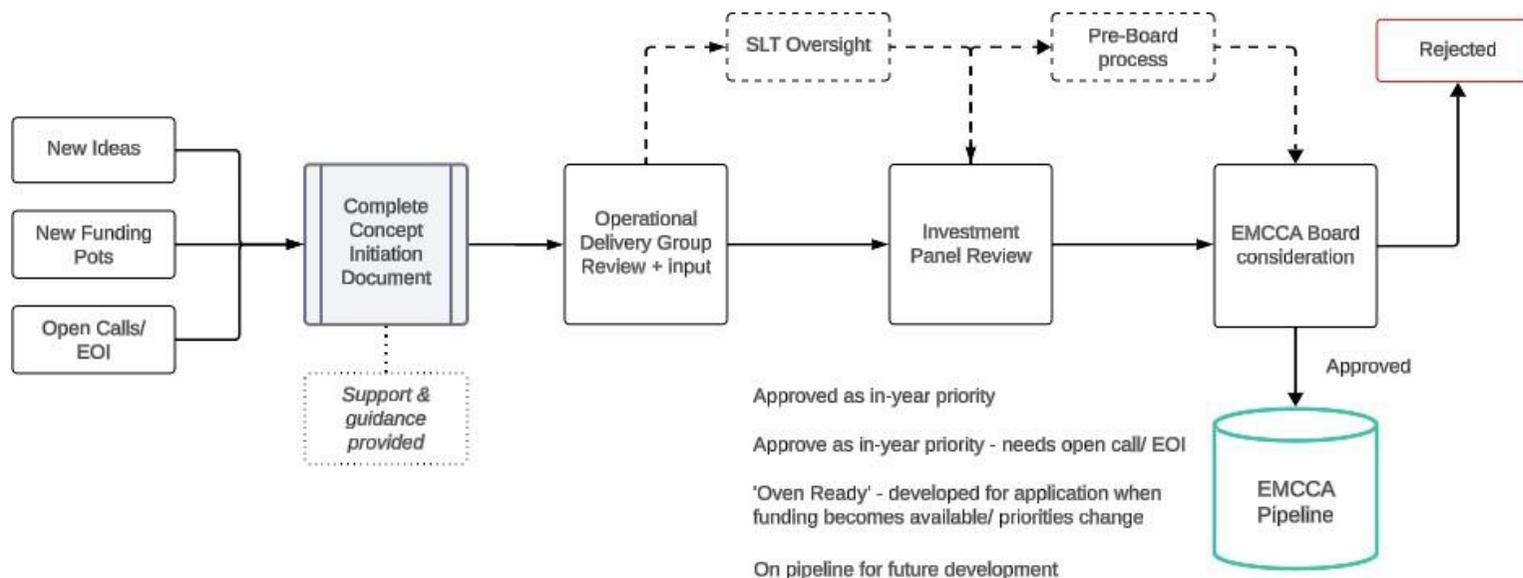
- Places a key focus on justifying the strategic fit of the 'concept' against the EMCCA strategic framework.
- Requires completion to provide an understanding of the size, shape and impact of the proposal/ change – this includes further validation of the strategic alignment, potential costs and benefits.
- High level risks and assumptions should also be understood.
- Concepts' will be reviewed by EMCCA Officers who will make a recommendation to the Board on approval/ rejection.
- Board will consider all 'concepts' and make the decision as to whether the 'concept' advances onto the EMCCA pipeline for further development.

Phase 1 operates with support and guidance from the Combined County Authority.

The process enables early engagement with the core areas of the Combined County Authority to enable subject matter expert input from an early stage from relevant core business areas, such as Legal and Finance, and PMO and HR.

This stage provides preliminary assurance that proposals are in line with strategic priorities, legally compliant, and as to the availability of resources and budget. It also identifies the most appropriate route for the approval of funding.

## Illustration H: SAF Phase 1



### SAF Phase 1 Steps:

Programmes or projects that have gone through the strategic planning process and have been identified for inclusion within the Corporate Plan are then added to the Investment Pipeline, they can be drawn down for business case development in line with the annual business plans and funding availability.

Those that are in-year must enter SAF Phase 1 as illustrated above.

The first step in Phase 1 is Concept Initiation, this is done through engagement with the relevant EMCCA Business Area lead. This step applies:

- regardless of whether submission is external or internal it needs to be led by the relevant EMCCA Business Area
- to drive appropriate early considerations through direction to completion of a Concept Initiation Document (CID)
- to ensure advice and guidance is provided by EMCCA
- to ensure a clear line of accountability within EMCCA

The objective of SAF Phase 1 is to complete the Concept Initiation Document (CID) and have it reviewed, then submitted to Board for consideration.

Throughout Concept Initiation EMCCA Officers can provide support and guidance on the process and completion of the CID. The EMCCA Operational Delivery Group which consists of core EMCCA service representatives will consider developing CIDs in order to ensure that cross EMCCA input and support is provided, seek to avoid CID development in isolation and ensure wider benefits of a proposal can be developed and considered.

The EMCCA Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are informed of CIDs in development and have the opportunity to comment, especially on the strategic alignment of emerging CIDs. This provides an opportunity for them to provide senior officer buy-in to the process and halt development where they have concerns.

The Investment Panel is the technical officer group that operates in support of the EMCCA Investment Committee. The Investment Panel will consider Concepts within the context of Corporate

Priorities and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in order to make recommendations to the Combined County Authority Board on whether or not an in-year concept should be supported.

Concepts, once considered by the Investment Panel, are reported to the Combined County Authority Board for consideration and decision. The Investment Panel will make a recommendation to the Board to support their consideration, however it is a Board decision as to whether the in-year concept is supported and approved to be added to the EMCCA Pipeline.

The Combined County Authority will determine if a Concept:

- **Is approved as an in-year priority** – this means it is deemed to be an immediate priority and therefore requires immediate development of its business case, approval and delivery
- **Is approved as an in-year priority and requires a subsequent open call/ EOI** – this means it is deemed to be an immediate priority that requires an open call or EOI process to determine the specifics of its development
- **Is approved for development as an ‘oven- ready’ proposal** – this means it is deemed to be a priority that requires immediate business case development but not implementation, it will then remain on the pipeline to be drawn down if funding becomes available to deliver of priorities change
- **Is approved for future development** – Is not deemed a priority and so sits on the pipeline as an undeveloped concept, when priorities change it can be drawn down for business case development
- **Is rejected** – Is not deemed to be a priority or appropriate for inclusion on the EMCCA pipeline

## 7.4 SAF Phase 2: Business Case Development

The Business Case Development Phase follows all entry avenues, the strategic planning process and SAF Phase 1. 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 relevant programme assurance and appraisal team within EMCCA. They 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.

Phase 2:

- The intention is to have a single case approach to development which requires a proportionate level of detail dependent upon cost and complexity.
- This phase focuses on the shaping and planning of the project and a development of the Business Case. This includes a full delivery plan, resource plan, value for money assessment, 3rd party impacts and articulation of risk and uncertainty that remains.
- For large and complex projects, this stage may be broken into two parts – an Outline Business Case to continue to test viability before creating a Full Business Case.

The business case is developed (or managed where development is led outside the Combined County Authority) by the sponsoring Business Area, ensuring that its content meets the required standard defined within the Combined County Authority guidance in addition to meeting the requirements of the SAF and HMT’s five case model Green Book compliance. It should also seek alignment to Policy Aims and Objectives, whilst meeting any funding requirements and/or milestone dates/requirements.

Where delivery partners are external to the Combined County Authority, they will be supported through the process by the lead Business Area within the Combined County Authority. The delivery partner will use the appropriate business case guidance and templates provided, subject matter experts and technical appraisers.

The subject matter experts to be engaged in the development stage include the Programme Assurance Team for assurance and appraisal, the Evaluation Team, Finance, Legal and Procurement who should all input into the business case, and its review prior to approval.

The lead Business Area is responsible for ensuring they or any partner meet deadlines, engage the appropriate subject matter experts and technical appraisers, and adhere to required formats when developing a business case.

The objective is to produce a comprehensive case for funding in line with HMT Green Book principles. The business case will be subject to a technical appraisal undertaken from outside the Business Area, to provide assurance to decision makers that investment proposals meet the agreed standards and compliance requirements, in line with recognised best practice.

Each business case will receive a ‘maturity assessment’ from expert EMCCA officers which will identify readiness for business case approval consideration, raising red flags and/or suggesting amends or additional work required to support the business case lead.

