



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Local Enterprise Partnership

National Assurance Framework

A National LEP Assurance Framework which guides local decision making to support accountability, transparency and value for money.



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Introduction

In 2014 we asked all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to work with us to develop a National Assurance Framework to cover all the Government funding received by them via accountable bodies. This was published in December 2014.

The purpose of this framework is to ensure that Local Enterprise Partnerships have in place the necessary systems and processes to manage delegated funding from central Government budgets effectively. This document is a revision of the 2014 Local Enterprise Partnership National Assurance Framework and supersedes that document.

DCLG has published two Accountability System Statements, one each for Local Government and the Local Growth Fund (LGF)¹. These documents set out how local government funding and the LGF are allocated, describing the robust local systems which are in place to ensure that resources are spent with regularity, propriety, and value for money. Section 2, paragraph 6 of the Accountability System Statement for LGF explains that the Local Enterprise Partnership National Assurance Framework is one element of the wider assurance system of funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships, which also comprises regular Local Enterprise Partnership reporting to the government against agreed output metrics, Local Enterprise Partnership evaluation frameworks, and annual performance conversations between the government and each Local Enterprise Partnership.

This document sets out what Government expects Local Enterprise Partnerships to cover in their local assurance frameworks. The approach remains light touch, but the aim is to provide greater clarity and set out where expectations have increased from those of 2014 as Local Enterprise Partnerships continue to mature and their role and responsibilities develop. The focus remains on implementing practices and standards which are necessary to provide Government and local partners with assurance that decisions over funding are proper, transparent, and deliver value for money. The Local Enterprise Partnerships will continue to have considerable freedom to determine how to implement the practices and standards articulated in this national framework through their own local assurance frameworks.

Local Enterprise Partnerships should review, refresh and sign off their Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Assurance Framework in light of this update as the requirements set out in this Framework will be incorporated as a condition of funding in future Growth Deal grant offer letters. These letters are the formal means by which the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) awards each annual Growth Deal allocation to each Local Enterprise Partnership, sets out the degree of flexibility on offer and specifies the terms of the grant. One of the terms of these letters from 2017 onwards will be that Local Enterprise Partnerships must submit a letter from their relevant Section 151 Officer (or Section 73 Officer for Combined Authorities) to DCLG's Accounting Officer by 28 February each year certifying that the Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework has been agreed, is being implemented and meets the revised standards set out in the Local Enterprise Partnership Assurance Framework. It is important to note that

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-growth-fund-accountability-system-statement>

it is the Government's expectation that accountable bodies cannot use this funding for their own purposes, or without any clear mandate from the LEP.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are reminded that Ministers expect Local Enterprise Partnerships to follow the principles that apply to Government and Local Authorities, which prevent public expenditure incurred in retaining the services of lobbyists to influence public officials, Members of Parliament, political parties or the Government to take a particular view on any issue. If Local Enterprise Partnerships have specific concerns or points to put across to Government then they should talk directly to officials or Ministers. This will both be more effective, and ensure appropriate use of public funds. No funding provided under the DCLG Local Growth Fund shall be spent on such costs.

Revising Local Enterprise Partnership Local Assurance Frameworks

The 2016 Annual Conversation (held between Government and each Local Enterprise Partnerships to review performance) will include a discussion on the progress of Local Enterprise Partnerships in revising their local assurance frameworks in line with this updated national guidance.

The Local Enterprise Partnership Board should sign-off the revised local assurance framework. The Section 151 Officer (or Section 73 Officer as appropriate) of the accountable body must also sign off the revised local assurance framework, and write to DCLG's Accounting Officer by 28th February each year beginning 2017 certifying that the local assurance framework has been agreed, is being implemented and that it meets the revised standards set out in the LEP National Assurance Framework. Local assurance frameworks must be published on each Local Enterprise Partnership's website, and reviewed annually.

Mayoral Devolution Deal Areas with "Single Pots"

Where Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities have agreed that the Local Growth Fund will be fully integrated into the 'Single Pot' of funding awarded in Devolution Deals, the local Single Pot Assurance Framework (once formally agreed by DCLG) will supersede the local assurance framework for project appraisal, prioritisation, assessing value for money, allocating spend and monitoring and evaluation². However, Single Pot Assurance Frameworks will not replace the requirement for Local Enterprise Partnerships to clearly articulate and publish online their internal corporate governance processes, as set out in sections 1, 2 and 3 of this framework. This should be published as a separate document, in the form of a governance statement, constitution, or similar, unless explicitly set out in a relevant Single Pot Assurance Framework. The Section 73 Officer of the accountable body must write to DCLG's Accounting Officer by 28th February each year beginning 2017 setting out how this requirement is being addressed and

² Where the Single Pot Assurance Framework does not provide monitoring and evaluation processes for the Local Growth Fund, section 5 of this guidance continues to apply.

certifying that the revised standards set out in sections 1,2 & 3 of the National Assurance Framework are being met.

