



BLACK COUNTRY LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Version 3 – Revised February 2016

Any enquiries relating to the Framework should, in the first instance, be directed to: -

Sarah Middleton
Chief Executive
Black Country Consortium Ltd
The Deckhouse
Waterfront West
Dudley Road
Brierley Hill
DY5 1LW

Phone – 01384 471102

Email – Sarah_Middleton@blackcountryconsortium.co.uk

Report Structure

Section 1		LEP Governance and Decision Making	Page 3
	1.1	Name	
	1.2	Geography	
	1.3	LEP Governance	
	1.4	Cross LEP Working and Engagement	

Section 2		Local Authority Partnership Working Across the LEP	Page 9
	2.1	Local Authority Accountable Body Structure	
	2.2	Team Black Country	

Section 3		Transparent Decision Making	Page 13
	3.1	Governance Overview	
	3.2	Registration and Declaration of Interests	
	3.3	Gifts and Hospitality	
	3.4	Stakeholder Engagement	
	3.5	Developing Prioritising and Appraising	
	3.6	Availability of Information on Line	

Section 4		Accountable Decision Making	Page 17
	4.1	Status and Role of Accountable Body	
	4.2	Audit and Scrutiny	
	4.3	Strategic Objective and Purpose	
	4.4	Working Arrangements and Meeting Frequency	
	4.5	Transparency and Local Engagement	
	4.6	Complaints and Whistleblowing	

Section 5		Ensuring Value for Money	Page 20
	5.1	Black Country Consortium Limited	
	5.2	Project Lifecycle	
	5.3	Principles	
	5.4	Stakeholders	
	5.5	Documents	
	5.6	The Five Case Model	
	5.7	Project Register	
	5.8	Project Prioritisation	
	5.9	Strategic Fit with SEP Objectives	
	5.10	Value for Money	
	5.11	Delivery Timing and Risk	
	5.12	Scoring Matrix	
	5.13	Complaints Procedure	
	5.14	Project Lifecycle	
	5.15	Contracts_Claims_Process	

SECTION 1

LEP Governance and Decision Making

1.1 Name

Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

1.2 Geography

The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) covers the geographical boundary of the Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton, it covers 356 square kilometres and sits at the heart of England, forming the western part of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, the largest conurbation outside London.

A map of the area can be found at Appendix 1

1.3 LEP Governance

Roles and Responsibilities:

1.3.1 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Structures

Details of the LEP structure are set out below:-

1.3.2 The Local Enterprise Partnership Board (Appendix 2)

The Board provides the clear vision and strategic leadership to enable the delivery of the Black Country Strategy Economic Plan (SEP) and, using the resources under its direction and engaging with local business, local authorities, government and government agencies and other local stakeholders, provides a vehicle through which innovative funding/development mechanisms to drive major change and investment can be secured.

The roles and responsibilities of the Black Country Strategic Transport Board, which previously operated as a LEP Sub-Board, are now fully integrated into the main Black Country LEP Board.

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk .

1.3.3 Membership

The LEP Board has been established since 2012 and currently comprises 13 members; a Private Sector Chairman, 6 Private Sector Members, 1 representative from the social enterprise sector, the 4 local authority Leaders and one representative each of the higher and further education sectors.

Local Authority Members may nominate a named alternate who should normally be a cabinet portfolio holder to act as their deputy in exceptional circumstances.

All Board Members (except for Council Leaders) will normally serve for a period of two years renewable for one further term subject to the approval of the Board and subject to such performance review process as the Board may establish.

Further details can be found at <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/our-board>.

Theme Advisory Groups and LEP Board Sub - Groups

1.3.4 **Reporting and making recommendations to the LEP and/or Joint Committee the Theme Advisory Groups and Funding Applications Sub-Group are not therefore subject to the requirements of paragraph 3.1.1(j) of the Governance Protocols**

1.3.5 The LEP Board has or will establish three Theme Advisory Groups to advise, make recommendations and co-ordinate activity and engagement on the direction, development and application of funding in respect of each the three SEP themes; people, place and business. At the request of the LEP the Theme Groups will make observations on individual applications for funding

More specifically the individual Groups will:-

- i) People Theme Advisory Group (including role of Black Country Employment and Skills Board) (Appendix 3)

Act as the leading strategic support body to the LEP providing a forum for the engagement of private sector employers and liaison with public sector employers to develop, formulate and co-ordinate policies and proposals relating to employability, education and skills that support the Black Country's strategic aim to grow its global supply chain with the world class skills it demands, to maximise the benefits of the region's location.

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us

- ii) Business: Competitiveness and Enterprise Theme Advisory Group (Appendix 4)

Act as the leading strategic support body to the LEP providing a forum for the engagement of private sector employers, intermediaries and liaison with public sector agencies to develop, formulate and co-ordinate policies and proposals within the theme area and enabling businesses in our key sectors to grow and deliver our contribution to the implementation of the SEP through the development of our economic, social and physical infrastructure

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us

- iii) Place Making and Land Theme Advisory Group (Appendix 5)

Act as the leading strategic support body to the LEP providing a forum for the engagement of private sector investors and developers in liaison with public sector planning authorities to develop, inform and co-ordinate policies and proposals relating to the environment, green growth, brownfield land, land for housing, transport schemes and the development of the visitor economy that support the Black Country's strategic aim to grow its global supply chain with the world class locations it demands to maximise the benefits of the region's location.

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us

- iv) Funding Applications Sub-Group (formerly Regional Growth Fund/Growing Places Sub-Group) (Appendix 6)

Consider and make recommendations to the LEP Board concerning applications for Regional Growth Fund, Growing Places and Public Works Loan Board Funding and monitor the overall effectiveness and use of the funds.

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us

Other Project Steering Groups and Informal or Time-Limited Working Groups

1.3.6 Reporting and making recommendations to the LEP, Theme Advisory Groups and/or Joint Committee and not therefore subject to the Requirements of paragraph 3.1.1(j) of the Governance Protocols

i) **Black Country Elite Centre Feasibility Steering Group**

Drive forward and make recommendations to the LEP via the People Theme Advisory Group on the necessary steps to complete the feasibility study & optimal business case for the Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills in a timely way meeting the requirements of the Growth Deal funding and to gaining approval to proceed (through a lead development partner) to the full development of the Elite Centre in 2016.

ii) **City Deal Housing, Jobs and Prosperity Pilot Project Steering Group**

Led by Accord Housing the Group co-ordinates the housing led Housing, Jobs and Prosperity Pilot

Project whose overriding purpose is to ensure that social housing tenants get linked up with work initiatives and benefit from the economic growth which will come about as part of the wider Black Country City Deal.

iii) **Black Country Broadband Plan Project Board (Group)**

The Group is responsible for reviewing and reporting to the LEP and Joint Committee on the supplier's detailed performance of the contract for the rollout of the Black Country Broadband Plan.

iv) **Black Country Access to Finance Group**

The role of the Group is to report and make recommendations to the LEP (via the Business Theme Group) on the business finance challenges and barriers facing the Black Country and engage with intermediaries and local business to make recommendations as to solutions to these issues.

v) **Black Country Growth Hub Steering Group**

Comprising members from the local authorities, University of Wolverhampton, Black Country Chamber, Black Country Consortium, the Manufacturing Advisory Service, UKTI and Pera Consulting the Group provides strategic leadership and direction for the Black Country Growth Hub thus ensuring its impact on businesses in the region, brings together and enhances business support services for the Black Country in particular for the High Value Manufacturing sector and appropriate communication and leadership back into respective partner organisations and the business community to ensure objectives are met.

vi) **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Operations Group**

The Group comprises the four local authorities, UKTI, Made in Britain (programme partner), Black Country Consortium and the Invest Black Country (IBC) team. Its function is to update on the activities and performance of IBC, review the pipeline of enquiries, capture local intelligence from each respective organisation and assist the development and delivery of IBC Strategy and Action plan. The Group provides co-ordination across partners to raise

awareness of the Black Country as an investment destination, capture investment interest for the area and assist indigenous foreign owned growth.

vii) Black Country Social Enterprise Cabinet

The Cabinet provides a biannual forum for infrastructure social enterprise support organisations in the Black Country to discuss and make recommendations to the LEP (via the Business Theme Group) or to other agencies on collaborative working to grow a flourishing social enterprise sector across the Black Country.

viii) Aerospace Growth Partnership

Led by Wolverhampton City Council the Group is examining ways to deliver closer supply chain collaboration; provide workforce development and technology transfer between the aerospace companies and their suppliers.

ix) Black Country Enterprise Zone Management Steering Group

The Group co-ordinates activity, to secure the successful delivery and impact through management, development and marketing of an integrated Enterprise Zone approach focussing on key priorities and enabling engagement.

Further details can be found at <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us>

x) Black Country Environment Forum

The Group brings together agencies and stakeholders to discuss and make recommendations (via the Place Theme Group) on the steps necessary to facilitate and champion a step in change in the image and environmental quality of the Black Country to underpin social and economic transformation and help meet the challenges of growth making the most of the existing diversity of the Black Country's natural and built environment, particularly its canals, open spaces and industrial, architectural and geological heritage.

xi) Black Country Green Growth Group

The Group aims to bring together interested agencies and stakeholders to develop a pipeline of projects and make recommendations on the development and delivery of the Green Growth Strategy that aims to establish the Black Country as leading centre for the manufacturing and deployment of key technologies and solutions underpinning the growing global low carbon economy with a particular focus in the energy, housing and transport industries.

xii) Visit THE Black Country Partnership

The Group engages with the tourism industry generally to ensure the widest participation and exchange of information and views to act as a voice and a 'champion' of tourism in the Region

xiii) City Deal Programme Management Group

The Group is responsible for providing oversight of the City Deal, identifying potential areas of collaboration and cross working and for collating information to government on key aspects of the City Deal

Details of all these Groups can be found at <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us>

1.3.7 Black Country Consortium Ltd

The Consortium is a company limited by guarantee (Incorporated Number 05159791) whose purpose is to champion the urban renaissance aspirations of the Black Country and more specifically to direct and support the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan. The Consortium provides the secretariat to the LEP and the financial and legal framework with which the LEP operates as a committee of the Consortium. The four Black Country local authorities provide annual subscriptions as core funding to the business.