All business cases will be completed using the EMCCA business case templates and adhere to the HMT five case model as follows:

Five Case Model	Description
Strategic Case	The strategic case sets out the rationale for the proposal; it makes a compelling case for change at a strategic level. It should set out the background to the proposal and explain how the project provides fit with the EMCCA strategic objectives, as well as any relevant local and/or national strategic priorities.
Economic Case	The economic case is the essential core of the business case and should be prepared according to HMT’s Green Book guidance. This section of the business case assesses the economic costs and benefits of the proposal to society as a whole, and spans the entire period covered by the proposal.
Commercial Case	The commercial case is concerned with issues of commercial feasibility and sets out to answer the question “can the proposed solution be effectively delivered through a workable commercial deal or deals?”. The first question therefore is what procurement does the proposal require, is it crucial to delivery, and what is the procurement strategy?
Financial Case	The financial case is concerned with issues of affordability, and sources of budget funding. It covers the lifespan of the scheme and all attributable costs. The case needs to demonstrate that funding has been secured and that it falls within appropriate spending and settlement limits.
Management Case	The management case is concerned with the deliverability of the proposal and is sometimes referred to as a programme management or project management case. It confirms that the capacity is available and proportionate to the delivery requirements. The management case must

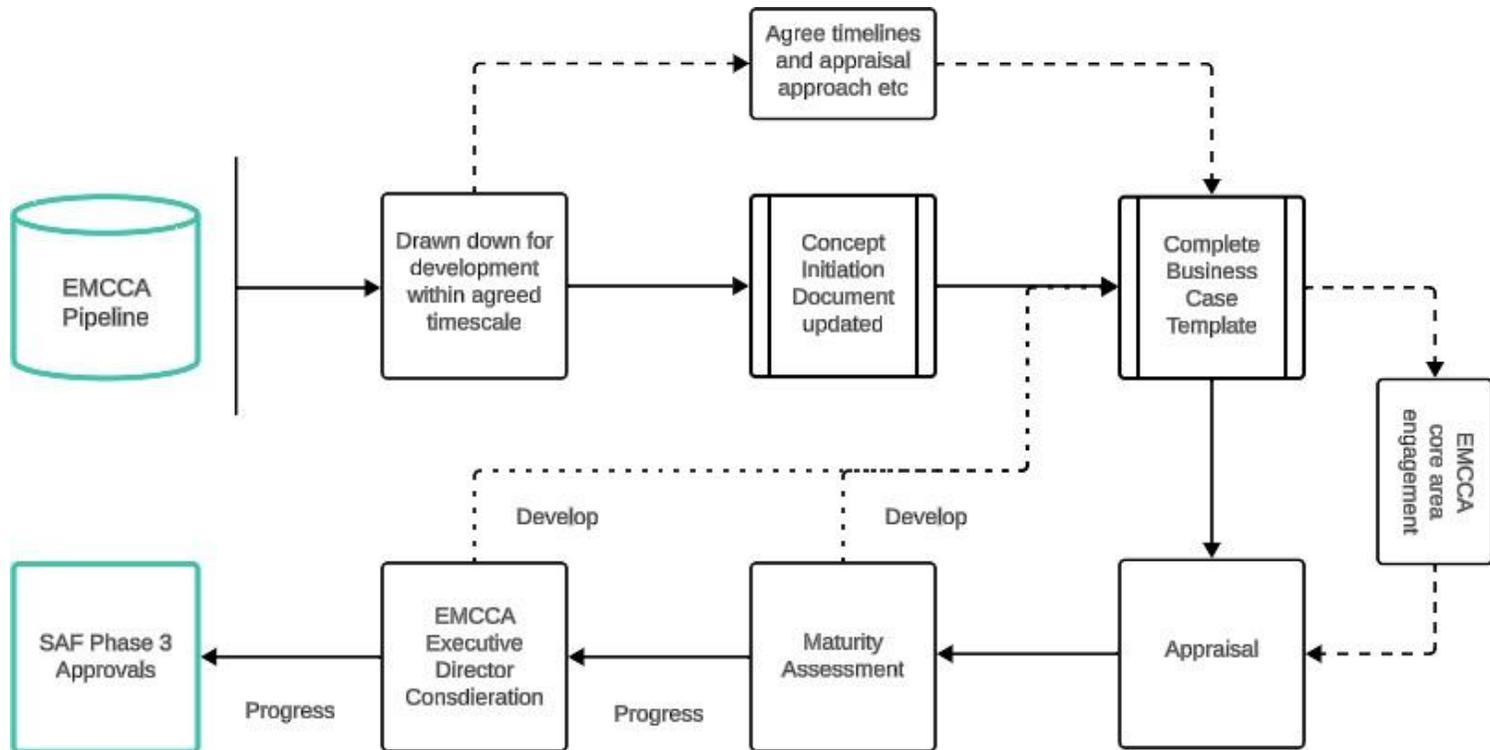
	clearly set out management responsibilities and governance and reporting arrangements. If it does not, then the business case is not yet complete. The Senior Responsible Officer should be identified.
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A proportionate approach will be taken to the overall level of appraisal to reflect the financial ask. 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.

**Phase 2 Process:**

The phase 2 process is designed to operate as follows:

**Illustration I: SAF Phase 2 - Development**



**SAF Phase 2 Steps:**

Draw Down/ PMO Engagement	Approved item on Pipeline is drawn down by lead officer(s) to begin business case development process. This requires early engagement between the EMCCA business area lead and PMO in order to identify and plan for effective timetabling of appraisal and assurance requirements and approval timetabling.
CID Updating	First step is to review and update the Concept Initiation Document to ensure that it is up to date, noting that it will be an appendix to the business case.
Business Case	Start to draft the business case in alignment with EMCCA guidance and HMTs five case model requirements, using appropriate EMCCA template.

Core Area Engagement	Regular check ins with Finance, Legal and identified other core EMCCA business areas in support of drafting the business case. A Value for Money assessment is required for all business cases which will be reviewed by the Section 73 Officer.
Appraisal	Out of business area appraisal of the business case needs to be undertaken in alignment with agreed appraisal approach with PMO identified at draw down.
Maturity Assessment	Maturity assessment of the business case is undertaken by PMO to determine if it is mature enough for the next stage, this process also enables red flags to be raised and addressed.
SRO Sign-Off + ED Consideration	SRO must sign off business case for advancement once they are satisfied with its content, it is then considered by the appropriate EMCCA Executive Director who considered whether it should be put forward for approval consideration. The Executive Director assumes responsibility for the business case through the approvals process and so must be satisfied with its content.

### **Appraisal**

The key appraisal steps are as follows:

- Preparing the strategic case which includes the strategic assessment and making the case for change, quantifies the present situation and Business as Usual (the BAU) and identifies the SMART objectives. This rationale is the vital first step in defining what is to be appraised. Delivery of the SMART objectives must drive the rest of the process across all dimensions of the Five Case Model as explained throughout the Green Book guidance
- Longlist analysis using the options framework filter considers how best to achieve the SMART objectives. Alternative options are viewed through the lens of public service provision to avoid bias towards preconceived solutions that have not been rigorously tested. A wide range of possibilities are considered, and a viable shortlist is selected including a preferred way forward. These are carried forward for further detailed appraisal. This process is where all complex issues are considered and is the key to development of optimum Value for Money proposals likely to deliver reasonably close to expectations
- Shortlist appraisal follows and is at the heart of detailed appraisal, where expected costs and benefits are estimated, and trade-offs are considered. This analysis is intimately interconnected to the, Strategic, Commercial, Financial, and Management dimensions of the five-case model, none of which can be developed or appraised in isolation. The use of Social Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) or Social Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) are the means by which cost, and benefit trade-offs, are considered
- Identification of the preferred option is based on the detailed analysis at the shortlist appraisal stage. It involves determining which option provides the best balance of costs, benefits, risks and unmonetisable factors thus optimising value for money
- Monitoring is the collection of data, both during and after implementation to improve current and future decision making
- Evaluation is the systematic assessment of an intervention's design, implementation and outcomes. Both monitoring and evaluation should be considered before, during and after implementation

Specific Transport appraisal requirements are detailed in Annex B

As stated above a proportionate out of business area appraisal is required for each business case alongside a maturity assessment undertaken by PMO.

For business cases that are seeking an investment above £2.5million an additional Risk and Investment Appraisal is required to help inform decision-makers. 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 Summary Appraisal is completed for items between £2.5million-£5million whereas a more comprehensive Appraisal Report is created for items over £5million.

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
- review and verify the evidence base/content of the Economic Case for accuracy
- analysis of Net Present Social Value (or NPC), Social Impact and Inclusive Growth
- 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 Strategic Risk Framework.

The report will set out the following impartial advice to inform the decision makers:

- 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.

### **Due Diligence**

Due diligence refers to the process of undertaking independent verification of a scheme promoter's financial records before entering into a transaction with them and of key information provided by scheme promoters in support of funding proposals. It is intended to supplement the appraisal process and support the effective management of risk. It will be undertaken by the Combined County Authority's PMO and may take place at any stage in the assurance process prior to entering into a grant funding agreement (GFA).

The scope of due diligence will depend on the nature of the funding proposition and the promoter. Where the promoter is a private sector body it is likely to take the form of an independent assessment of ownership structure and financial standing and any other appropriate risk considerations determined at that time.

Issues or conditions identified during negotiations with promoters, such as overage requirements or clawback, will be included in grant funding agreements.

## **7.5 SAF Phase 3: Business Case Approvals**

Phase 3 of the SAF is the business case approvals phase, this focuses on approval of the business case that has been developed following the principle of approval provided at the beginning of the process by the Combined County Authority Board.

Approval considerations will be undertaken by the appropriate approver, dependent upon the level of financial approval and additional tolerance considerations in alignment with the Constitution.

Approvals will consider the business case and additional assurance and advice against an increasing scale of assurance requirement dependent on level of financial approval.

Phase 3 includes Approval Delegations which determine who the ‘approver’ is. The approvals phase has been designed to ensure an ever-increasing level of assurance can be provided the Combined County Authority relevant to the level of financial commitment. To support this and achieve better informed decision making the SAF has been developed to enable:

- Appropriate front end initiation process through the concept initiation process that drives strategic fit.
- Principle of approval so board and only Board determines the pipeline content
- Proportionate business case development process that meets national and Combined County Authority standards of best practice.
- Appropriate use of expertise within Business Areas to support business case development.
- Provision of support and guidance throughout the SAF.
- Use of out of Business Area/second line of defence assurance principles and processes to undertake proportionate appraisal.
- Technical officer support through the Investment Panel to focus Investment Committee and Board considerations and inform the decision-making process.