1. Governance and decision making

1.1 Local Enterprise Partnerships have, rightly, established and structured themselves in different ways, reflecting the differing needs and demands of each area. The Government is not seeking to change that. However, the Government and local areas must be clear about how each Local Enterprise Partnership operates, how and when decisions are taken, and by whom. Local Enterprise Partnership local assurance frameworks must be clear and unambiguous about who has authority for decision making.

The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework must set out its rules governing:

- the Local Enterprise Partnership board membership. Local Enterprise Partnership boards must have a private sector chair, with at least 50% of the rest of the members also coming from the private sector³. Other board membership should be drawn from local authority leaders and other relevant public sector organisations. The main Local Enterprise Partnership Board must include an identified board member to represent and engage with the SME business community;
- all Local Enterprise Partnership sub-groups and their membership requirements;
- the roles and responsibilities of the main Local Enterprise Partnership board and any permanent sub-boards, with a particular focus on who is responsible for each type of decision. It must include a description of any schemes of delegation, and clarity on which body or person is responsible for the final sign-off of funding decisions. This must include arrangements as appropriate for overseeing growth hub, Enterprise Zone and City Deal activities. In all cases clear reporting lines back to the Local Enterprise Partnership board, and where appropriate to the accountable body, must be demonstrated;
- the relationship between the Local Enterprise Partnership board and the supporting local authority partnership arrangements that enable collective engagement with all local authority leaders in decision-making on growth priorities (such as a Combined Authority, Economic Prosperity Board, Joint Committee or Leaders Board) and how these priorities will be supported by collaboration and joint-delivery at executive level. See also 3.3;
- the arrangements for the lawful and effective implementation and delivery of projects. Where the Local Enterprise Partnership awards Government funding these arrangements shall include openly advertising the funding opportunity, assessing applications, making the award through a formal agreement, monitoring progress for the lifetime of the project and maintaining a robust audit trail to demonstrate compliance. Where the Local Enterprise Partnership receives Government funding to deliver a project it shall use all

³ Local Enterprise Partnerships should consider selecting private sector board members through an open, transparent and non-discriminatory competition which assesses each candidate on merit

reasonable endeavours to fulfil its contractual obligations and maintain a robust audit trail to demonstrate compliance;

- its commitment to diversity, including a diversity statement explaining how the Local Enterprise Partnership will look to ensure diverse representation at Board and sub group level which is reflective of their local business community (including geographies and protected characteristics)⁴;
- the conduct for all board members (see gov.uk guidance “The 7 principles of public life”⁵);
- arrangements for cross LEP working (where appropriate).

⁴ Def'n of protected characteristics: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

2. Transparent decision making

2.1 It is important that Local Enterprise Partnerships have clear arrangements in place which enable effective and meaningful engagement with local partners and the public. Local Enterprise Partnerships are required to operate transparently, thereby giving the public confidence that decisions made are proper, based on evidence, and capable of being independently scrutinised.

2.2 Local Enterprise Partnerships should take a proportionate approach to sharing and publishing information, using the prompts set out below as the basis for determining what to release. It is understood that not all information will be appropriate for publication (e.g. information that is commercially sensitive). Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to use discretion in determining what should and should not be published. The expectation however, is that the public should see that the Local Enterprise Partnership is applying similar standards of transparency as public sector organisations over decisions it makes about public funding.