Further details concerning the activities of Black Country Consortium Ltd can be found at www.the-blackcountry.co.uk

1.3.8 SEP Programme Office

A dedicated, innovative and proactive SEP Programme Office has been established within Black Country Consortium Ltd to support all aspects of SEP programme direction and management.

The Programme Office will be led by a SEP Delivery Director with responsibility for the timely delivery of an integrated economic growth delivery programme for the Black Country by providing project and programme management expertise to Team Black Country ensuring projects are selected, planned, managed and closed using the principles of best practice project management. A key aspect of the role is to ensure resources are spent with regularity, propriety and provide for value for money.

The role will work in close collaboration with the Accountable Body and the BCC Ltd team who will provide strategic oversight, intelligence and advocacy to the SEP/Growth Deal programme management and additional capacity to the Programme Office through its Black Country European Policy Co-ordinator and the Black Country Economic Intelligence Unit. The role of the Joint Committee Programme Manager, and oversight of the Joint Committee Secretariat, remains with the Accountable Body and a summary of these responsibilities can be found at section 4.1.

The Programme Office will define a practical fit for purpose project management methodology based on best practice and deploy the Performance Management Information System (PMIS) – VERTO, a cloud based system designed specifically for the public sector that supports programme and project management best practice (Prince2, MSP, P30 etc.);

The Programme Office will provide training and mentoring to Project Managers, Sponsors and team members from Team Black Country to ensure that the project methodology and supporting PMIS is fully understood and used. The Programme Office will enable Team Black Country to establish and develop project management as a core competency. The terms of reference and structure for the Programme Office are set out in Appendix 7.

Further details for the SEP Programme Office can be found on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk and the Black Country Consortium Ltd website www.the-blackcountry.co.uk.

1.4 Cross LEP Working and Engagement

1.4.1 West Midlands LEP Chairmen

West Midlands LEP Chairmen meet approximately quarterly to discuss issues of common concern and to consider and develop areas of joint working. The meeting is supported by regular meetings of LEP Senior Officers.

Information on individual West Midland LEPs can be found via the following links:

Coventry and Warwickshire LEP: www.cwlep.com
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP: www.centreofenterprise.com
The Marches LEP: www.marcheslep.org.uk
Stoke and Staffordshire LEP: www.stokestaffslep.org.uk
Worcestershire LEP: www.wlep.co.uk

- 1.4.2 Cross-LEP groups also meet to focus on specific issues such as transport and finance. The cross-LEP statement on transport is set out at Appendix 8.

SECTION 2

Local Authority Partnership Working Across the LEP

2.1 Local Authority Accountable Body Structures

Local Authorities act as Accountable Bodies for the various funds available to support the LEP's activities as follows:-

Sandwell MBC – Growing Places, Regional Growth Fund, Broadband Project Plan and Public Works Loan Board Fund (including both City Deal and Growth Deal elements).

Walsall MBC – City Deal, EU Technical Assistance Team, Local Growth Fund (including the Growth Hub Growth Deal funding from July 2015) and LEP Strategic Fund

Wolverhampton CC – Enterprise Zones and Growth Hub City Deal (funding up to the end of June 2015)

Dudley MBC – Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

Black Country Executive Joint Committee (Appendix 9)

Established by Dudley MBC, Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC and Wolverhampton City Council the Black Country Joint Committee acts as a strategic body in relation to the City Deal and Growth Deal setting and reviewing objectives for strategic investment across the Black Country, providing a coherent single position on the major strategic City Deal and Growth Deal issues, agreeing the allocation of spending and major priorities.

The Chairman of the LEP Board (or his authorised nominee) is an ex officio member of the Joint Committee and is entitled to speak on Growth Deal and City Deal matters but not vote. Reports from the Advisory Board are presented by the appropriate Working Group member with input from the LEP Chairman.

Further details can be found at

http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/council_and_democracy/black_country_joint_committee.htm the webpage for the Black Country Joint Committee secretariat.

Black Country City Deal and Growth Deal Advisory Board (Appendix 10)

Established by the four Black Country local authorities, the Joint Committee Advisory Board acts as a strategic advisory body; reviewing and recommending to the Joint Committee objectives for strategic investment across the Black Country in relation to the City Deal and Growth Deal.

The membership of the Board includes four private sector representatives nominated by the LEP Board. They are three LEP Board members and a private sector representative interested in transport. Other private sector LEP Board members act as nominees for the lead members and provide a pool of additional expertise on a rotational basis.

Further details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us.

Working Group (Appendix 11)

The overall role of this Group comprising the four Local Authority Heads of Regeneration, Consortium Chief Executive, Black Country Director of Transport and a Private Sector LEP Board Member is, with support from the Programme Management Office, to devise, oversee, manage and monitor the Growth Deal and City Deal Programmes and review and evaluate on a regular basis ongoing individual project's progression and delivery against the business case for the project, including any key milestones, financial spend and compliance with any central Government grant terms, and report and make recommendations to the Advisory Board as appropriate.

Collaboration Agreement (Appendix 12)

The four local authorities and Black Country Consortium Ltd. have entered into a collaborative agreement that establishes a legal framework for joint working in relation to the functions of the Joint Committee. This agreement places equal responsibility on all four Black Country Local Authorities and the Black Country Consortium for the underwriting of the Joint Committee programme. The Agreement gives delegated authority from each of the four Local Authority Cabinets to the Joint Committee. The four Local Authorities have delegated their functions for City Deal and Growth Deal and this was approved by each of the Local Authorities' Cabinets during the autumn of 2014. Therefore, when the Joint Committee approves a decision for City and Growth Deals, it is acting, in effect, as Cabinet for each of the Local Authorities. Walsall Council, as Secretary to the Joint Committee and Advisory Board, reports to the Joint Committee, following which the Joint Committee may authorise signature by Council officers without having to go to individual Cabinets for authority to do so. Given this delegated authority, all four Local Authorities are in the process of amending their internal grant approval processes (e.g. approval to give out and receive grants) to reflect the new arrangements relating to City Deal and the Growth Fund.

Further details can be found at Appendix 12 and at http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/council_and_democracy/black_country_joint_committee/bcjc_reports/bcjc_reports_7_may_2014.htm

2.2 'Team Black Country'

2.2.1 The establishment of 'Team Black Country' is an ongoing process reflecting the recognition that closer integration of the skills and resources of the Black Country Local Authorities can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of SEP delivery. A culture of collaboration, reducing areas of duplication and aligning skill sets, offers the potential to achieve real efficiencies in the management and delivery of SEP programmes. Team Black Country recognises the shared issues and challenges across the Black Country and the benefits to be derived from a more responsive and agile resource management process to meet the variable needs across the Black Country and between programme areas. A range of key growth related activities can operate on a pan-Black Country basis and Team Black Country will provide the mechanism for more coordinated and efficient delivery of such activities.

2.2.2 A set of principles has been endorsed by the LEP Board as the framework for Team Black Country to guide cultural change and working practices amongst Black Country local authorities:-

1. It is in our joint interests to progress Team Black Country. It is the logical next step to closer collaboration in a time of austerity but also an opportunity for the Black Country LEP
2. We need a mindset which is Black Country first. We will all benefit when we work jointly for the Black Country's benefit.
3. We need honesty, seniority and leadership from officers of the four local authorities.
4. We must be prepared to use time, resources and people to help one another out, not just between the Local Authorities but also drawing in other public and, importantly, private sector and voluntary sector expertise.
5. There will never be a precise correlation between what we put in and what we get out. That is fine.
6. We will empower the SEP Programme Manager and agree to work positively with the Local Authorities. They will challenge each of us as they rightly should. They will be responsible for ensuring delivery of the Black Country Programme and we are choosing to employ them to assist us to make a step change in programme delivery and programme/pipeline development. We help their success and they help our own.
7. When we are successful it is to all of our credit. It is likely a lot of that credit will be badged at the LEP's. It is in our interest for this to happen, for it is through LEPs that money is flowing and we are in a national competition for resources and attention. Political credit will always be secured too.
8. Team Black Country will operate with pace. It will be fluid and it will spot and take opportunities. Its processes will be as slick as possible and its governance diligent but proportionate.
9. Team Black Country will be positive for our officers and their future development. It gives us a chance to stretch and develop our own capability locally: a Black Country 'talent pool'.
10. A pooled approach to resourcing project development costs for pan-Black Country initiatives and to address strategic opportunities will support a more responsive approach to delivery.
11. Where any authority or partner, or their staff, are not working in accordance with our Team Black Country approach we will deal with it quickly and honestly. When we make decisions together we will stick to them. We will act as if bound by 'Cabinet collective responsibility'.

2.2.3 Black Country Transport Working

The Black Country Transport Officers Group has been established to provide technical and policy advice to the LEP, Joint Committee and Joint Advisory Board and to the West Midlands' Strategic Transport Officers Group on transport matters, co-ordinate technical views, option appraisals and strategic/background information in relation to individual schemes or higher level transport interventions and to develop, conduct initial appraisal and advise upon transport schemes. The Group comprises officers from the four local authorities, the Integrated Transport Authority, Centro, Network Rail, Highways Agency and the Department for Transport by invitation.