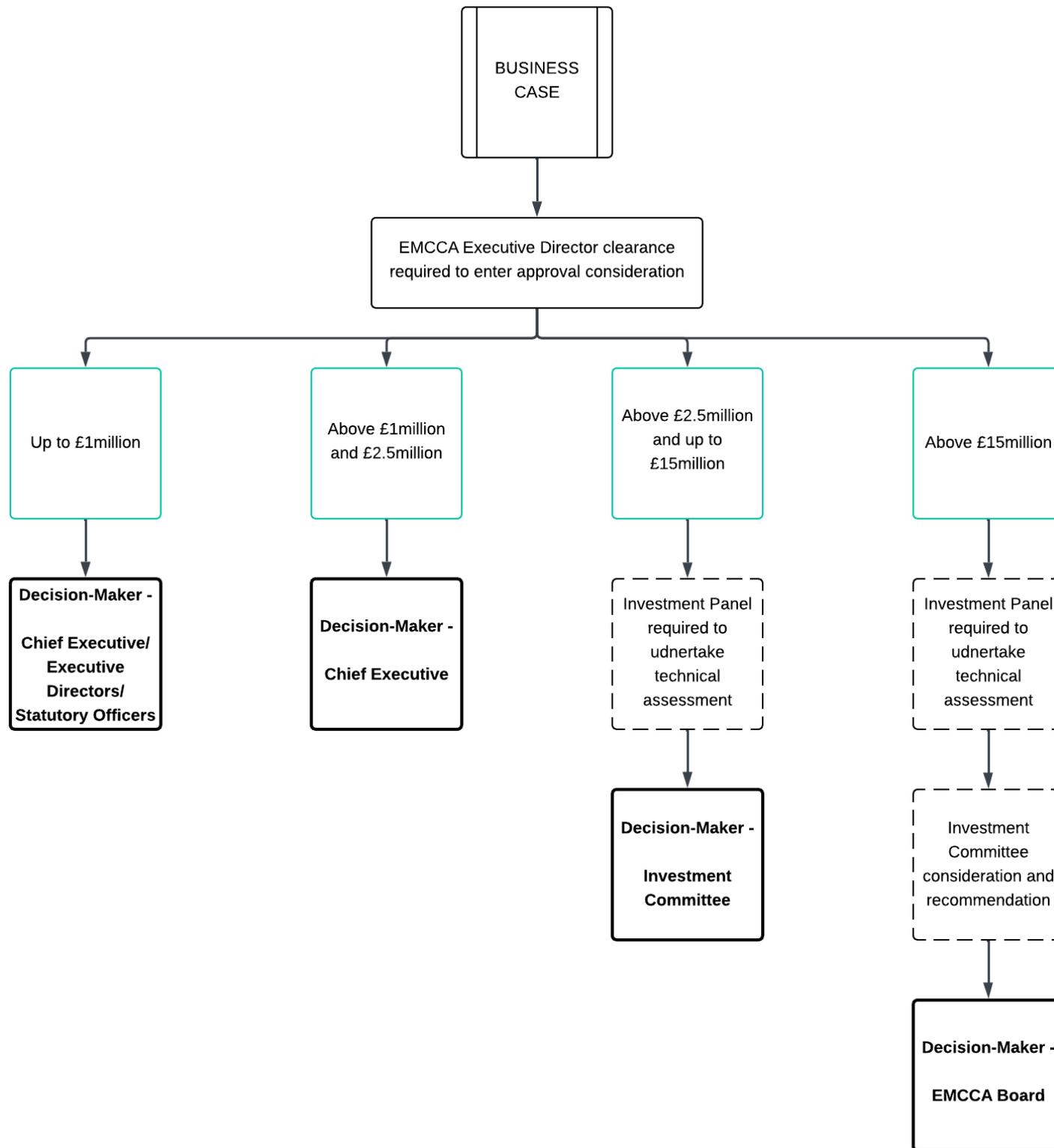
This approach is designed to enable:

- Decision-makers at all levels to base their decisions upon objective, evidence based out of Business Area findings and recommendations, in turn driving better decision-making.
- Increased EMCCA ownership and accountability.
- Increased Statutory Officer involvement and accountability.
- Increased levels of assurance and appraisal support and guidance
- Approvals based on proportionate financial delegation i.e. a request of £10,000 will not be scrutinised to the same level as a request for £5million.
- The time taken to reach an approval decision being reflective of the financial ask.

The required approval route is dependent on the level of financial approval that is required. In principle, the approach to business case approvals will be as follows:

Approval Value	Approver
Up to £1million	Chief Executive, Executive Directors or Statutory Officers
Above £1million and up to £2.5 million	Chief Executive (supported by Investment Panel is required)
Above £2.5 million and up to £15 million	Investment Committee (with Technical Assessment by Investment Panel)
Above £15 million	EMCCA Board with an Investment Committee recommendation

**Illustration J: SAF Phase 3 - Approvals**



**Approval up to £1million**

Approvals up to £1million fall within officer delegations and can be approved by the Chief Executive, the appropriate Executive Director, the Section 73 Officer or the Monitoring Officer.

**Approval above £1million and up to £2.5million**

Approvals above £1million and up to £2.5million fall within the delegation of the Chief Executive, who is encouraged to call upon the Investment Panel to provide technical support if required.

#### **Approval above £2.5million and up to £15million**

Approvals above £2.5 million fall within Member approval delegations. Approvals above £2.5million and up to £15million are considered and approved by the Investment Committee. The Investment Panel supports the Investment Committee by reviewing all business cases put forward for approval above £2.5million.

The Investment Panel will provide the Investment Committee with a summary on each business case proposal, noting observations to consider, including the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal, observations on the level of investment risk, key lines of enquiry to follow up on 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 etc.

THE Investment Committee will consider the technical assessment provided by the Investment Panel alongside key strategic fit and political considerations.

#### **Approval above £15million**

All business cases for approval above £15million fall within the decision-making responsibility of the Combined County Authority Board. The process follows that of business cases going to the Investment Committee, however unlike approvals below £15million the Investment Committee will make a recommendation for consideration rather than take a decision.

The Board will then consider the recommendation from its Investment Committee alongside the various documentation provided.

#### **Investment Panel**

These approval routes are supported by the Investment Panel which is a Technical Officer group for the Investment Committee, they provide technical test and challenge of business case proposals over £2.5million in value and make recommendations to the Investment Committee and Combined County Authority Board.

The Investment Panel can assist other decision-makers within delegations as and when required.

The Investment Panel review business case proposals by:

- reviewing a proposal from a basis of HMTs five case model in order to ensure that it has been developed to an appropriate standard
- highlighting key lines of enquiry to identify the key issues, key questions and key areas of concern within a business case proposal. This will determine what the key lines of enquiry should be for the Investment Committee to consider from a technical perspective
- provide observations and recommendations to the Investment Committee on business case approvals. The Investment Panel will draw conclusions on the level of risk that it believes applies to approving a proposal and make observations and recommendations on that level of risk and how it can be improved

Investment Panel members will be expected to not only push the key lines of enquiry relevant to producing a quality business case but also in ensuring that agreed priorities of EMCCA have been adequately addressed.

**Tolerances**

There are set tolerances that cut across all approval decision-making that involve an option of escalated progression to support the decision-maker if they have any concerns regarding a business case approval that has a significant reputational and/or political risk. In such circumstances approvals can be escalated to Board for final approval.

An additional tolerance exists to allow escalation of approval with regard to inclusive growth and social value. Therefore, if a business case had a low benefit cost ratio score and/or net present social value score then the decision could be escalated to Board for final approval to ensure wider intended benefits of projects can be supported.

**Increasing scale of assurance**

The process illustrates that the level of approval required is determined by the level of financial commitment, the following diagram provides an overview of the documentation that is needed depending on the approval route that needs to be taken:

**Illustration K – Scale of assurance (documentation)**

<p><b>Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept Paper</li> <li>• Business Case</li> <li>• Required Appendices</li> <li>• Level 1 Appraisal</li> <li>• Maturity Assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer Decision Notice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept Paper</li> <li>• Business Case</li> <li>• Required Appendices</li> <li>• Level 2 Appraisal</li> <li>• Maturity Assessment</li> <li>• <i>Investment Panel Advice</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer Decision Notice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept Paper</li> <li>• Business Case</li> <li>• Required Appendices</li> <li>• Level 2 Appraisal</li> <li>• Maturity Assessment</li> <li>• Risk &amp; Investment Appraisal</li> <li>• Investment Panel Technical Assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment Committee Report</li> </ul>	<p><b>Information:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept Paper</li> <li>• Business Case</li> <li>• Required Appendices</li> <li>• Level 2 Appraisal</li> <li>• Maturity Assessment</li> <li>• Risk &amp; Investment Appraisal</li> <li>• Investment Panel Technical Assessment</li> <li>• Investment Committee Recommendation</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment Committee Report</li> <li>• Board Report</li> </ul>
<p><b>&lt; £1 Million</b></p>	<p><b>£1 Million - £2.5 Million</b></p>	<p><b>£2.5 Million – £15 Million</b></p>	<p><b>&gt; £15 Million</b></p>

**7.6 Subsidy Control**

The Combined County Authority will ensure that all public funded programmes and projects are delivered in line with Subsidy Control law. This will include assessing all applications against the relevant requirements (which at this time are primarily set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as clarified in the Statutory Guidance) and where necessary making referrals to the Competition and Markets Authority prior to an award being made.

All grant funding agreements will contain appropriate legal conditions on Subsidy Control. Where a misuse of a subsidy is identified, the Combined County Authority may exercise its right under Section 77 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Subsidy Control will be considered as part of the decision-making process. The Combined County Authority will conduct appropriate legal due diligence should it determine that the characteristics of the proposal require additional scrutiny, including if a proposed measure is novel, contentious or repercussive.

Records of compliance will be kept. The transparency requirements set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 will be satisfied, in line with the relevant timescales.

## **7.7 Management of Contracts**

Following Approval, the Programme Assurance Team will send out a Funding Offer Letter, which includes the following:

- Project Name
- Applicant
- Maximum Funding contribution (£), with details regarding when payment is to be issued, what is eligible expenditure, commencement and completion dates.

This will be subject to review and sign off by the EMCCA Legal team prior to issue. The Funding Offer Letter will also set out the monitoring and evaluation requirements and process to be followed.

Contracts for Investment Funds are managed within the Programme Assurance Team.