2.3 Local Enterprise Partnerships must, therefore, set out in their local assurance framework the arrangements for transparent decision making covering the points below:

- a dedicated website through which local partners and the public can check progress on the delivery of Growth Deals and access key documents such as the Strategic Economic Plan, ensuring that this information can be found easily and is accessible to all;
- arrangements for making, and recording decisions, and for ensuring that papers, decisions, minutes, agendas etc are published promptly in line with existing local authority rules and regulations [access to information, Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972, as amended by the FOI 2000];
- through their accountable body, ensure that Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests are dealt with in line with relevant legislation;
- have a published conflicts of interest policy, a published register of interests covering any decision makers which is kept updated, and a published complaints policy;
- ensure that there is ongoing local engagement with public and private sector stakeholders to inform key decisions and set out how they will evidence effective engagement;
- ensure that there is local engagement with and feedback to the general public about future Local Enterprise Partnership strategy development and progress against delivery of the SEP, including key projects and spend against those projects and that this can be evidenced;
- publish arrangements for developing, prioritising, appraising and approving projects, with a view to ensuring that a wide range of delivery partners can be involved (see also section 4 on value for money);

- the Local Enterprise Partnership's priorities and mechanisms for maximising the social value of its investment funding and activities so that partners and beneficiaries can play an active role in the programme.

3. Accountable decision making

3.1 The accountable body is responsible for ensuring that the Local Enterprise Partnership makes decisions in accordance with the Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework.

3.2 Local Enterprise Partnerships are responsible for developing and maintaining the Strategic Economic Plan and determining their key funding priorities. They are also responsible for ensuring that they maintain adequate capacity and expertise to deliver against those.

3.3 Democratic accountability for the decisions made by the Local Enterprise Partnership is provided through local authority leader membership of Local Enterprise Partnership Boards. In places where not all local authorities are represented directly on the Local Enterprise Partnership board it is important that their representatives have been given a mandate through arrangements which enable collective engagement with all local authority leaders (see section 1.1).

3.4 The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework must set out the agreed systems and practices which support both the legal and financial responsibilities of the accountable body and the leadership role and democratic accountabilities of the Local Enterprise Partnership. It is important that these support both the accountable body role in ensuring proper, transparent decisions which deliver value for money and also support timely, informed decision making by the Local Enterprise Partnership. The local assurance framework must also set out the circumstances under which the accountable body would not comply with a Local Enterprise Partnership decision and the process for resolving such conflicts.

3.5 The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework must set out what (if any) independent scrutiny arrangements the Local Enterprise Partnership has in place and whether these are integrated into part of the local authority's arrangements or separate from them. We would strongly encourage Local Enterprise Partnerships to make use of independent scrutiny arrangements, for example by establishing an overview and scrutiny committee to provide check and balance in the operation of the partnership.

3.6 The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework must:

- state the accountable body arrangements for the Local Growth Fund and other funding sources received from Government;
- state that use of resources are subject to the usual local authority checks and balances – including the financial duties and rules which require councils to act prudently in spending, which are overseen and checked by the Responsible Chief Finance Officer – the Section 151 Officer, or in the case of a Combined authority a Section 73 officer;
- state how and when the annual accounts covering the Local Growth Fund and other funding sources received from Government are published;
- state the responsibilities of the accountable body as covering the following:

- ensuring decisions and activities of the Local Enterprise Partnership conform with all relevant law (including State Aid and public procurement) and ensuring that records are maintained so this can be evidenced.
 - ensuring that the funds are used in accordance with the conditions placed on each grant;
 - ensuring that the Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework is adhered to;
 - maintaining the official record of Local Enterprise Partnership proceedings and holding copies of all relevant Local Enterprise Partnership documents relating to Local Growth Fund and other funding sources received from Government funding;
 - responsibility for the decisions of the Local Enterprise Partnership in approving projects (for example if subjected to legal challenge);
 - ensuring that there are arrangements for local audit of funding allocated by Local Enterprise Partnerships at least equivalent to those in place for local authority spend.
- Set out the Local Enterprise Partnership and accountable body agreed timescales and operating practices to support the effective implementation of decisions. Including:
 - monitoring arrangements;
 - information required from project promoters and delivery agents;
 - details of the written agreement between the accountable body and delivery agent and arrangements for protection of public funds including those in the event of non-delivery or mismanagement.

4. Ensuring value for money

4.1 It is important that all Local Enterprise Partnerships have robust arrangements in place to ensure value for money and effective delivery.

4.2 The section below on option appraisal and prioritisation addresses what Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to consider in deciding how to allocate their funding to projects and prioritise between proposals. Given the considerable variation in types and sizes of projects which Local Enterprise Partnerships may want to support, and acknowledging that many Local Enterprise Partnerships already have effective practices in place, our intention is not to establish any rigid rules but rather establish a set of guiding principles.

4.3 The section on value for money & business case development considers the more detailed business case work we would expect project promoters to undertake, and Local Enterprise Partnerships to scrutinise, once a project has been identified for funding, to ensure that the proposal is optimised, represents value for money and is deliverable.