The post of Black Country Director of Transport, responsible to the Managing Director of Wolverhampton City Council, has been established to focus on the development of well evidenced transport schemes that can be developed into a strong pipeline. This includes working with partners on scheme design & development, identifying funding sources and ensuring scheme delivery as part of the Strategic Economic Plan. In addition, the Director

inputs into the Core Strategy Review and acts as a member of Team Black Country to put the Black Country in a strong position in any joint working and funding arrangements.

2.2.4 EU Funding Technical Assistance Team

Walsall Council acts as the Accountable Body for the European Union (EU) Technical Assistance Team on behalf of the Black Country. The role of the team of three officers includes programme monitoring, compliance and performance management, together with intervention design and management where action to get the programmes projects back on track is required. The Team also provides guidance for individuals and organisations through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) application processes to successful approval, successful project initiation, delivery and completion. The Team also supports the successful prosecution and completion of all ERDF projects and initiatives approved as part of the 2007 – 2014 Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) package for the Black Country.

This activity currently mainly relates to the 2007-14 ERDF Programme but the Team is also engaged in supporting the development of the 2014-20 Programme including the development of a pipeline of projects and guidance to support new governance arrangements, bidding agreements and Programme start up. The work of the BCTA team will continue throughout the new programme, and a funding submission to support both ERDF and ESF work has been submitted to DCLG, with match secured from the four Local Authorities and the LEP to support this future activity’.

2.2.5 Collaborative Working Task Group

This time limited group brings together officers working on the development of LEP, Joint Committee and other collaborative structures and the administration and management of the various funding streams to ensure that there is a collective understanding of roles and purpose with the aim of working towards a seamless Black Country management of these areas of activity.

2.2.6 Invest Black Country

Invest Black Country (IBC) works to increase the numbers of Inward Investment opportunities successfully landed by the Black Country by developing and promoting the best possible propositions and taking these to the market place.

IBC delivery is achieved through team work, the three core staff (2.2FTE’s) work with colleagues throughout the 4 Black Country Councils, the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and their partners to co-ordinate investment proposition development, responding effectively to enquiries.

Key to success is maximising the benefits that can be drawn from the UKTI service, getting this right has resulted in many new investments landing in the Black Country.

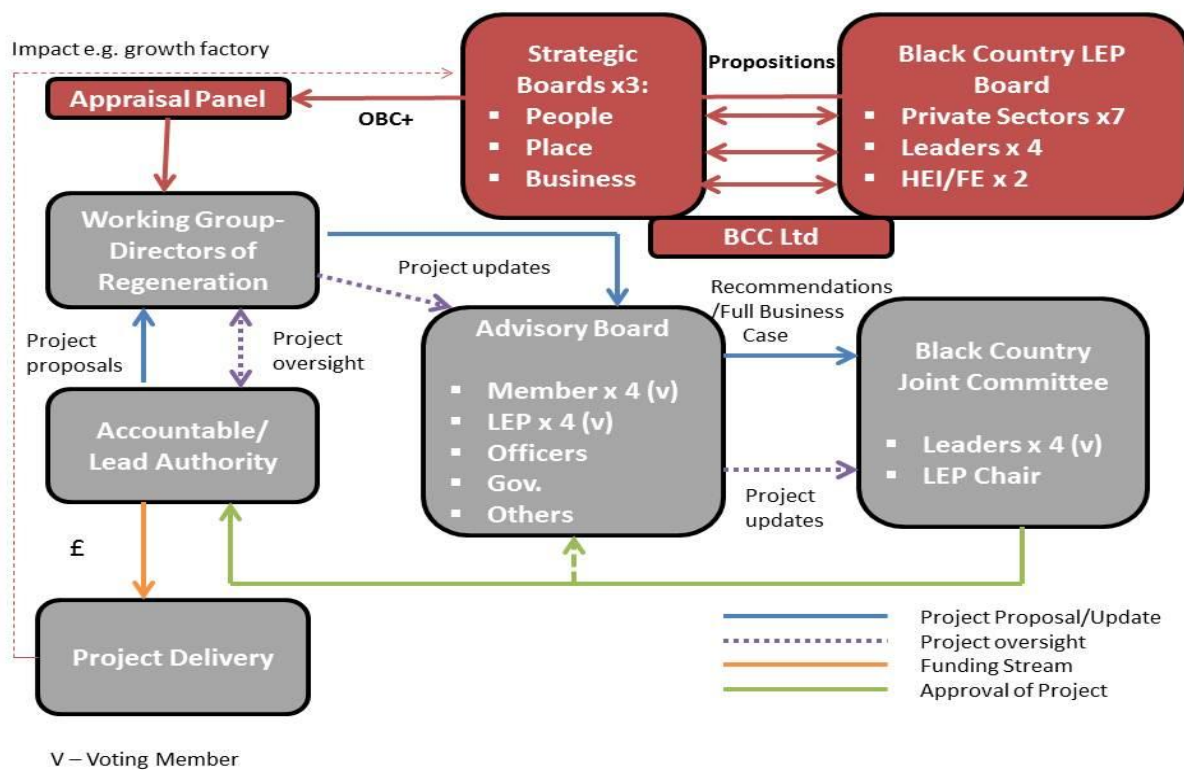
IBC provides a single point of contact for companies looking to relocate and investors looking to develop in the Black Country, together with the capacity to actively target investment funds looking for long term investment opportunities.

Through IBC, the Black Country is able to direct the work of regional partnerships including: Drive West Midlands and the West Midlands Investment Forum, and is regularly represented at global shows through its partnership with Marketing Birmingham.

SECTION 3

Transparent Decision Making

3.1 Governance Overview



3.1.1 Governance Protocols

- The Secretariat to the LEP will be provided by Black Country Consortium Ltd.
- The Partnership may establish such groups or committees as may be necessary to facilitate the conduct of its business. For the time being they will comprise the Sub-Group and Theme Advisory Groups set out at paragraph 1.3.5 and the informal and time limited Groups set out at paragraph 1.3.6
- The Board is established as a Committee of the Directors of Black Country Consortium Limited and its proceedings will, as far as possible, be conducted in accordance with the requirements of this framework and the relevant Consortium Articles of Association.

- d. The Board may elect a local authority member and a private sector member to act as Deputy-Chairmen.
- e. The Chairman or in his absence the Deputy Chairmen, may call a meeting of the Board at any time, giving not less than seven days' notice.
- f. Where an emergency meeting is called the notice period may be waived and the reason for doing so will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- g. Notwithstanding the requirements of the Access to Information Rules (see paragraphs j and k) meetings will be attended by:
 - i. Board Members,
 - ii. the Black Country Consortium Chief Executive as head of the Partnership Secretariat and such members of her staff that she requires to support her in this role,
 - iii. Local Authority Chief Executives;
 - iv. other observers by resolution of the Board or at the request of the Chairman where expert input is required for a particular discussion item;
 - v. BIS Regional Director or Liaison Officer.

Quorum

- h. No business will be transacted at a meeting of the Board unless at least four Members of the Board are present at least two of whom shall be private sector Members.

Voting and Decisions

- i. All decisions will be made with a consensus approach. If necessary a vote will be taken. Any decisions put to the vote shall be decided by a majority of the Members present and voting at that meeting. Voting shall be by such means as may be agreed by the Members present at a meeting provided that the Chairman or any Member may request a vote to be taken by a show of hands on any resolution or business before a meeting.

Access to Information Rules and Freedom of Information, etc. Requests

- j. Meetings of the LEP Board will, in addition to these protocols, comply with the Access to Information Rules set out at Appendix 13
- k. Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests will be dealt with via the Accountable Body.
- l. If the LEP Board agrees at any time in the future to establish any Sub-Group with delegated powers in respect of any of its functions. The meetings of that Sub-Group will also comply with the Access to Information Rules.

Minutes

- m. Subject to the requirements of the Access to Information Rules, minutes of the Board proceedings will be drawn up and kept electronically, as will all Board papers. The minutes shall be submitted to the next meeting for approval as to their accuracy. The minutes as approved shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting to which they are submitted and if so signed shall be received as conclusive evidence of the facts stated therein and the meeting had been duly convened and validly held.
- n. The names of the Members present at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes. If any officer or employee of the Partnership, Black Country Consortium or any other organisation attends the meeting the name of that officer or employee shall be recorded as being in attendance.
- o. Minutes are available to the public on the LEP website
<http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/our-board/lep-board-meetings>

Engagement Events

- p. The Board will hold periodic open events for discussion and engagement with the private sector and other stakeholders to monitor and discuss the progress of the Partnership at such time and place as the Board may from time to time determine.

Annual Review

- q. The LEP will publish an annual review document detailing its activities. This will be distributed to stakeholders and be available on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk

3.1.2 Review of this document

These protocols will be reviewed annually and variations to the protocols will only be made after consultation with the LEP Board and the Section 151 Officer of the Accountable Body.

3.1.3 Pecuniary Interests – Conduct of Board business

All business of the Partnership will be conducted in accordance with the Nolan principles of public life:-

a. Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

b. Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

c. Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merits.

d. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

e. Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

f. Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

g. Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3.2. Registration and Declaration of Interests

- 3.2.1 Members of the LEP Partnership Board must register their interests; elected members will have already undergone this procedure and their own local authority's register of interests

will be sufficient except they will be asked if they need to make any additional declarations to reflect the application of the code across the LEP geography. A collated register of interests of all members of the LEP will be maintained and will be available on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk. The registration of interests procedure for all other members of the Partnership Board will follow the Members' Code of Conduct set out in part 5 of the Accountable Body's Constitution and the relevant paragraphs are, set out as Appendix 14. Where the appendix refers to Walsall Council this will be taken as referring to the LEP and its geographic area

3.2.2 Members must act in the interest of the whole Black Country LEP area and not in the interest of their sector or geographical area.