The Combined County Authority has implemented a performance management process which is aimed at ensuring contract performance is achieved and that all contract deliverables and obligations are met, this is aligned to the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023. The process will ensure that the following key contract management elements are implemented:

- Contract owners who understand all contract requirements, deliverables and provider obligations.
- Contract owners have a detailed understanding of the Combined County Authority's responsibilities within external funding agreements linked to supplier agreements.
- Regular contract performance meetings are held with providers to review contract delivery in order to maintain ongoing quality and performance of the contract.
- Performance reporting updates are submitted on a regular basis by providers, highlighting performance against key performance indicators and service levels (as appropriate).
- Ongoing contract management to include scheme risk and issues management.
- Ensure ongoing delivery of value for money through effective change management control in accordance with the contract terms and conditions.
- Problem resolution and implementation of improvement plans where necessary to support increased performance

## **7.8 Funding Agreements**

The Combined County Authority will enter into a funding agreement with external promoters following a decision point or change request approval. Any funding conditions will be specified in the funding agreement and can include but are not limited to:

- A funding cap.
- The promoter's Chief Internal Auditor to provide assurance and to certify all expenditure on an annual basis. Where the promoter is a private entity, a monitoring officer is employed to ensure that all expenditure is eligible.

- Reference to any security arrangements that have been negotiated and set out in separate legal documentation.
- Claw-back provision in place to ensure funding is only to be spent on the specified scheme.
- Claw-back provision in place for any land acquired for the scheme in the event that the scheme not carried through.
- Any cost savings achieved on the completed scheme are returned.
- Where schemes could trigger a return on investment, they may be subject to overage, and the relevant project specific clauses are negotiated with the promoter and included where relevant.
- The Combined County Authority will determine when to release funding.
- The Combined County Authority may arrange for local audit of schemes to detect any misuse of funds.
- All organisations that receive funding through the Combined County Authority are contractually required to acknowledge this, and that of Government, in all communications, branding and marketing activity. This includes the use of logos on relevant communication materials and inclusion of specified wording in press releases and development of stories and case studies that showcase the impact of the schemes.
- The Combined County Authority will look to recover funding where there has been non-compliance, misrepresentation or under-performance.

## 7.9 Pipeline Management

The EMCCA pipeline has regular document points which require completion of and approval of a key document, these not only assist with the application of the SAF but also with overall pipeline management.

The SAF is supported by a single register for Programmes/ Projects with enabling systems for upload and to generate reporting on progress, performance, monitoring & evaluation and outcomes delivery.

The Single Project Register is the master list of all projects that EMCCA are committed to deliver. It serves as a centralised hub for all project information to aid in successful delivery, including dependencies, timeframes, budgets and change control. It will be the one **'golden source'** list of all projects and programmes and will enhance EMCCAs organisational agility, efficiency and effectiveness providing clarity, and alignment to enable coordination of managing change initiatives.

The EMCCA pipeline will be published to provide public visibility and in order to create momentum for the private sector to gear up and support delivery.

## 8. Post Approval

### 8.1 Release of Funding

The Combined County Authority Section 73 Officer inputs into all funding decisions and must be satisfied prior to funding being released in line with appropriate conditions.

Funding claims submitted to the Combined County Authority are checked against the approved project baseline information, which is included within the original funding agreement/contract including financial profiles, outputs and outcomes. Subject to a satisfactory review, payments will be released quarterly in arrears unless otherwise agreed.

A mechanism for 'claw-back' provision is to be included within funding agreements/contract to ensure funding is spent only on the specified scheme and linked to the delivery of outputs and outcomes.

Sample testing of invoices against expenditure and sample testing to verify outputs forms part of the monitoring process. This is part of the programme assurance role of the Combined County Authority.

### 8.2 Performance Reporting

The Combined County Authority Performance Management Framework works in close alignment with the Single Assurance Framework to ensure there is a consistent, streamlined and joined-up approach to performance. The framework sets out our performance management approach, governance and processes.

The English Devolution Accountability Framework (EDAF) provides guidance on how Mayoral Combined Authorities (and Mayoral Combined County Authorities) should be accountable to local scrutiny, the public and UK Government. Our Performance Management Framework supports us to comply with the standards in the EDAF, and how the Combined County Authority is committed to delivering good governance and strong measures of accountability.

The performance management framework includes how we are accountable to:

- Local Scrutiny – through the Corporate Plan and corporate performance reporting, committee reporting, directorate business plan reporting and project reporting.
- The Public – through Committee Meetings, Mayoral Question Time, Social and Digital Media, Performance Dashboard, Engagement with Partners and State of the Region Review.
- UK Government – through reporting to various Government departments including the Ministry Housing, Communities & Local Government, Department for Education and Department for Transport.

The Combined County Authority is committed to implementing an organisation wide performance management culture and embedding a culture of continuous improvement.

### 8.3 Risk Management

The Combined County Authority Risk Management Framework supports the Single Assurance Framework, to ensure there is a consistent, streamlined and joined-up approach to managing risk.

The Risk Management Framework has been based upon the principles of the HMT Orange Book (2020); these are governance, integration, collaboration, processes, and continual improvement. The objective of the framework has been to adapt these principles to the Combined County Authority's ways of working, ensuring compliance with our Single Assurance Framework.

The Orange Book states that, in successful organisations, risk management enhance strategic planning and prioritisation, assists in achieving objectives and strengthens the ability to be agile to respond to the challenges faced. Risk management, is therefore an essential and integral part of the Combined County Authority's planning and decision-making, enabling us to successfully meet our objectives.

The Risk Management Framework includes:

- EMCCA risk culture
- Our Corporate Risk Appetite
- Definitions
- Escalation procedure
- Roles and Responsibilities
- The various levels of risk management at a Corporate, Service/Programme and Project level.
- Our processes and tools within our risk procedure document.

The Risk Management Framework will sit within this broader Single Assurance Framework (SAF). The SAF will set out the processes, approach and criteria that demonstrate to government, the public and other key stakeholders the robust assurance, appraisal and value for money considerations that are used to develop and deliver projects and programmes to a high standard, maximising the opportunity to realise benefits whilst ensuring effective stewardship of public funds.

The Risk Management Framework will be a key tool in successfully delivering the SAF. It will ensure that appropriate pipeline and project oversight is provided by both officers and politicians and provide risk data on project development and delivery to drive performance review considerations.

EMCCA is committed to implementing an organisation wide risk management culture that demonstrates high levels of risk maturity and best practice in the identification, evaluation and effective management of risk in respect of current activities and new opportunities.

The Chief Executive working closely with the statutory officers, is accountable for ensuring that Corporate Risk Management is being completed to the appropriate standard in line with the Risk Management Framework. This includes ensuring risks are captured and updated and that mitigating actions have been completed. The Senior Leadership Team will review the risk on the register quarterly. Directors and Heads of Service are accountable for the service level risk registers within their remit, and project managers for project level risks.

The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for overseeing the Combined County Authority's Risk Management Framework and Procedures and the Corporate Risk Register, to ensure that risk management is being undertaken to the appropriate standard and in line with the Risk Management Framework.

## **8.4 Change Requests and Funding Clawback**

Change Control is the process through which all requests to change the approved baseline of a project or programme are captured, evaluated, and then approved, rejected or deferred. A change request form is required when the tolerances that were set out in the approved Business Case are or will be breached. This included changes to Time, Cost and Scope.

All early warnings and project change requests must be clearly documented, with evidence of approvals and notifications saved where applicable and recorded.

Approval routes should always be led by the delegation amount and proportionate, this means change requests do not need to be approved by the 'original approver'. For example, a project requests a minor time extension, and no additional funds are required. The original business case may have been approved by Board but there is no need for Board to be sighted on a 'minor' change as this could delay project progress and cause further time delay while they wait for the next bi-monthly Board meeting.

Where an increase in funding is required, this will need to go to the Board or Investment Committee for approval, in line with agreed delegations.

Early warning notifications should be reported to the Investment Panel at the earliest opportunity, who will escalate as appropriate.

Change tolerances above those detailed within the approved business case and/or above the tolerance levels set out in the Change Management procedure must be considered for approval by the Investment Committee.

Funding clawback and recovery processes for underperforming projects are to be clearly addressed in the funding agreement/contract.

## **8.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Combined Authority Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has been developed in accordance with HMT'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 principles:

- Reporting requirements are locally defined and reported to the Senior 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 strategic planning process and Annual Report
- Baseline information is consistent across key initiatives.
- Monitoring and evaluation is a core part of all activities.
- Lessons learned are used to inform future policy, projects and programmes, especially in the strategic planning process.

Schemes that benefit from funding from the Combined County Authority are required to have a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan as part of business case development. The aim is to embed evaluation at scheme design stage to ensure clarity from the outset about how we expect interventions to work to achieve their objectives, and how we intended to measure outcomes and impacts that stem from delivered schemes.

The monitoring plan will guide the collection of data from individual projects and will be designed to ensure that it meets the requirements of both the Combined County Authority and 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 County Authority activity.

The monitoring plans will be proportionate and in line with the latest government department guidance where relevant. For example, all transport schemes (over £5m) will follow Monitoring and Evaluation Guidance for Local Authority Major Schemes. The draft plans are created by the project manager and then consulted upon with the Programme Assurance Team and evaluation team, to ensure consistency, quality of plans and value for money for any planned external consultancy to support evaluation as applicable. Plans are then signed off as per the governing arrangements for that specific project.

When EMCCA is awarded funding from Government, they will meet the required obligations regarding monitoring and evaluation on the acceptance of grant funding.

The Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts from the Monitoring and Evaluation plans will be used to assess the effectiveness of the public investment, and the extent to which schemes are contributing to the overall objectives of the Combined County Authority.