4.4 Local Enterprise Partnerships must have robust processes in place that ensure all funding decisions are based on impartial advice. These arrangements must be set out in the local assurance framework. There must be clear separation between those acting as scheme promoters and those appraising programmes and projects and advising decision makers, so that the Local Enterprise Partnership is acting on impartial advice on the merits of (potentially competing) business cases.

4.5 Local Enterprise Partnerships must also ensure that the local assurance framework sets out the arrangements for the active management of risk relating to all matters for which the Local Enterprise Partnership is responsible, including but not limited to propriety and value for money issues. This must include having a named individual of appropriate seniority who is responsible for the identification and management of risk.

Options appraisal and prioritisation

4.6 Local Enterprise Partnerships must have a clear and transparent basis, (published on their website) against which projects and programmes are initially identified, commissioned, appraised and prioritised. Local accountability frameworks must set out:

- the evidential basis on which the need for intervention is based and how the Local Enterprise Partnership will ensure that it identifies programmes and projects based on need and/or opportunity supported by rigorous analysis of quality data and with regard to the application of best practice;
- the methodology used to assess value for money of the Local Enterprise Partnership's programme, and to prioritise projects, ensuring the Local Enterprise Partnership considers the full range of options which enable the strategic objectives to be met. Particular attention should be given to how different types of projects will be compared and assessed. Typically this would include consideration – at a level proportionate to the scale of funding required for the proposal – of whether:

- there is a clear rationale for the interventions linked with the strategic objectives identified in the Strategic Economic Plan;
- the proposal has clearly defined inputs, activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes, with clear addionality, ensuring that factors such as displacement and deadweight have been taken into account;
- the benefits exceed the costs of intervention;
- deliverability and risks have been appropriately considered along with appropriate mitigating action (the costs of which must be clearly understood).

Value for Money and Business Cases

4.7 The methodology used to assess value for money and the degree of detail to which business cases are developed in support of particular projects or programmes must be set out in the local assurance framework.

4.8 The methodology should be proportionate to the funding allocated and in line with established Government guidance including the *HM Treasury Green Book*. Typically we would expect business cases to address, in a proportionate manner, the five cases set out in the Supplementary Guidance to the Green Book.

4.9 A list of basic expectations for different types of specific project appraisal is attached at Appendix A.

4.10 Local Enterprise Partnerships must ensure that the commercial, financial and management arrangements are appropriate for effective delivery. To assist with this, *Infrastructure UK* (now part of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority) has produced a Project Initiation Routemap Handbook and associated Modules which provide a framework to support public and private sector infrastructure providers improve the delivery of their projects and programmes. Local Enterprise Partnerships may find this helpful when reviewing these aspects of business cases.

4.11 The local assurance framework must state that the Local Enterprise Partnership will identify a named individual with overall responsibility for ensuring value for money for all projects and programmes and a named individual (not necessarily the same person) responsible for scrutiny of and recommendations relating to each business case. These responsible individuals should ideally be independent of the promoting organisation or where this is impractical, should sit outside the management unit responsible for developing and promoting the business case.

Monitoring and Evaluation

4.12 Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to ensure that there is appropriate output and outcome monitoring and evaluation of projects taken forward.

4.13 The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework must set out the arrangements for output & outcome monitoring and evaluation of projects – with reference to documents such as the Growth Deal Evaluation Plan where appropriate.

4.14 Evaluating projects can deliver the following objectives:

- Provide accountability for the investment;
- Justify future spending allocations;
- Enhance the operational effectiveness of existing projects or future project extensions; and
- Improve future initiatives (as well as future VFM appraisal) based on learning.

4.15 Local Enterprise Partnerships must ensure a proportionate approach to monitoring and evaluation. Evaluation objectives should relate back to the business case and build on the assumptions used in the appraisal process.

4.16 The specific outcomes that will be monitored and measured will differ depending on the type of intervention. Monitoring and evaluation should therefore focus on those outcomes that are most relevant to the impact of the project's objectives.

Appendix A: Advice from relevant departments and NDPBs

This overarching Local Enterprise Partnership framework covers all Government funding which Local Enterprise Partnerships and their accountable bodies are responsible for. It is supported by advice from relevant departments and NDPBs set out below. This additional advice is wholly consistent with the principles and practices set out in this document and should be read together. Links to these related documents are set out below.

Transport schemes

Transport projects will be subject to the minimum requirements on value for money assessment, assurance and evaluation of transport projects set out at Appendix B.