3.2.3 Completed registration of interest forms will be available on the LEP website <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us>.

3.3. Gifts and Hospitality

3.3.1 Gifts and hospitality policy for elected members will be the same as that of their own local authority. Copies of these will be available on the respective members own local authority website. A collated register will be updated and made available on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk.

3.3.2 For all other LEP Board members, the Accountable Body's Code of Conduct will be used to declare any gifts or hospitality as set at Appendix 14

3.4. Stakeholder Engagement

3.4.1 Bi-monthly newsletters will be distributed to stakeholders throughout the Black Country and wider West Midlands informing of current and planned LEP activity and how to get involved.

3.4.2 Regular social media updates concerning relevant activity will be provided via the LEP Twitter site @blackcountrylep

3.4.3 A calendar of events will be developed and made available on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk

3.4.4 An on-going PR campaign will inform stakeholders of LEP activity

3.4.5 Stakeholders will be able to contact the LEP via the LEP websites contact form <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/contact-us> or through social media @blackcountrylep

3.5. Arrangements for Developing Prioritising and Appraising and Approving Projects

The details of arrangements for the development, prioritisation and appraisal and approval of projects are set out at Section 5 of the Framework.

3.6. Availability of Information Online

Links to the Black Country LEP website are available on local authority websites and links to the Walsall Council Joint Executive Committee webpage are also available on the other local authority and Black Country LEP websites. The LEP Secretariat will undertake regular reviews to ensure this information is accurate, up to date and consistent.

SECTION 4

Accountable Decision Making

4.1. Status and Role of Accountable Body

4.1.1 Walsall Council will be the Accountable Body for the Local Growth Fund. As the Accountable Body Walsall Council will: -

- a) Hold the Local Growth Fund funding and make payments in accordance with the decisions made by the LEP and ratified by the Joint Committee;
- b) Account for these funds in such a way that they are separately identifiable from the accountable body's own funds and provide financial statements to the LEP as required;
- c) Ensure that projects have in place and have agreed suitable arrangements for the management of the risks associated with the project activity to ensure that projects comply with legal requirements with regard to equalities, environmental, EU issues and other relevant legislation and guidance;
- d) The role of the Accountable Body is to put in place suitable arrangements for ensuring that grantees manage the risks associated with the LEP's activities. Through the Section 151 Officer the Accountable Body will put in place appropriate arrangements which reflect the approvals received from the LEP Board and the Joint Committee. The Accountable Body will complete a number of activities at the Pre Grant Award, Grant Award and Post Grant Award stages as outlined in the 'Local Growth Deal Programme - Roles and Responsibilities' document;
- e) Ensure that those in receipt of Growth Deal funds are obligated to comply with the LEP Assurance Framework;
- f) Maintain the official record of Growth Deal decisions and proceedings as undertaken by the Joint Committee, and the audit trail for all projects;
- g) Respond to requests made by the Consortium Audit Committee for support;
- h) Supply format for non-elected voting members to declare interests (elected voting members can utilise their own authority's procedure; and
- i) Supply access to all Joint Committee associated documents including decisions, minutes and reports. Documents will be available online via the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk.
- j) The Accountable Body will utilise its own internal audit, accountancy and treasury management systems in the delivery of its role.
- k) Provide the Secretariat to the Working Group, Advisory Board and Joint Committee at the Pre Grant Award, Grant Award and Post Grant Award stages as outlined in the 'Local Growth Deal Programme - Roles and Responsibilities' document. The Joint Committee

Programme Manager, with support from the Joint Committee Programme Management Officer(s) will:

-
- Ensure the effective scheduling and calling of the meetings within the Joint Committee structures – including the Working Group, Advisory Board and Joint Committee Programme Management meetings
- Coordination of the Accountable Body Working Group, which includes the Section 151 officer and legal, finance and audit leads;
- Hold the Local Growth Fund funding and make payments in accordance with the decisions made by the LEP and ratified by the Joint Committee;
- Monitor the agreed arrangements for the management of risks associated with the project activity and ensure that projects are appropriately managing the risks through the mechanisms within their Grant Agreement, assessing evidence where appropriate through agreed mechanisms.
- Maintain the official record of Growth Deal decisions and proceedings as undertaken by the Joint Committee, and the audit trail for all projects;
- Ensure that their agendas are set and that the meetings are accurately recorded, with minutes and decisions published where appropriate
- Ensure that the resultant action plans are produced and progress monitored
- Work with the Joint Committee Secretary to ensure that all appropriate meeting schedules are both aligned and timely
- Working with the Programme Office in the delivery of project outcomes and compliance with instructions, tasks and improvements
 - Contractual monitoring, evidence verification and project audit – and the sharing of this information with the Programme Management Office through the Growth Deal Monitoring Database
 - Updating Grant Agreement schedules for multi-year projects, to incorporate approved changes as necessary.
- Establishing and maintaining the required Accountable Body structures and arrangements as directed by the Joint Committee
- In consultation with the SEP Delivery Director, calling and chairing Programme Management Meetings, Forward Planning and drafting/coordinating reports on behalf of the Lead Authority for consideration at the appropriate group meetings.
- Ensuring that project/report sponsors are informed and offered guidance with the preparation and submission of their reports
- Appointment and management of the Accountable Body part of the Programme Management Team.

4.2. Audit and Scrutiny

4.2.1 Regular independent (external) audit and assurance checks will be commissioned and undertaken to verify that the LEP is operating effectively within the terms of its agreed assurance framework.

4.2.2 The Consortium’s Audit Committee will report on the effectiveness of the Secretariat’s systems of governance, internal financial control and risk management in relation to the elements of Growth Deal funding for which it is directly responsible. This will ensure that the highest standards of propriety in the use of public monies are maintained and proper accountability for the use of those monies. The LEP and the Consortium Audit Committee will be responsible for taking the necessary action to remedy any shortcomings identified within any such audit.

4.2.3 In relation to the Joint Committee each constituent Council, within its own Scrutiny structure may choose to look into the performance of the City Deal and Growth Deal and its impact on that Scrutiny Committee's Council, it can do and report under the normal structure to its Full Council and Cabinet on its findings. The findings will then be reported back to the next available Joint Committee as appropriate.

4.2.4 The provisions of paragraph 4.2.3 above will apply to the scrutiny of the LEP in relation to City Deal and Growth Deal as it applies to the Joint Committee.

4.3. Strategic Objectives and Purpose

4.3.1 The LEP will: -

- a) Ensure that value for money is achieved regarding the local growth fund funding;
- b) Identify a prioritised list of projects within the available budget;
- c) Make recommendations on individual project approval, investment decision making and release of funding, including scrutiny of individual scheme business cases to the Black Country Joint Committee for ratification;
- d) Monitor progress of scheme delivery and spend;
- e) Actively manage the devolved budget and programme to respond to changes in circumstances (for example scheme slippage, scheme alteration or cost increases);
- f) Engage government in dialogue to ensure resource is maximised and additional funding streams are coordinated;
- g) Fully participate in the development of strategic cross boundary schemes; and

4.3.2 Terms of reference for the LEP are available at Appendix 2 and can be found on the LEP website www.blackcountrylep.co.uk

4.4 Working Arrangements and Meeting Frequency

4.4.1 Meetings of the LEP will be programmed to occur approximately monthly, with special meetings held as required. All of these meetings will be open to the public subject to the Access to Information Rules set at Appendix 13.

4.4.2 The LEP will develop a process for making urgent decisions between normal meetings and where special (exceptional) meetings cannot be convened within an acceptable timeframe. Notice of any special meetings will appear on the LEP website <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/our-board/lep-board-meetings> .

4.5 Transparency and Local Engagement

4.5.1 Meeting papers and minutes, scheme business cases and evaluation reports, funding decision letters with funding levels and conditions indicated and regular programme updates on delivery and spend against budget will be published on the LEP website <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/our-board/lep-board-meetings> in accordance with Access to Information Rules.

4.5.2 The public and stakeholders will be able to provide input via the LEP websites contact form <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/contact-us>. Stakeholders will be made aware of how to provide input by being informed via the LEP newsletter which is distributed to businesses throughout the Black Country, and through intermediaries such as the Chamber of Commerce.

4.5.3 The LEP will adhere to Local Government Transparency Code through Walsall Council as the accountable body.

- 4.5.4 A statement detailing the process by which the LEP will make decisions on major investment, as well as the rationale, will be published online alongside other documentation. Details can be found at www.blackcountrylep.co.uk
- 4.5.5 FOI and EIR requests will be dealt with in the first instance by Walsall Council, whose officers will have access to all relevant documents .

4.6. Complaints and Whistleblowing

- 4.6.1 Complaints from stakeholders, members of the public will be dealt with and resolved in accordance with the Black Country Consortium’s Customer Care Charter and Complaints Procedure set at Appendix 15. .
- 4.6.2 Whistleblowing allegations will be referred immediately to and investigated by the Internal Audit officers of the Accountable Body. The whistleblowing procedure is included at Appendix 16 and further information can be found at: http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/council_and_democracy/whistle_blowing.htm

SECTION 5

Ensuring Value for Money. Prioritisation, appraisal, business case development and risk management

5.1 Black Country Consortium Limited Project Assurance

Black Country Consortium Limited (BCC) Ltd. will provide Project Assurance through the lifecycle on behalf of the LEP. This section sets out the project lifecycle process relating to projects submitted for inclusion as part of the SEP.

5.2 Project Lifecycle

All projects follow a lifecycle; from initial idea, through planning to implementation and finally closure. It is important that projects within the SEP Programme follow a consistent lifecycle model. The lifecycle is supported by key decision points; Stage Gates. Stage Gate’s enable the appropriate level of oversight, governance and monitoring of projects at key steps through their lifecycle journey. They enable the appropriate approval bodies to approve or reject a project to move to the next stage in the lifecycle.