The Combined County Authority is committed to effective monitoring and evaluation so that it is able to:

- Provide local accountability to the public by demonstrating the impact of locally devolved funding and the associated benefits being achieved.
- Provide accountability to Government and comply with external scrutiny requirements i.e. to satisfy the conditions of the Devolution Deal. Specifically, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be used to demonstrate local progress and delivery to senior government officials and Ministers who are ultimately accountable for devolved funds
- Understand the effectiveness of policies or investment and to justify reinvestment or modify or seek alternative policy. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework provides a feedback loop for the Combined County Authority and relevant stakeholders.
- Develop an evidence base for input into future business cases and for developing future funding submissions. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will define the principles of collection, collation and analysing data which can be utilised for future work and especially in relation to economic impact of particular interventions creating ‘benchmarks’

Lessons learnt from evaluation will be reported to the Combined County Authority Board and across the governance framework as required.

The Combined County Authority Monitoring and Evaluation Framework supports the Single Assurance Framework, to ensure there is a consistent, streamlined and joined-up approach to monitoring and evaluation requirements. The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework sits separately from the SAF.

## **8.6 Enforcement**

The delivery of projects will be managed by KPIs and contract clause obligations enforceable within the terms of the contract or grant agreement, which is why it’s essential to only operate via written agreements for the delivery of projects.

## **8.7 Closure**

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

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

As part of the funding agreement, EMCCA 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.

## 9. Communications

### 9.1 Partnership and Engagement

Stakeholders are engaged in all the work that the Combined County Authority undertakes. Regular updates are provided to Board, our committees and the informal governance mechanisms that have been put in place with our constituents, non-constituents, partners and stakeholders. This reflects our position as the first Combined County Authority with a specific emphasis on partnership working and engagement.

A suite of communications guidance for funding streams has been developed, owned by the Communications and Engagement Team. Communications objectives are to:

- Keep the public and stakeholders informed about the progress and milestones of devolution.
- Encourage the public and stakeholders to get involved in engagement or consultation activities.
- Build support for East Midlands devolution by sharing the vision, ambitions and the benefits it will have for local people.
- Ensure the East Midlands position is presented fairly and accurately in any related media coverage.

All communications activity complies with the code of recommended practice issued under the Local Government Act 1986. The code requires that any publicity describing the Combined County Authority's activities and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both. Any comment should be objective, balanced, informative and accurate. All publicity and comments are free from political bias.

### 9.2 Question Time

EMCCA recognises the importance of accountability and transparency, ensuring that local leaders are held responsible for their decisions and performance. To demonstrate this the Mayor and Portfolio Holders will be held to account.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee leads in holding the Mayor to account and the Board to account for its decision-making. Specifically in reference to the Mayor it holds at least two sessions per annum focused on Mayoral Question Time in which it seeks to hold the Mayor to account for the delivery of their priorities, as well as hold the Mayor to account as Chair of the Board for the delivery of the Boards priorities.

Additionally, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeks to invite Portfolio Holders to Committee meetings to answer questions about their portfolio.

One specific requirement of the government's Scrutiny Protocol is that the Mayors of Combined Authorities make themselves available to take questions from the public. The Communications Team will seek to satisfy this requirement through organised question time events that are moderated by an independent source.

### 9.3 Communication Tools

Primary communications tools are:

- Website: All information about EMCCA, including background information, timelines, news and events, will be published on the website.
- Social media: All news, updates and events will be shared via social media.
- A suite of funding publicity guidance for beneficiaries/ delivery partners will also be available on the website.
- E-newsletter

## **9.4 Working with the Media**

EMCCA will actively engage with the media to amplify messages to the broadest possible audiences.

## **9.5 Accessibility**

All communications relating to the Combined County Authority are accessible and transparent. Stakeholders and the public will be kept updated with progress, delivery and decision making. It also supports effective and meaningful engagement activity to encourage participation in the relevant activities and enable local partners and the public the opportunity to inform key decisions and future strategy development.

The communications approach considers the requirements of the following:

- Project applicants
- Governance requirements
- Wider partnership requirements; and
- Communities' requirements.

## 10. Single Assurance Framework Annexes

The following Annexes are set out in this Single Assurance Framework:

**Annex A**      **External Funding Application Process (Parts A to C)**

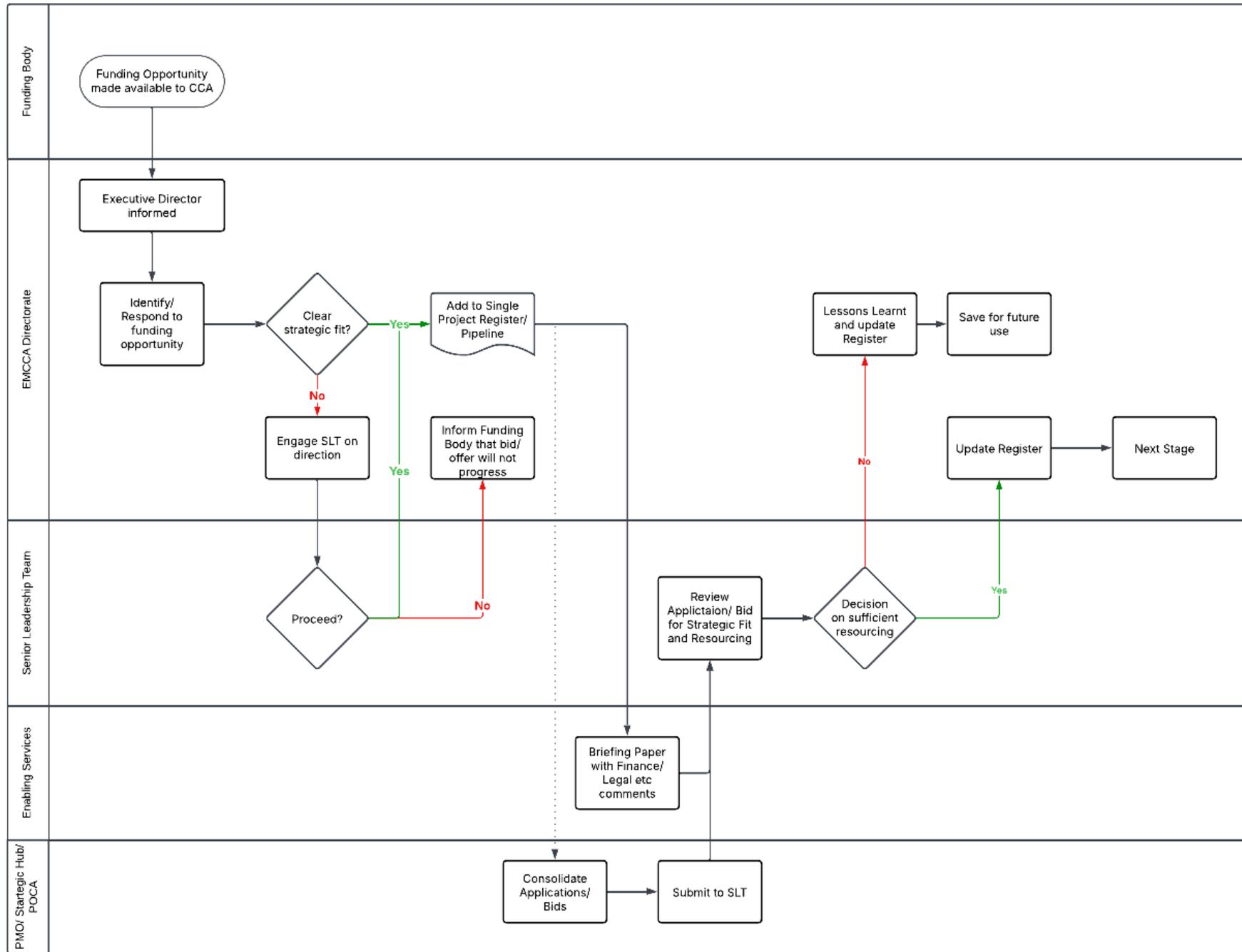
**Annex B**      **Transport Programmes and Projects (including CRSTS)**

**Annex C**      **Adult Skills Fund**

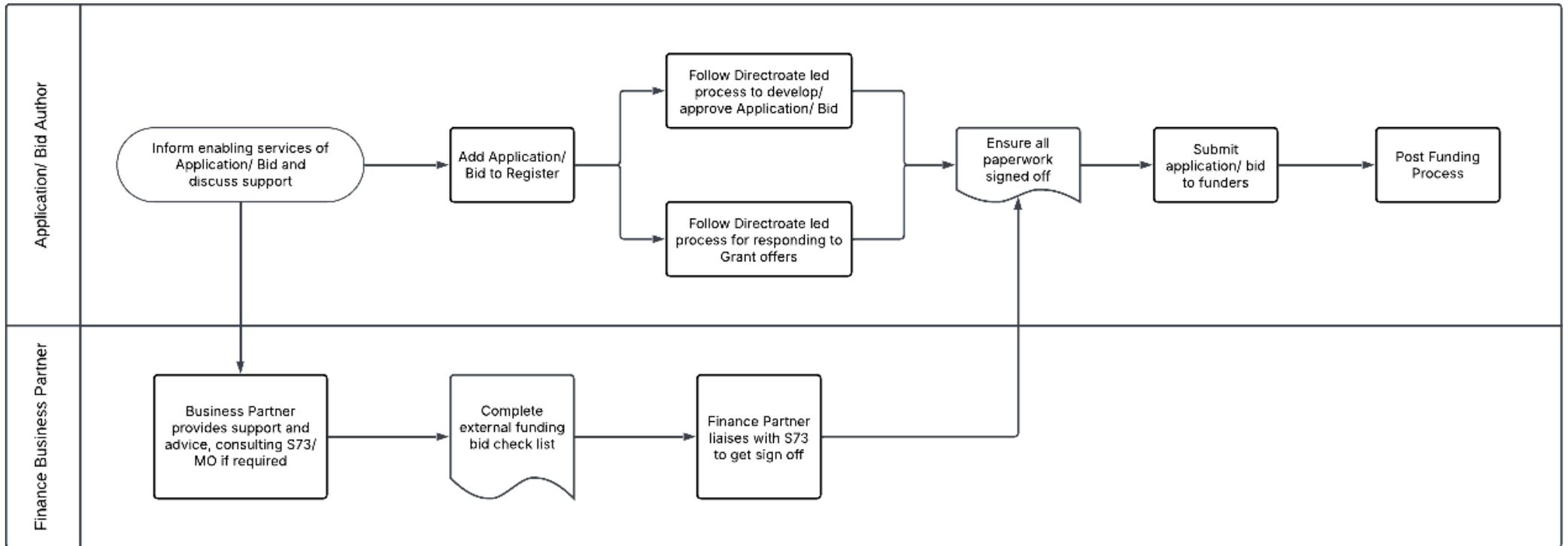
**Annex D**      **Strategic Place Partnership**