The basis of transport appraisal is the Department for Transport's (DfT's) appraisal guidance known as WebTAG. WebTAG is not a standard 'one size fits all' process. It promotes the use of proportionate appraisal and gives some significant discretion in the level of detail that is appropriate depending on the nature of the transport scheme concerned.

For these purposes a 'transport scheme' is defined as any scheme that significantly changes the transport network infrastructure, whatever its objectives. For example, improving journey times may not be the objective of a scheme but the impact on journey times, if expected to be significant, would still need to be considered as part of the overall value for money consideration of a scheme.

Skills capital schemes

From April 2015 the Government has transferred the skills capital budget, previously managed by the Skills Funding Agency Capital team, to Local Enterprise Partnerships via the Local Growth Fund paid to the accountable body.

How Local Enterprise Partnerships choose to incorporate the management of skills capital funds within their Local Enterprise Partnership governance is a matter for local discretion. Skills Funding Agency support to assist with decisions about skills capital schemes is no longer available. It is, however, expected that Local Enterprise Partnerships will base their local processes on Skills Funding Agency good practice, advice and guidance, tailored to local circumstances, or put in place equivalent robust local arrangements to ensure value for money and effective delivery of skills capital schemes, through strong project development, project and options appraisal, prioritisation, and business case development – as set out in section 4 above.

Housing

Local Enterprise Partnerships will be expected to base their local arrangements on Home and Communities Agency good practice, advice and guidance tailored to local circumstances, or put in place equivalent robust local arrangements to ensure value for money and effective delivery of housing, regeneration and related infrastructure schemes. The DCLG Appraisal Guide (due to be published 2016) provides guidance on how the Department appraises residential and non-residential development which Local Enterprise Partnerships may wish to follow.

Regeneration

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance, it is anticipated that Local Enterprise Partnerships will have local arrangements in place that provide assessment and support to ensure schemes deliver value for money and positive growth. For regeneration these projects might extend beyond housing and transport interventions, and include investment in things like enabling works, land assembly, utilities, and/or public realm projects. The DCLG Appraisal Guide may be a suitable document for helping appraise the costs and benefits of these types of interventions

Enterprise, innovation and business support

Growth Hubs, Innovate UK and the British Business Bank are key partners in enterprise, innovation and business support schemes. Good practice when working with partners should include ensuring a connection to national expertise and infrastructure and non-duplication of existing support, investments and finance options.

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Appendix B: Transport Schemes

Value for Money

Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to be satisfied that the proposed schemes will achieve value for money.

Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to demonstrate that they have established processes to ensure that the modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration. This should describe how they will ensure that the modelling and appraisal of schemes meets the guidance set out in WebTAG.

The use of WebTAG, which is mandatory for all schemes, does not preclude additional assessments or methodologies (e.g. wider economic benefits) being employed to prioritise and assess the overall business case for a scheme.

Neither does it dictate the weighting or importance that decision-makers should attach to any aspect of the WebTAG assessment or any additional assessment. In particular, the Benefit to Cost Ratio is only one component of the value for money assessment and should not be the sole driver of decision-making.

The overriding principle is that the full range of the material costs and benefits of a scheme, both quantified and unquantified, should be available to decision-makers.

Minimum requirements	<p>The modelling and appraisal of schemes contained in business cases must be developed in accordance with the guidance published in WebTAG at the time the business case is submitted to Local Enterprise Partnerships for approval.</p> <p>Central case assessments must be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT's planning dataset). This requirement doesn't stop Local Enterprise Partnerships considering alternative planning assumptions as sensitivity tests and considering the results of these in coming to a decision about whether to approve a scheme.</p> <p>The appraisal and modelling will be scrutinised by Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure it has been developed in accordance with the WebTAG. This will be undertaken independent of the management unit or authority promoting the scheme. The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework will set out how this will be done.</p> <p>The local assurance framework must set out how the assessment and scrutiny of business cases will be quality assured.</p>
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Recommended	Set out mechanisms for providing early advice to scheme promoters on whether the study approach is fit-for-purpose, particularly in relation to modelling and Social & Distributional Impacts (which both can have significant lead times)
Optional	<p>A description of how Local Enterprise Partnerships will ensure that WebTAG will be applied by scheme promoters in a proportionate and robust way.</p> <p>A description of the circumstances under which external scrutiny or audit of the appraisal or modelling of schemes would be commissioned e.g. controversial or particularly costly schemes.</p>

Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to put in place a process for producing a Value for Money (VfM) statement for all schemes put forward for approval summarising their overall assessment of the economic case. This VfM statement will need to be reviewed and updated at each approval stage.