Therefore BCC Ltd. has defined a lifecycle model consisting of Stage and Stage Gates. The approval process for each Stage Gate has also been defined to ensure total transparency of process for all stakeholders.

5.3 Principles

A number of principles have been defined that underpin the defined approach:

- a. Proposals are actively encouraged from all public, private and charity sector stakeholders. The process has therefore been made as simple as possible, balanced with appropriate governance and oversight as required by Central Government and the LEP to ensure the barrier to participating is as low as possible. For example; creating a lengthy initial application form may put off some possible proposers, particularly SMEs.
- b. Approval Stage Gates have been defined to ensure appropriate engagement by both funding approvers and technical subject matter experts. Given the diverse range of possible proposals it is important that technical subject matter experts are engaged to validate proposals where required.
- c. The complete end to end process must be fair and transparent
- d. There are limited funds and resources and prioritisation will be undertaken by the LEP Board.

- e. We work with a sense of urgency and where appropriate time limits have been established within the approval process

5.4 Stakeholders

Several entities, including Approval Panels and Approval Boards are engaged in the project lifecycle. These are defined below.

No	Panel / Board	Participants
1	Proposal Panel	3 x Theme Leads, Delivery Director, Economic Intelligence Unit
2	Theme Board	As defined in separate documentation
3	LEP Board	As defined in separate documentation
4	Joint Committee Advisory Board	As defined in separate documentation
5	Joint Committee	As defined in separate documentation
6		
7.	Working Group	Private Sector LEP Board Member, Local Authority Heads of Regeneration, Consortium Chief Executive, Black Country Director of Transport, Joint Committee Programme Manager and Team
8.	Accountable Body Project Group	Joint Committee Programme Management Team, Appropriate Officers within Walsall MBC
9	Programme Office	Delivery Director, Programme Office Analyst, Programme Office Administrator

5.5 Documents

A number of standard documents are required to support projects through the approval, delivery and closure lifecycle stages. These are defined below.

No	Document	Description & Purpose
1	Initial Proposal	A short “2 page” document that outlines the proposal against the five case model in high level terms enabling an initial evaluation and prioritisation with a weighting against strategic fit.
2	Outline Business Case	Building on the Initial Proposal the Outline Business Case (OBC) provides further detail into the proposed project, scope, benefits, costs and approach.
3	Full Business Case	Building on the OBC, the Full Business Case (FBC) enables a final decision on funding approval. Only those projects that have been approved at the Initial Proposal and outline Business Case stages will progress to the FBC
4	Change Request	Once a project has been approved any change will be subject to a formal Change Request. The approval authority for the proposed Change Request depends on the scale and impact of the Change.

No	Document	Description & Purpose
		The Programme Office provides guidance on the Change Control process for in-flight projects.
5	Exceptions Report	During the implementation of a project, the Project Manager may become aware of an issue that is likely to take the project out of agreed tolerances. An Exceptions Report enables the Project Manager to communicate this issue as early as possible to appropriate stakeholders
6	Project Status Report	The Project Manager will provide regular timely and accurate status reporting (fortnightly) to the Programme Office throughout the lifecycle of the project. .
7	Project Closure Report	As part of submitting a project for approval to close the Project Manager will prepare the Project Closure Report. This acts as a mirror to the approved Full Business Case and compares the final status against the original baseline for schedule, cost, quality, benefits and scope.
8.	Accountable Body Claims and Reporting Process	Projects will submit evidence of spend to date as part of the supporting evidence for Grant Claims. This will inform accurate projections of spend for the programme. Grant claims will be paid monthly or quarterly by agreement, and will also be supported by a detailed report on progress towards meeting contractual objectives and evidence of expenditure. All Grant claims will be evidenced by the Project documentation required by the Accountable Body to validate the claim and the Programme Management team at both the PMO and the Accountable Body will work together to include forecasting and actual information into dashboard reporting. The Programme Office will monitor and report overall Programme Cashflows to validate progress of delivery by each Project against Grant allocated. The Accountable Body has put in place a Monitoring and Assurance Framework to ensure that all projects are in compliance with the conditions of Grant, the LEP Assurance Framework and have the required evidence and audit trail to support Project activity.
9.	Match Funding - monitoring	The Programme Office will require periodic Project Progress reports detailing the total investment in the project and information on other sources of investment. Projects will be asked by the Accountable Body to certify that the required % of non-LGF spend on the project has taken place. The Accountable Body and the LEP reserve the right to request evidence of match funding.

Templates for the Initial Proposal, Outline Business Case and Full Business Case are contained in Appendix 17.

5.6 The Five Case Model

5.6.1 HM Treasury standard for the development of a Business Case is based on the Five Case Model. Policies, strategies, programmes and projects will only achieve their spending objectives and deliver benefits if they have been scoped robustly and planned realistically from the outset and the associated risks taken into account.

5.6.2 The business case, both as a product and a process, provides decision makers, stakeholders and the public with a management tool for evidence based and transparent decision making

and a framework for the delivery, management and performance monitoring of the resultant scheme.

- 5.6.3 The business case in support of a new policy, new strategy, new programme or new project must evidence:
- a. That the intervention is supported by a compelling case for change that provides holistic fit with other parts of the organisation and public sector– the “**strategic case**”
 - b. That the intervention represent best public value – the “**economic case**”
 - c. That the proposed Deal is attractive to the market place, can be procured and is commercially viable – the “**commercial case**”
 - d. That the proposed spend is affordable – the “**financial case**”
 - e. That what is required from all parties is achievable – the “**management case**”

5.7 Project Register

- 5.7.1 The Programme Office will maintain a Project Register. This is a list of all proposals, in-flight projects and closed projects. Proposals and projects will be ordered by their lifecycle stage and prioritised by the Programme Office based on the agreed prioritisation model.
- 5.7.2 Red / Amber / Green (RAG) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be tracked for all in-flight projects and included on the Project Register.
- 5.7.3 The Verto MIS will be used as the project & portfolio management solution providing this Project Register.

5.8 Project Prioritisation

- 5.8.1 At all projects levels projects will be appraised on the following 3 areas:

Appraisal Criteria:
1. Strategic fit with SEP objectives
2. Value for Money - Benefit Cost Ratio & Leverage
3. Delivery timing and risk

These elements may be weighted at different stages of the project lifecycle. For example Strategic Case will be viewed as the priority at the Initial Proposal Stage.

- 5.8.2 There is no lower or upper financial limit for the projects to be put forward at this stage, however please note that only capital funding is available from the Local Growth Fund, (not revenue).
- 5.8.3 In relation to skills-related projects, the Skills Funding Agency in the past indicated that projects should contribute at least two thirds of the funding required. This benchmark is viewed by the LEP as a useful guideline.

5.9 Strategic Fit with SEP Objectives

- 5.9.1 The Black Country Strategic Economic Plan April 2014 is available via: <http://theblackcountrylep.com/about-us/black-country-plans-for-growth/strategic-economic-plan>
- 5.9.2 The Plan sets out 3 primary objectives and 12 strategic programmes:

Strategic Programmes to Transform the Black Country Infrastructure and Environment - PLACE	Strategic Programmes to Raise Employability, Education and Skills -- PEOPLE	Strategic Programmes to Improve Black Country Competitiveness - BUSINESS
--	---	--

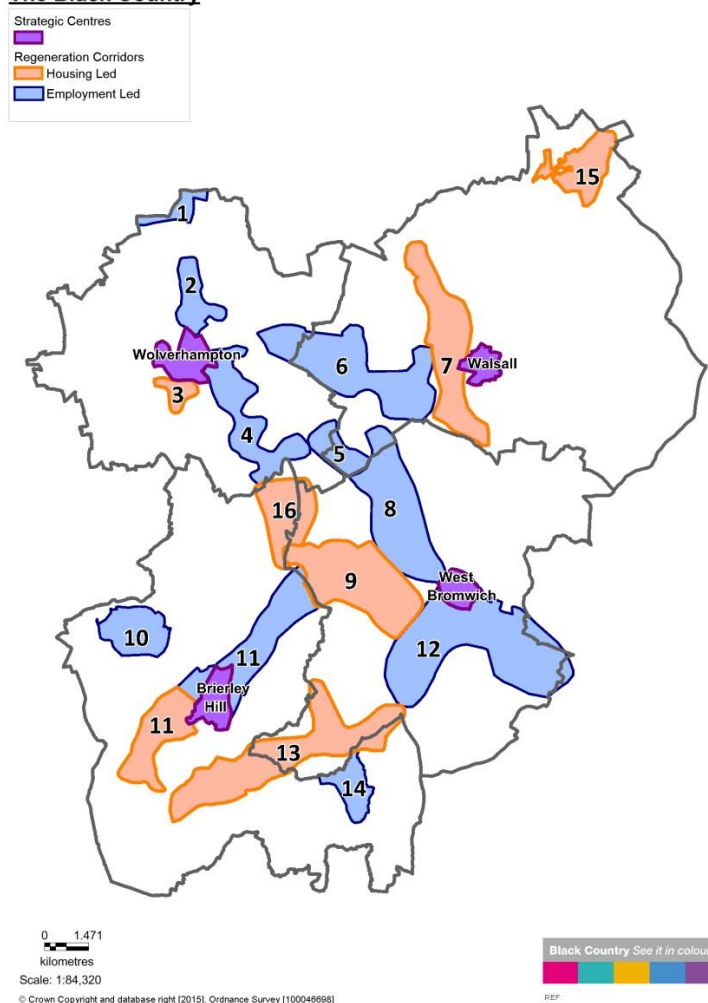
Strategic Programmes to Transform the Black Country Infrastructure and Environment - PLACE	Strategic Programmes to Raise Employability, Education and Skills -- PEOPLE	Strategic Programmes to Improve Black Country Competitiveness - BUSINESS
PL1. Employment sites and premises	P1. Skills for the supply chain	B1. Developing a Supply Chain fit to supply
PL2. Infrastructure to Support Growth	P2. Skills capital	B2. Exploiting global opportunities
PL3 Housing (including in town centres)	P3. Schools and college statutory education provision.	B3. Access to Finance.
PL4. Distinctive Urban Centres	P4. Securing and upskilling the Black Country residents and employees	
PL5. Overall quality environment and low carbon.		