**Annex E**      **Scrutiny Protocol Action Plan**

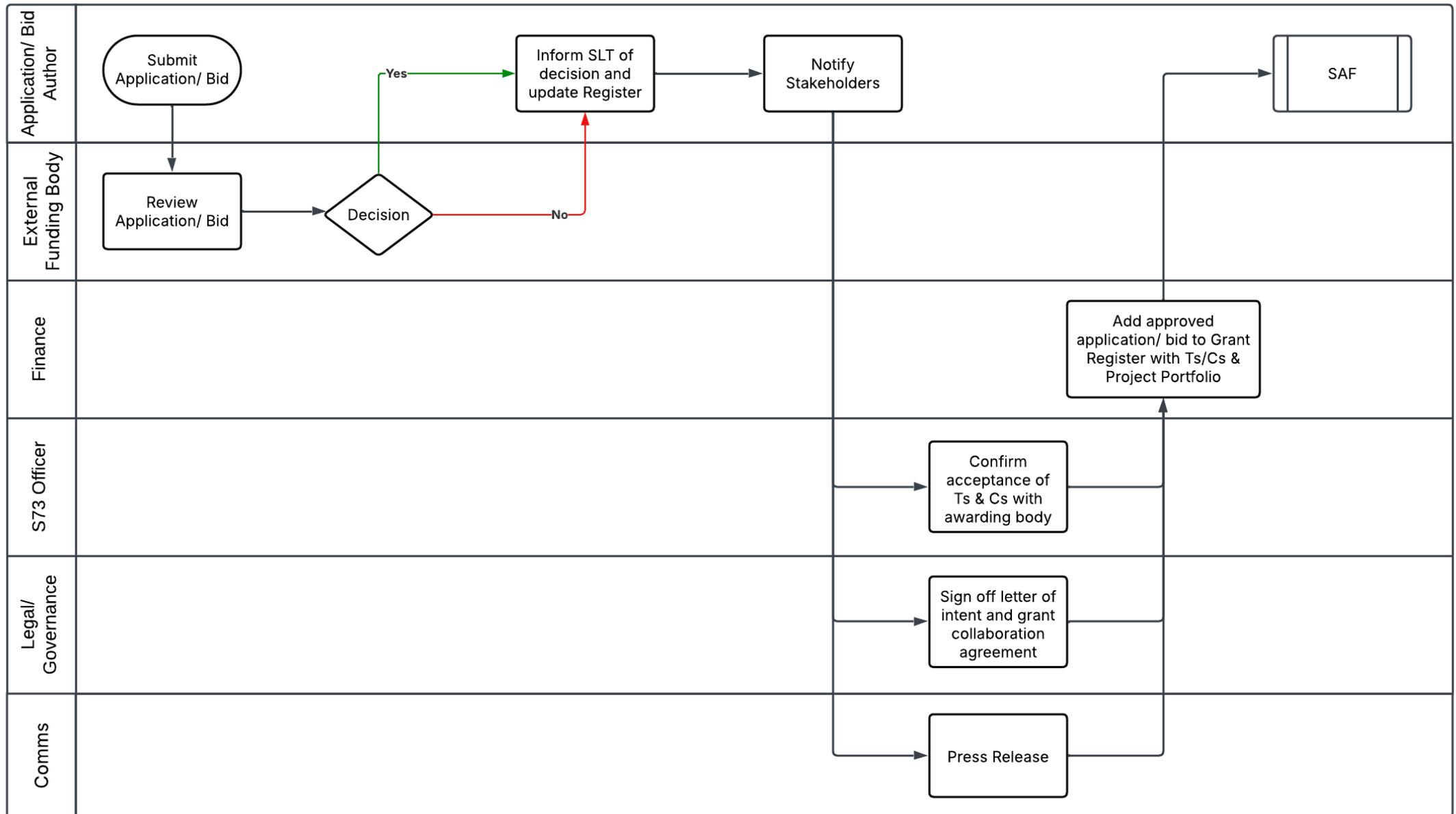
# Annex A External Funding Application Process - Part A



# Annex A External Funding Application Process - Part B



# Annex A External Funding Application Process - Part C



## Annex B Transport Programmes and Projects (including CRSTS)

For the purposes of the Single Assurance Framework (SAF) a transport scheme is defined as any scheme that significantly changes the transport network infrastructure or its operation, whatever the objective of the scheme. All transport schemes will be delivered in line with the requirements of the English Devolution Accountability Framework and any additional fund specific requirements set out by Government as necessary.

The SAF ensures a flexible and proportionate approach, enabling transport business cases to retain the benefits of local assurance in terms of speed of decision making.

For transport infrastructure schemes, the Combined County Authority will ensure that modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration, and that modelling, and appraisal meets the guidance set out in TAG.

To ensure that the scope of the business case meets the requirements of relevant funding streams, those involving Transport will ensure that project business cases will be developed in accordance with DfT requirements and that those projects are managed in delivery to the same standards.

### **City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)**

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding has been allocated by government to eligible Mayoral Combined Authorities alongside funding for Highways Maintenance, CRSTS is included within the East Midlands devolution deal.

Delivery of CRSTS will align with subsequent business case submissions to government and will include an agreed delivery programme and list of identified schemes for investment through the CRSTS. The business case will also confirm the governance and assurance requirements, proportionate to the scale of the investment.

CRSTS investment activity will be appraised, delivered, monitored, and evaluated in line with the principles set out within the SAF with additional information included to ensure the conditions of the funding are met in full. Ongoing quarterly monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by DfT, EMCCA will also adhere to the government's CRSTS change control process. For any CRSTS scheme retained by DfT EMCCA will adhere to departmental assurance requirements.

### **Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport Block Funding**

Currently the Highways Maintenance Block and Integrated Transport Block allocations for East Midlands are awarded by DfT in addition to the region's CRSTS allocation. The allocation amounts are determined using DfT formulae which are based on data specific to each local authority area. The allocations are used for small-scale, high-volume activities, e.g. highway and footway resurfacing, local crossing installations and traffic signal improvements, which do not align with standard business case processes.

These allocations will be 'passported' to the Constituent Authorities to determine usage based on local criteria. The monitoring of spend and delivery will be in accordance with DfT grant settlement conditions and recipients will also be asked to provide periodic reporting to the Transport Team within EMCCA. If these programmes are subsumed into CRSTS in the future, then they will be subject to the monitoring and evaluation conditions of the CRSTS programme.

### **Transport Investment Programme**

The Transport Investment Programme forms a pipeline of transport investment proposals that builds on the existing Constituent Local Transport Plans, prior to the completion of Transport Transition from the Constituent Councils to EMCCA IN March 2026. On adoption of the region's first Local Transport Plan the Investment Programme will provide the delivery of the Plan's objectives. In order to be considered for investment through

devolved funds, and for transport funding opportunities provided for by non-devolved funds, projects must be included with the Transport Investment Programme.

The Transport Investment Programme forms part of the project initiation process for transport schemes. The additional criteria upon which transport proposals will be assessed are:

- A qualitative assessment of how the project achieves regional and/or programme objectives
- Value for money, measured either through an economic appraisal that provides a benefit cost ratio (BCR), or a qualitative statement of value for money when an economic appraisal has yet to be conducted
- Deliverability to timescales/funding window
- Risk profile

The prioritisation of transport projects and schemes adopts a model similar to the Department for Transport Early Assessment Sifting Tool (EAST), with clear priorities, driven by the East Midlands economic, inclusive growth, decarbonisation and health objectives.

The process also involves a rigorous review and challenge at business case development of any planning powers and/or consents that may be required for the project to progress, construction issues involved, the certainty of third-party funding and consultation evidence on the public acceptability of the proposal.

A mechanism will be used, whereby options are appraised. This will facilitate onwards ranking and prioritisation of options with unfeasible options removed.

The prioritisation process identifies preferred local transport investments for funding opportunities and is central to local decision making. The process is designed to be robust, evidence based, and transparent in line with best practice.

This process ensures all transport investment will deliver the strategic objectives of EMCCA. Statutory requirements, conditions of funding and other local transport objectives also form a key component of investment decisions, with the particular objectives and priorities of each funding stream made available by Government taken into account.

### **Appraisal**

The appraisal process for the SAF is consistent with HM Treasury's Green Book and Business Case Appraisal process. For transport schemes this includes supplementary and departmental guidance, such as the Department for Transport's (DfT) TAG appraisal guidance.

EMCCA will ensure Value for Money (VfM) and transparency of transport schemes through its business case assessments, that assessment requirement will be proportionate to the scale of investment.

The transport team within EMCCA will be responsible for ensuring that modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration, and that it meets the guidance set out in TAG. In addition to TAG, other robust or evidence-based assessments or methodologies may be employed to assess the overall business case of a scheme.

The assessment requirement will be proportionate to the scale of the investment as set out in the table below:

Scale of Scheme	Business Case Assessment (in alignment with DfT guidance)
< £500,000	Business Justification Case

£500k - £2.5m	Single Case (FBC)
£2.5m - £5m	Outline Business Case (OBC) and then Full Business Case (FBC)
> £5m	Outline Business Case (OBC) and then Full Business Case (FBC) + Risk & Investment Appraisal

Decisions will be taken appropriate to the phase of a scheme and greater scrutiny and emphasis on VfM will be undertaken as schemes progress through the process, with greater scrutiny of final stage VfM.