Minimum requirements	<p>A value for money statement for each scheme in line with published DfT WebTAG guidance and DfT advice on assessing VfM⁶ must be presented for consideration to Local Enterprise Partnerships at each approval stage.</p> <p>The VfM assessment must be signed off as true and accurate by a named officer with responsibility for Value for Money assessments within Local Enterprise Partnerships.</p>
Recommended	Set out what processes will be put in place to ensure that all impacts of a scheme (monetised and non-monetised) will be assessed by officers on a consistent basis and are based on reasonable assumptions.

Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to confirm that they agree to only approve schemes that meet a minimum VfM threshold and put in place the appropriate checks and balances to ensure compliance with this requirement.

The overwhelming majority of local major schemes funded in recent years were assessed by the Department as offering at least “high” value for money.

We would like to ensure that the value for money of major transport investment is maintained and therefore would expect that Local Enterprise Partnerships would only in exceptional circumstances agree to fund schemes with lower than “high” value for money.

If Local Enterprise Partnerships wish to retain the flexibility to fund schemes assessed at less than “high” value for money, the assurance framework should clearly set out the

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/value-for-money-advice-for-local-transport-decision-makers>

circumstances under which funding for such schemes would be considered, and outline any additional scrutiny or conditions that would apply.

Minimum requirements	<p>Local Enterprise Partnerships must either; only approve schemes that offer at least “high” value for money, as assessed using DfT guidance, or; set out the limited circumstances under which schemes offering lower than “high” value for money would be considered.</p> <p>Schemes must be assessed against the relevant thresholds at each approval stage.</p>
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Local Enterprise Partnerships are required to demonstrate separately (in other sections of the assurance framework) that they are transparent and open when reporting the results of modelling and appraisal, and that they have plans in place to obtain the necessary resources to fulfil the requirement to secure Value for Money.

External views on business cases

This section should outline what arrangements exist for Local Enterprise Partnerships to invite and consider any external comment and/or scrutiny of business cases prior to approval. In previous DfT guidance, bidding Local Authorities were required to place their business case on their own websites when bids were submitted for funding and that practice should continue.

Minimum requirements	<p>Business cases must be published (and publicised) before funding approval decision is made so that external comment is possible.</p> <p>Opinions expressed by the public and stakeholders must be available to relevant members or boards of Local Enterprise Partnerships when decisions are being taken.</p>
Recommended	<p>The above period should be at least 3 months.</p> <p>Local Enterprise Partnerships should make public how they have taken external comments into account</p>

Evaluation and Monitoring

The following requirements on the evaluation and monitoring of **outcomes** apply to all transport schemes.

<p>Minimum requirements</p>	<p>Local Enterprise Partnerships must put in place mechanisms to ensure that schemes are monitored and evaluated in line with the latest DfT guidance⁷ on the evaluation of local major schemes. In particular Local Enterprise Partnerships should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out proportionate evaluation and monitoring (M&E) plans that clarify: 1) requirements for individual schemes including funding of M&E activities; 2) responsibility for undertaking M&E, how minimum standards will be met and timescales for completion and decisions. • ensure that, for each scheme, there is clarity about how spend against delivery of outputs will be reported. • ensure that M&E plans are in place for schemes by the time that funding is signed off or before any data collection is programmed. • put in place processes to ensure that the results of any evaluation and monitoring are published.
<p>Recommended</p>	<p>Local Enterprise Partnerships should have the results of any evaluation and monitoring reviewed independently of the scheme promoter.</p> <p>Local Enterprise Partnerships should prepare an evaluation ‘handover pack’ as part of the appraisal process that documents all key assumptions so that those responsible for scheme evaluation can fully understand how appraisal estimates were produced and can examine the potential drivers of any differences between forecasts and outturns.</p>
<p>Optional</p>	<p>Set out how Local Enterprise Partnerships will share best practice obtained from evaluation and monitoring reports.</p>

Local Enterprise Partnerships and scheme promoters should refer to published DfT frameworks for advice on monitoring outcomes (e.g. reducing congestion, improving journey reliability etc.) measures, data collection methods and potential data sources.⁸

⁷ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/evaluation-local-major-schemes>

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35975/1stf-monitoring-evaluation-framework.pdf;
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/301284/bba-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework.pdf;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-local-authority-major-schemes>