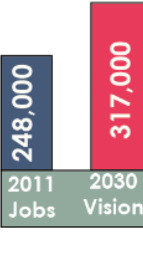


Projects will be assessed in terms of their strategic fit to these 12 programmes.

5.9.3 The **Black Country Performance Management Framework** provides a clear framework against which success can be measured. This is set out in Appendix 18.

5.9.4 The following table sets out our ambitions for our targets sectors and the map illustrates our growth network – 4 strategic centres and 16 corridor centres as set out in our Core Strategy

The Black Country



		2011 Jobs (000's)	2030 Vision (000's)		
TRANSFORMATIONAL SECTORS 	Advanced Manufacturing	66,000	73,000		
	Transport Technologies	26,000	30,000		
	Environmental Technologies	38,000	45,000		
	Business Services	74,000	121,000		
	Building Technologies	44,000	48,000		
	TOTAL	248,000	317,000		
	ENABLING SECTORS 	Visitor Economy	29,300	38,700	
Sports		3,500	4,100		
Health		66,000	69,900		
Public Sector		60,900	54,200		
Retail		88,100	102,200		
TOTAL		247,800	269,100		

5.10 Value for Money

5.10.1 Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)

The LEP model which is used by its Economic Intelligence Unit takes the outputs from projects and calculates the benefit cost ratio for employment, business creation, business assists, learners assists and housing outputs and combines them to calculate the GVA impact and a total project Benefit Cost Ratio based on the public sector ask. The full methodology is show in Appendix 19

5.10.2 Appendix 20 sets out the value for money calculations for Transport projects.

5.10.3 Match funding/Leverage

Projects will be ranked according to the amount of funding requested as a proportion of investment levered from other sources – public and private.

5.10.4 The BCR and leverage ranking are combined and ranked in order to determine a ranking order.

5.11 Delivery Timing and Risk

5.11.1 Projects able to demonstrate the most certainty will be given the highest priority. In order to determine that certainty we will evaluate the mitigations proposed against each of the key risks.

5.12 Scoring Matrix

5.12.1 Proposals and projects at each stage of the lifecycle will be prioritised based on a simple scoring of 0 – 3, where 0 is the lowest score. Projects will be scored by the Programme Office using a clearly defined scoring model that defines the characteristic of a “0”, “1”, “2” and “3” against the Five Case Model elements of Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial, and Management.

5.13 Complaints Procedure

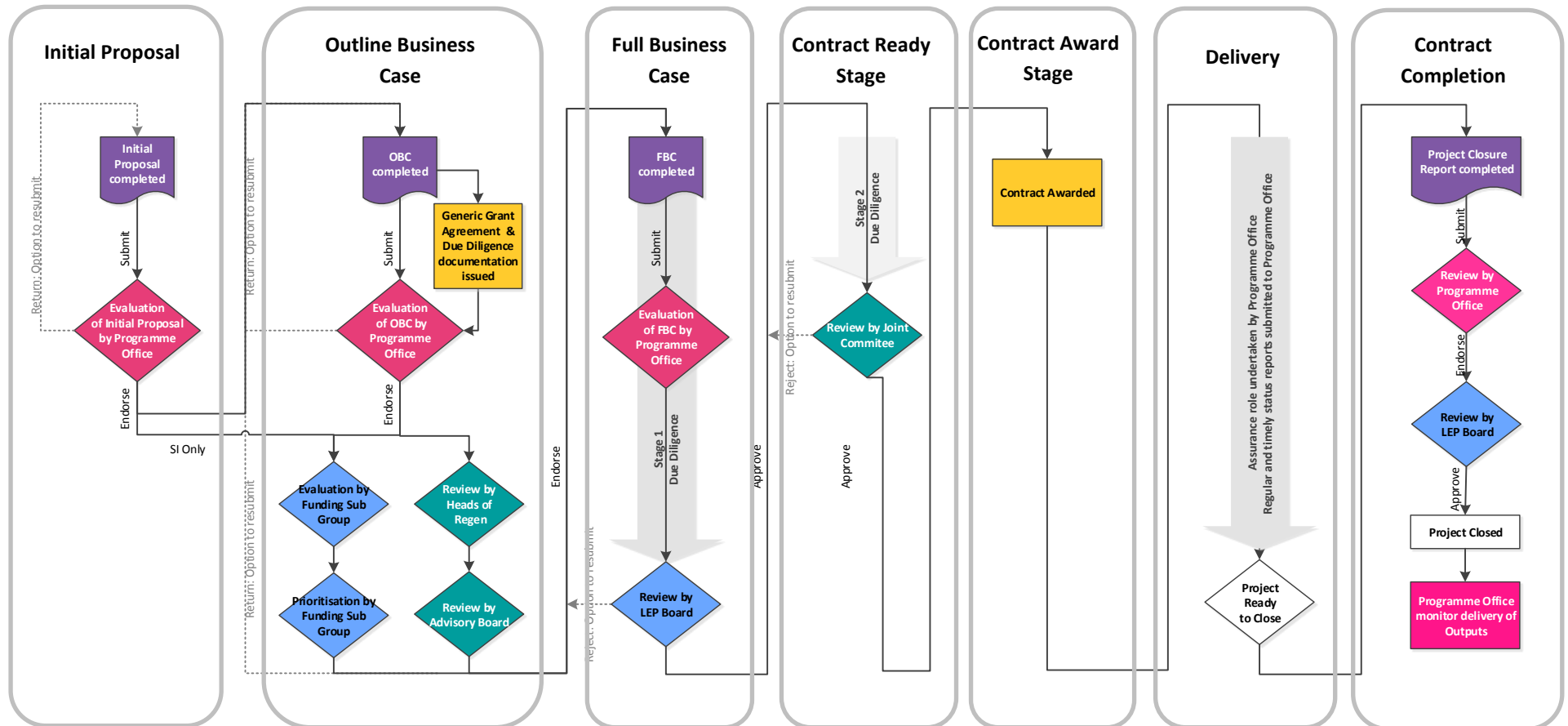
5.13.1 A transparent complaints procedure exists for stakeholders at all stages in the project lifecycle and is set out at Appendix 15. The complaints procedure has a number of steps enabling appropriate escalation:

- a. Informal
- b. Appeal to Black Country Consortium Ltd. Company Secretary
Appeal to Black Country Ltd, Board of Directors

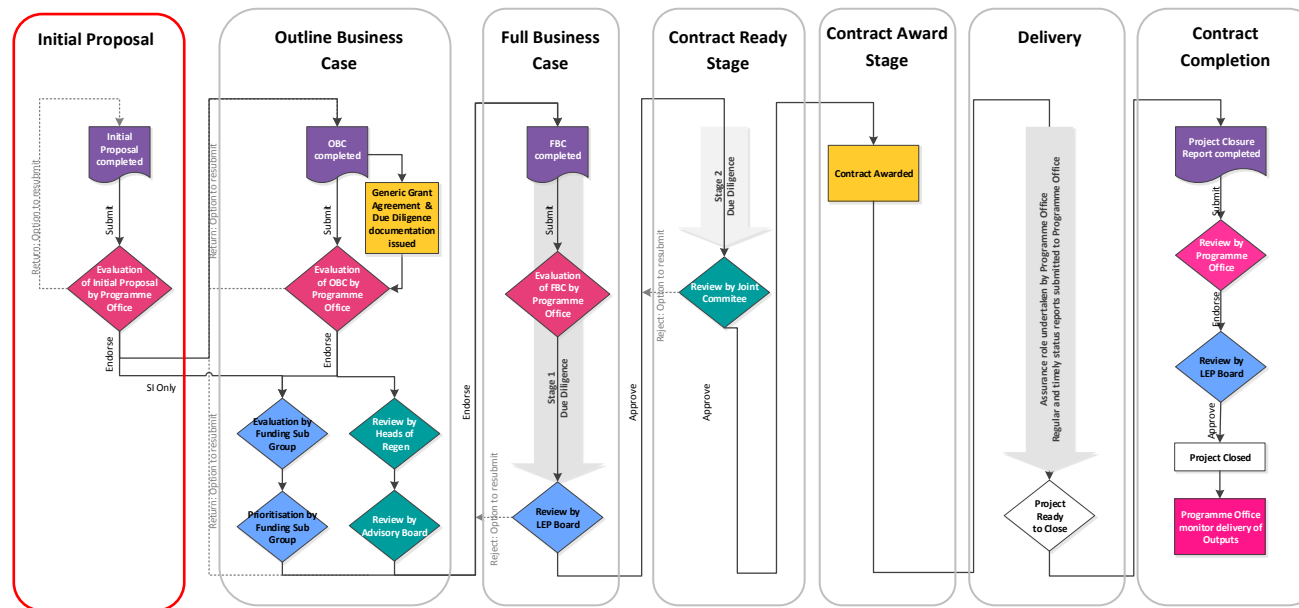
5.14 Project Lifecycle

Each project will be subject to a structured due diligence process. The requirements at each stage of project development will be articulated and made available to the applicant.