WebTAG will be used for all schemes but for schemes with low value (below £5m) a proportionate approach will be taken.

There is a general expectation that all schemes must endeavour to achieve “high” VfM, where benefits are at least double costs as set out within DfT’s guidance, at all stages of the approval process, however exceptions may be considered where there is strategic justification.

VfM for transport schemes will be independently scrutinised on behalf of EMCCA as part of the appraisal process. This will be undertaken either by expertise in house with responsibility sitting outside of the business area developing or promoting the business case or via a commission to a specialist transport consultant, fully independent from the scheme promoter and with no involvement in the development of the scheme being appraised.

The modelling and appraisal of schemes contained in business cases will be developed in accordance with the guidance published in TAG at the time the business case is submitted for approval. Central case assessments will be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT’s planning dataset).

Alternative planning assumptions may be considered as sensitivity tests, the results from this may be considered as part of the decision-making process to approve a scheme. Appraisal and modelling will be scrutinised to ensure it has been developed in accordance with TAG principles. This will be undertaken through the independent appraisal process and overseen by EMCCAs transport function.

### **Cycling and Walking Schemes**

All cycling and walking schemes must meet the latest standards set out in Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 1/20). To ensure consistency in the quality and safety of schemes, Active Travel England (ATE) will provide support to ensure cycling and walking schemes are designed and delivered to high standards, including compliance with LTN 1/20. EMCCA will work with ATE and all its constituent authorities to ensure the design quality of all active travel schemes funded is in line with relevant design guidance, with design reviews undertaken prior to any scheme approval.

### **Delivery**

EMCCAs transport function, as the accountable business area will carry out the programme management of agreed transport schemes, to ensure their delivery by scheme promoters. The identification of schemes, development of scheme proposals and completion of business cases is the responsibility of scheme promoters, supported by the Transport team and subject matter experts within EMCCA.

This arrangement where EMCCA is not the promoter will be underpinned by the establishment of formal grant funding agreements, signed off by the Monitoring Officer, that protect the financial interests of EMCCA and enables EMCCA to fulfil its responsibility to deliver VfM whilst setting out respective responsibilities including reporting and audit requirements.

Business cases will be published on the EMCCA website in line with DfT guidance and published where it is appropriate to do so as part of submission for the decision to approve funding.

## Annex C Adult Skills Fund

All investment decisions made in relation to this funding are undertaken having considered:

- Statutory duties relating to adult education and training which have been transferred to the Combined County Authority under Statutory Instruments.
- Statutory entitlements to education and training of adults living in devolved areas, and policy entitlements where relevant.
- Statutory and non-statutory guidance.

The Strategic Skills Plan sets out the strategic vision and priorities for all skills funding and programmes. There is an implementation plan that provides clear direction of how devolved funds should be commissioned. The Strategic Skills Plan supports the Corporate and Investment Plans as well as key priorities in the region's Local Skills and Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

### **Annual Assurance Report**

The Combined County Authority will produce an Annual Assurance Report on the delivery of its Adult Skills Fund functions in line with wider monitoring and evaluation requirements and the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This is reported to the Department for Education (DfE) by 31 January each year.

The Combined County Authority will also submit its Annual Assurance Statement to the DfE in July each year following consideration by the Skills & Employment Committee.

### **Funding Requirements**

The County Combined Authority publishes its Funding & Performance Management Rules specific for each academic year. This document sets out the conditions of ASF funding and apply to all providers who receive ASF funding from the Combined County Authority.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

EMCCA regularly consults with its key stakeholders, including learning organisations and learners, in order to best inform policy direction and decision making.

### **Local Skills Implementation Plan (LSIP)**

Alongside the Strategic Skills Plan, LSIPs will also set out the current and future skills needs of the region and how local provision can help people develop the skills they need to get good jobs and increase their prospects. We will work with the designated Employer Representative Bodies (ERB's) in the EMCCA area, utilising and sharing local labour market intelligence and analysis to inform the commissioning approach for ASF. EMCCA will also ensure that the ASF responds to the employer feedback contained within the LSIPs for our region.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Adult Skills Fund Budget reporting will operate in line with the English Devolution Accountability Framework, it will be included within EMCCA monitoring and evaluation submissions as required under the devolution agreement. The Combined County Authority has submitted our policies for adult education, these were required as part of the readiness conditions and have been published as part of the commissioning process. Evaluation on residents' outcomes and impact will be undertaken in the 2nd year of ASF devolution, and regular ongoing evaluations will be undertaken to develop and measure the positive impact and best practice for future development of the ASF.

The Combined County Authority's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be used for the Adult Skills Fund Budget activity including the use of logic models. It will meet the national requirements together with locally

determined requirements so that it can be used to inform and shape the criteria for future funding awards. This formal evaluation is undertaken on an annual basis.

**Assurance**

The Combined County Authority is responsible for assuring the use of funds by all learning organisations delivering the Adult Skills Fund Budget. Wider assurance includes internal controls such as performance management and monitoring, risk management and quality assurance reviews.

For the purposes of the Single Assurance Framework (SAF) a Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) scheme is defined as any scheme that is approved by the Strategic Place Partnership Board for inclusion in the Strategic Place Partnership Delivery Plan. All such schemes will be delivered in line with the requirements of the English Devolution Accountability Framework and any additional fund specific requirements set out by Government as necessary.

### **Strategic Fit**

The SPP Partnership Board will agree the schemes for inclusion within the Delivery Plan. The Partnership Board will consider the wider strategic objectives of the Combined County Authority when considering schemes for inclusion within the Delivery Plan.

Any scheme for business case development that is approved by the SPP Partnership Board for inclusion in the Delivery Plan will require the completion of a Concept Paper that requires justification of the strategic fit. EMCCA and Homes England will work together to align Concept Paper content to maximise information available to the Partnership Board and other governance forums.

### **Pipeline Entry**

All schemes approved by the SPP Partnership Board will automatically be included within the EMCCA Pipeline as schemes for business case development, as a result they will not be required to undertake phase 1 of the Single Assurance Framework. This recognises the significant due diligence undertaken to inform SPP Partnership Board delivery plan considerations and approval.

To ensure that the scope of the business case meets the requirements of the Strategic Place Partnership, a single case model will be utilised that ensures scheme business cases will be developed in accordance with Homes England requirements and that those schemes are managed in delivery to the same standards.

EMCCA and Homes England will seek to maximise opportunities for data sharing to inform business case development. All investment decisions made in relation to Strategic Place Partnership are undertaken having considered:

- EMCCA Strategic Framework
- Homes England Strategic Plan
- SPP Delivery Plan criteria (approved by the Combined County Authority)

### **Development**

The Combined County Authority is responsible for assuring the use of funds by all partners and developers delivering schemes within the Strategic Place Partnership. Wider assurance includes internal controls such as performance management and monitoring, risk management and quality assurance reviews. All schemes will undergo appraisal from Homes England as part of the standard due diligence in developing that business case and assessing risk and conditions.

EMCCA and Homes England will work together to programme scheme business case decision points and approvals so that key considerations within each governance arrangements takes place in support of each other, this relates to consideration points as required detailed within EMCCA and Homes England governance pathways.

### **Approval**

Schemes shall be approved by EMCCA in alignment with the delegations for business case approvals set out in this Single Assurance Framework.

## Annex E Scrutiny Protocol Action Plan

Devolution relies on local leaders and institutions that are transparent and accountable, seek the best value for taxpayer's money and maintain strong ethical standards. The EDAF sets out how the institutions with devolved powers are accountable to local people and the UK government, and how their decisions will be scrutinised and made transparent for local politicians, business leaders and local communities of their area.

The government has also produced a Scrutiny Protocol as a key part of making sure that institutions' overview and scrutiny arrangements are of the highest possible standards for holding them to account for delivery as well as for playing a critical role in policy and strategic development. This sets out a series of principles to guide the work of institutions and their scrutiny functions.

The SAF has been developed in response to the English Devolution Accountability Framework.

EMCCA is committed to achieving future devolution for the region that will benefit its residents and regional business. The Combined County Authority recognises that in providing areas with more power and funding flexibility it becomes even more essential to strengthen governance, assurance and accountability arrangements to ensure that they are used appropriately to support regional and national priorities.

Given this, the Combined County Authority is committed to adhering to the Scrutiny Protocol and additional governance, assurance and accountability requirements set out by Government.

To evidence this our adherence to the Scrutiny Protocol to date and the actions identified for further delivery in 2025/26 are set out in the table below to demonstrate EMCCAs commitment to be an integrated settlement ready organisation.