5.14.1 Overview



5.14.2 Initial Proposal Stage

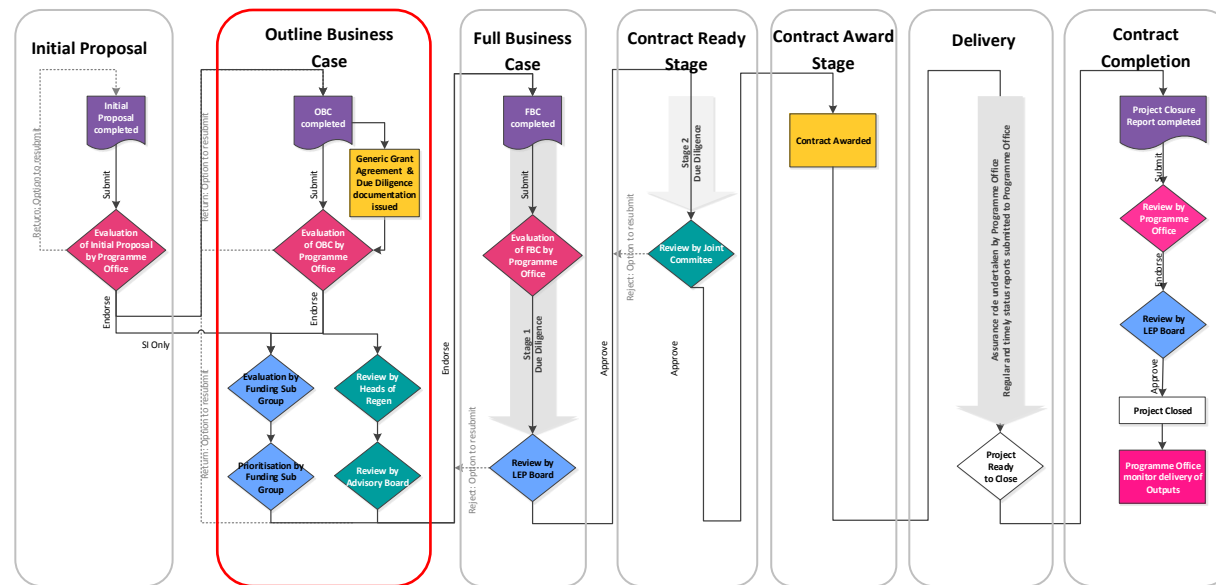


- Submissions are actively encouraged from any Black Country stakeholder, including public, private and third sector. To minimize the barrier to entry the first Initial Proposal form has been designed to be as simple as possible to complete but based around the Five Case Model for Business Cases as defined by HM Treasury. The purpose of the Initial Proposal is to provide a high level overview of the project, and the opportunities it presents and the risks it entails.
- An Initial Proposal form will be submitted to the Programme Office for evaluation; templates are available via the Black Country LEP website. Clear strategic alignment to the SEP is paramount. The Programme Office will be looking specifically; to match the proposal to the 3 strategic Themes and 12 SEP Programmes; for which of the Black Country LEP (BCLEP) Growth Objectives and Measures of Success will be addressed; and **how** the proposal will unlock the identified BCLEP Growth Objectives.

- c. The Programme Office will seek technical / expert guidance to validate demand as well as state aid compliance. All Initial Proposals will be assessed within 7 working days.
- d. Proposals will be submitted for the following; Site Investigations, Transport bids, and other LGF priorities as identified by the SEP.
- e. Proposals will either be endorsed/recommended to proceed or returned. Proposals requiring 100% funding will automatically be returned. Those proposals that are returned are invited to resubmit. Guidance will be offered on the reasons for non-endorsement.
- f. Those proposals that are endorsed/recommended to proceed are invited to move to the Outline Business Case (OBC) Stage and develop their Outline Business Case. The project is added to the pipeline and included in the Dashboard Reports to the Working Group, Advisory Board as well as the LEP Board.

NB: Whilst Site Investigation bids will only complete the Initial Proposal document, all SI bids will be subject to endorsement by the Funding Sub Group, Heads of Regeneration, and Advisory Board before approval by the LEP and subsequent Joint Committee.

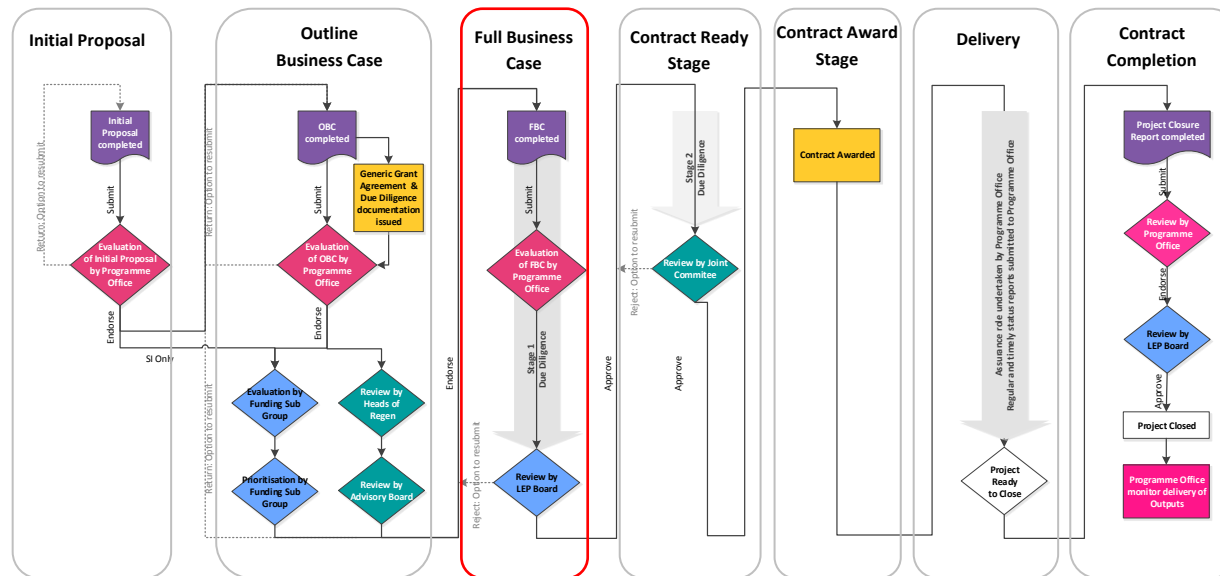
5.14.3 Outline Business Case Stage



- a. The Outline Business Case (OBC) is the detailed planning stage where the applicant will revisit and build on the information supplied in the Initial Proposal. At this stage the applicant will be required to focus on the first four cases with light touch to the Management Case. A detailed Management Case will follow at the Full Business Case stage
- b. At OBC Stage the applicant will be issued with copies of the generic Grant Agreement and the Walsall Accountable Body Legal and Financial Due Diligence checklist. Early visibility of the documentation will enable a more rapid turnaround at pre-contracting.
- c. The Programme Office will provide helpful guidance information to those completing OBCs. This will include online support and may include face to face workshops, depending on demand from applicants. The guidance will be on how to complete the documentation, not what to enter. Those providing guidance must be allowed to remain independent.
- d. Once submitted, the OBC will be evaluated by the Programme Office using a clearly defined scoring model that defines the characteristic of a “0”, “1”, “2” and “3” against the Five Case Model elements of Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial, and Management. The score generated will confirm the robustness of the OBC and inform the prioritisation to be carried out by the Funding Sub Group.
- e. The Programme Office will rank submitted OBCs. The ranking model will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders to ensure transparency.
- f. Technical Evaluation of the OBC will be undertaken by the Funding Sub Group of the LEP Board that will call upon externally sourced technical expertise to advise as required. This will inform the prioritisation of bids to be put forward for LEP Board approval.
- g. The calendar of LEP Board meetings will be publicised to provide clear guidance as to the approval schedule. The Funding Sub Group will meet at an appropriate interval prior to the LEP Board to enable the submission of recommendations.
- h. The Funding Sub Group does not make a formal approve / reject decision but provides recommendations to the decision making entity; the LEP Board. The Funding Sub Group will focus on the strategic fit of each OBC and their recommendations will be shared via meeting minutes. Supplementary information for clarification may be requested by the Funding Sub Group. At this stage the OBC is also shared by the Programme Office with the Working Group Heads of Regeneration and Advisory Board in outline for endorsement.
- i. If the Funding Sub Group, Working Group and Advisory Board endorse a submitted OBC the applicant is invited to move to the Full Business Case Stage.
- j. At this stage the Programme Office advises the applicant to commence their informal due diligence and informs the Accountable Body they have done so, to enable to Accountable Body to provide the appropriate support and guidance from the earliest possible stage. It is made clear to

applicant by both the Programme Office and the Accountable Body that this does not equate to an approval of their project and all work done at this stage remains at the risk of the applicant.