Principle	Delivered	2025/26 Actions for delivery
1: Pool of Members	8 Constituent Members 4 Non-Constituent Members Pool of substitutes for both Constituents and Non-Constituents	Membership review to create greater substitute pool that can be utilised for task & finish groups
2: politically balanced membership	Membership reflects political balance of EMCCA region	Political balance calculation will be made following May 2025 County elections
3: Geographically balanced membership	All 4 constituent councils nominate 2 members each for appointment by the Board. Non-constituents in line with requirements of our Order nominate 2 representatives per county area.	Plans will be discussed of impact of Local Government Reform on membership.
4: appointment of Chair	Chair is appointed by the Committee and must be an 'appropriate person' i.e. not of the same political party as the Mayor	IRP will be asked to provide view on Independent or Appropriate person. O&S Committee will also be asked view in questionnaire.
5: sustained appointments made on interest and skills	Guidance provided to Constituents and Non-Constituents on skillset requirements to benefit appointment to O&S Committee	Local Authorities are asked to nominate the same members for at least two years, as far as possible

6: well-resourced training	Members are provided with a full induction programme, regular information briefings and access to specific scrutiny training from a number of partner organisations.	A training and development plan will be developed and delivered as EMCCA enters its second year of operation.
7: inviting technical expertise	Mayor and expert EMCCA Officers are invited to meetings alongside reports to the Committee.	Portfolio Leads will be invited to meetings in addition to Mayor, as well as external identified subject matter experts and stakeholders
8: remuneration and status	EMCCA remunerates its Regulatory Committee members.	Independent Remuneration Panel will review level of allowances
9: holding the mayor and the institution to account	Mayor attends as required and faces annual Mayoral Question Time	Extend number of Mayoral Question Time sessions and extend accountability to Portfolio Holders
10: participation in pre-policy and pre-decision scrutiny	Our scrutiny model ensures immediate pre-scrutiny can take place of Board decision-making.	Develop minimum 6-month Forward Plan to assist greater pre-scrutiny.  Create standing Senior Leadership Team item to consider pre-scrutiny referrals
11: provision to call in	The provision to call-in decisions of the Board, Mayor or Officers remains within our scrutiny model	Review and improvement/ refinement of process to be introduced
12: regular performance monitoring	This has been EMCCAs first year of operation, in establishing our scrutiny arrangements the Committee has reviewed key thematic performance.	Performance monitoring against the Corporate Plan will be introduced and the Committee will be involved in developing the EMCCA outcomes framework .
13: robust work planning	Annual work plan established at the start of the municipal year and reviewed at each meeting	Committee will be invited to improve on current process.
14: focused task and finish exercises	As this has been EMCCAs first year of operation the focus has been one establishing the governance arrangements.	Intention is for task and finish groups as required.
15: strong relationships with stakeholders	This has been identified as an area requiring development in year 2 of operation.	Plans to develop a tiered scrutiny system with Constituent and Non-Constituent partners.  Greater engagement with partners and stakeholders in work programme activity.
16: regular self-evaluation and reflection	The Committee will self-evaluate and submit an annual report to Board.  Additional self-evaluation will be undertaken in the annual review of governance.	
17: access to data, research and analysis	Members have complete access to all data, research and analysis that they require to undertake their function.	

18: strong relationship with audit committees		<p>We will seek to ensure that Work Programmes for both committees are aligned to ensure sharing of key issues within their respective terms of reference.</p> <p>We will also seek to progress joint training &amp; joint briefings for the Chairs.</p>
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# The Investment Panel

## Technical Officer Group

### Terms of Reference

The Investment Panel is the Technical Officer Group for the Investment Committee.

Technical Officer Groups have key roles, for the Investment Panel they are as follows:

- 1) Support the development and delivery of the Investment Committee Work Programme
- 2) Drive Communication between partners, particularly through the Devolution Leadership Group
- 3) Gather intelligence and undertake research
- 4) Act as the Lead Officer Forum on Investment
- 5) Drive the development and delivery of strategic investment responsibilities

The Investment Panel will support the Investment Committee and the Combined County Authority (Board) in making investment decisions and making recommendations on investment decisions as appropriate, relating to applications made in accordance with the Investment Programme (that underpin devolution agreements and any other investment proposals and other funds that EMCCA receive).

The Investment Panel, as a Technical Officer Group, is part of the informal governance arrangements set up to support the EMCAA governance framework. It is not therefore a public meeting, only membership and attendees invited through EMCCA are able to attend Investment Panel meetings.

### Membership

The membership of the Investment Panel will consist of the following EMCCA officers:

- Section 73 Officer (Chair) [link to 151/ Finance Group]
- Executive Director Strategy & Investment [link to Business Advisory Board]
- Head of Investment Strategy & Programmes [link to Partner Investment Leads]
- Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer [link to Governance Group]
- Head of Procurement [link to Partner Procurement leads]
- Head of Project Management Office [link to Partner PMO leads]

Each member may send a representative if they are unable to attend meetings.

The Investment Panel will call upon wider EMCCA business area specialisms as required (Human Resources, Communications and wider).

The Investment Panel will engage constituent council support through the Devolution Leadership Group as appropriate. The Panel will have the ability to co-opt membership from constituent councils to assist with specific considerations as and when required.

# TOG Roles

The key roles that the Investment Panel will play are as follows:

## Standard TOG roles:

### **Support the development and delivery of the Investment Committee Work Programme**

- Inform the content of the work programme
- undertake required actions set by the Investment Committee and determined by the Panel itself
- Own, coordinate and monitor Investment Panel action plan
- Forward plan effectively to ensure timely consideration of issues and allow analysis of emerging opportunities, risks, and considerations to either exploit or minimise their impact
- Formulate advice and guidance to members of the Investment committee

### **Drive Communication between partners**

- Ensure that appropriate links and communication channels are identified, developed, and maintained between the Panel and lead constituent council officers, noting that it is the responsibility of constituent council officers to brief and engage within their own organisations
- Directly engage and update the Devolution Leadership Group (Constituent Council Place Directors) which will act as the lead constituent council officer support to the Investment Panel

### **Gather intelligence and undertake research**

- Gather intelligence, data, and evidence relevant to the activity of both the Investment Committee and the Investment Panel (utilising the direct links with the Devolution Leadership Group)
- Ensure the sharing of information and good practice to ensure effective, joined up, cross cutting working and improved performance.

### **Act as the Lead Officer Forum on Investment**

- Act as the lead forum for raising issues and opportunities. Given the Panel core membership only consists of EMCCA officers, those officers must ensure they are engaging and consulting appropriately with constituent, non-constituent, and external partners appropriately and in alignment with the principles requested by the EMCCA Board.

### **Drive the development and delivery of strategic investment responsibilities**

- Input into the development, implementation and delivery of relevant strategy, policy, investment proposals, and programmes and projects.
- Propose new ideas (concepts) as projects for investment consideration and development.

## Specific Investment Panel roles:

### **Investment Pipeline**

- Manage approach to pipeline prioritisation, ensure appropriate MTFP considerations within prioritisation and make prioritisation proposals to the Investment Committee and the EMCCA Board
- Consider concept proposals and make concept recommendations to the Combined Authority Board

### **Assurance Framework**

- Drive the level of expertise and HMT's 5 case element criteria considerations within business cases and approval considerations
- Provide technical test and challenge of business case proposals over £2.5million in value and make recommendations to the Investment Committee and Combined Authority (Board)

- Commission external advisors where the Panel considers appropriate in order to advise on technical assessment of business cases
- Strengthen delivery of the Assurance Framework principles and project lifecycle

#### **Investment Committee Member support**

- Develop and support Members in their Project and Programme approval roles
- Provide performance and risk management through:
  - reviewing performance, escalating matters of concern as appropriate
  - reviewing risk, escalating matters of concern as appropriate
  - making recommendations to programme/ project managers as required
  - support the Investment Committee in its management of project performance, risk management and monitoring & evaluation responsibilities
  - support the Investment Committee in the application of the Change Management procedure

## Investment Functions

- Collectively provide observations and recommendations on conditions to apply to Funding Decisions.
- Undertake a formal review of a project or programme if instructed to do so by the Investment Committee or the Chair of the Investment Committee.
- To instruct funding recipients to issue the necessary information required by the Panel as to the rationale behind any material delay or change in a project or programme, if instructed to do so by the Investment Committee or the Chair of the Investment Committee
- To undertake a review of project or programme performance and delivery if instructed to do so by the Investment Committee or the Chair of the Investment Committee
- To request information deemed to be required for Investment Committee consideration of Investment proposals if the Panel believes that all relevant information has not been included in a proposal
- To oversee and monitor investments made through the Investment Programme and detailed within the Investment Programme Dashboard

## Assurance Framework Functions

- To consider Concept papers for in-year proposals in order to determine prioritisation, provide test and challenge and consider concepts for recommendation to Board (noting that all Concepts received will be presented to Board)
- To undertake quarterly reviews of EMCCAs project portfolio and make recommendations to the Investment Committee on re/prioritisation of projects to ensure effective, timely, and efficient use of available resources.
- To provide advice and guidance as requested to business cases in development
- To provide advice and guidance to the Chief Executive as requested in the exercise of their delegated authority of approving business cases up to a value of £2.5 million
- To provide technical test and challenge of business case proposals for approval against HMT's 5 case model and provide a technical assessment and recommendation to the Investment Committee in the exercise of their delegated authority of approving business cases over £2.5 million
- To provide technical test and challenge of business case proposals for approval against HMT's 5 case model and provide a technical assessment and recommendation to the Investment Committee and Combined Authority Board in the exercise of their delegated authority of approving business cases over £15 million

When undertaking their role in support of the business case approval process, as set out in the Assurance Framework, Investment Panel Members are required to:

- Review a proposal from a basis of HMT's five case model and other fund specific guidance in order to ensure that it has been developed to an appropriate standard.
- Highlight key lines of enquiry - identify the key issues, key questions, and key areas of concern within a business case proposal in order to determine what the key lines of enquiry should be for the Investment Committee from a technical perspective.
- Investment Panel members will be expected to not only interrogate the key lines of enquiry relevant to producing a quality business case but also to ensure that agreed priorities of EMCCA have been adequately addressed.
- Provide observations and recommendations to the Investment Committee - The Investment Panel will draw conclusions on the level of risk that it believes applies to a proposal and make observations and recommendations on that level of risk and how it can be improved.11

## 11. Glossary

SAF	SINGLE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK
EMCCA	EAST MIDLANDS COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY
CCA	COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY
ASF	ADULT SKILLS FUND
CRSTS	CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT
IGF	INCLUSIVE GROWTH FRAMEWORK
HMG	HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT
HMT	HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY
MHCLG	MINISTRY HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DfE	DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION
DfT	DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
BAU	BUSINESS AS USUAL
EDAF	ENGLISH DEVOLUTION ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK
EDWP	ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER
PMO	PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE
GFA	GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT
TOG	TECHNICAL OFFICER GROUP