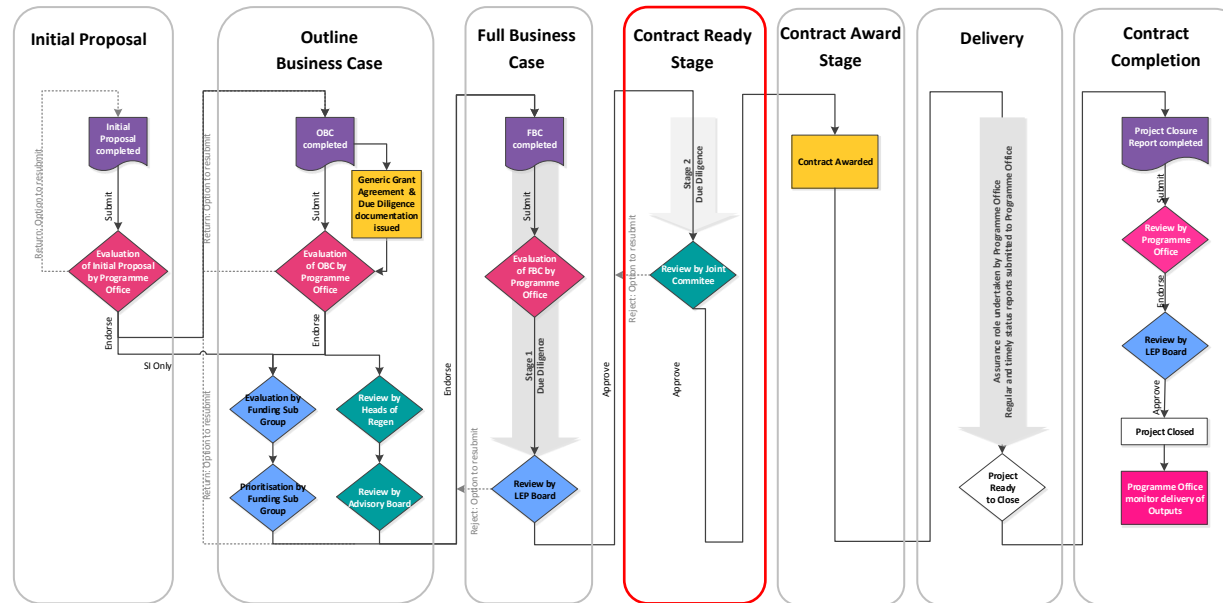
5.14.4 Full Business Case Stage



- The Full Business Case (FBC) is the detailed final phase where the bidder will revisit and build on/update (if applicable) the information supplied in the OBC. In addition the bidder will complete the fifth and final section of the Five Case Model; the Management Case.
- Authors of the Full Business Case will be actively encouraged to complete this documentation with a sense of urgency, although no specific time limit will be imposed as it is recognised that some applicants may require significant time to develop their Full Business Case.
- The Programme Office will provide helpful guidance information to those completing FBCs. This will include online support and may include face to face workshops, depending on demand from applicants. The guidance will be on how to complete the documentation, not what to enter. Those providing guidance must be allowed to remain independent.

- d. At this stage Walsall Accountable Body will hold a pre-contracting workshop with the applicant and advise the applicant to commence their pre-approval formal due diligence submission.
- e. Once submitted, the final case of the FBC will be evaluated by the Programme Office using a clearly defined scoring model that defines the characteristic of a “0”, “1”, “2” and “3”. The Programme Office will rank submitted FBCs. There is a finite limit on how many FBCs can be assessed by the LEP Board during any one meeting. The ranking process will be clearly communicated to all stakeholders to ensure transparency.
- f. If all the supplementary information has been provided then the FBC will be submitted to the LEP Board for approval.
- g. Applicants are NOT able to update their FBC at any time whilst waiting for submission to the LEP Board without undertaking a formal Change Request. The Change Request will be reviewed by the SEP Delivery Director in the first instance. Depending on the scale/nature of the Change then the SEP Delivery Director may require the author to return to the Outline Business Case Stage.
- h. If the LEP Board reject a submitted FBC the applicant may be invited to revisit their FBC and resubmit.
- i. If the LEP Board feels the types of projects and benefits being submitted are unbalanced they will feed back their Needs. These Needs may trigger a re-prioritisation by the Programme Office of waiting Business Cases. Needs may also be communicated back up the chain to those considering submitting an Initial Proposal. Additional marketing around these Needs may also be appropriate.
- j. If the LEP Board approves a submitted FBC the project will move to the Contract Ready Stage and the applicant is informed by the Programme Office of the decision the next working day.

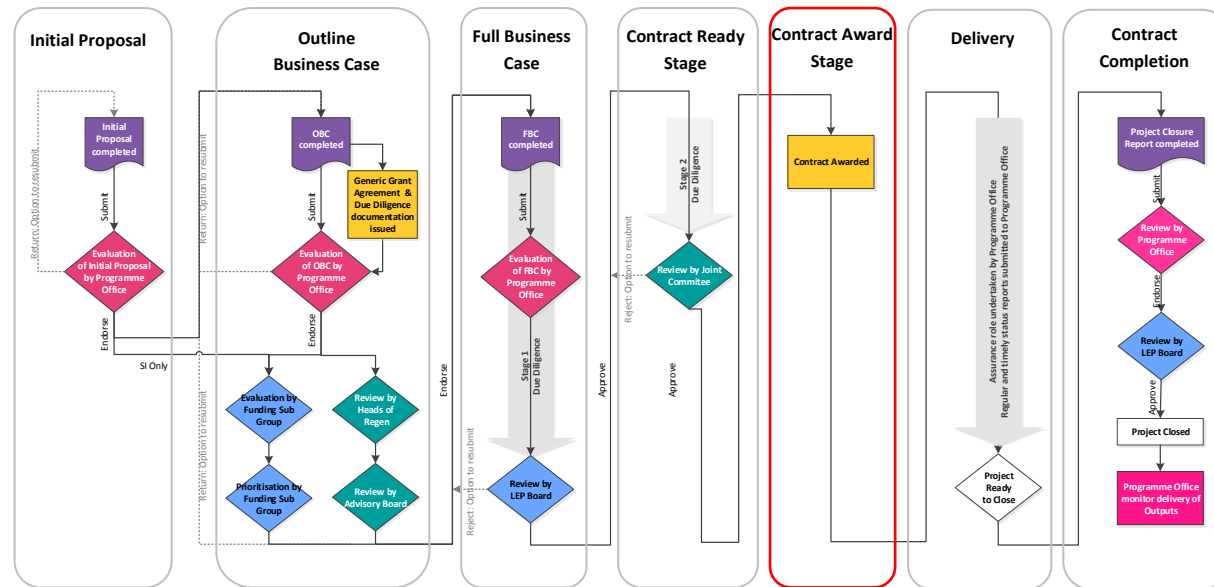
5.14.5 Contract Ready Stage



- The Programme Office will undertake Pre-Due Diligence checks on all FBCs prior to submission to the Accountable Body commencing the formal stage of due diligence to enable pre-contracting work to commence in the lead time to the Joint Committee Meeting.
- The Accountable Body will complete Stage One of Due Diligence (Formal Pre-Approval Due Diligence) on all projects that have been approved by the LEP Board prior to submission to the Joint Committee
- All projects at this stage will be submitted to the Joint Committee for review by the Joint Committee Secretariat.

- d. Those projects approved by the Joint Committee will move to the Contract Award Stage. Agreement of the terms of and subsequent award of the grant agreement by the Accountable Body will be determined by the availability and allocation of funding. Some projects may therefore remain at “Approved Contract Ready Stage” until funding is provided.
- e. Once funding is provided the project will move to the Contract Award Stage and project delivery will commence.
- f. Detailed contract/grant conditions will be drawn up by the Accountable Body for each successful bid as part of this Contract Award stage following a final stage of due diligence and pre-award negotiations.

5.14.6 Contract Award Stage

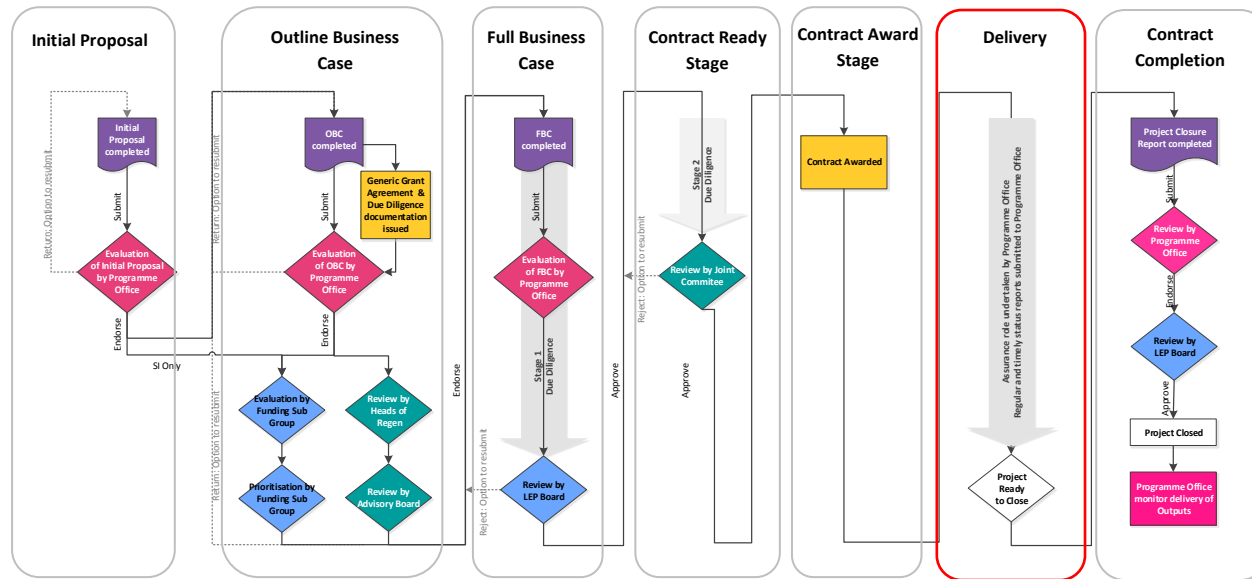


- a. Now the project is approved and funding has been secured.

- b. The Accountable Body will negotiate the details of the Grant Agreement with applicants, including the security or underwriting of the Grant via a Performance Bond, Legal Charge or other process for underwriting, negotiate the content of the Schedules, including Outcomes and organise the Sealing or Signing of Grant Agreements

c.

5.14.7 Delivery

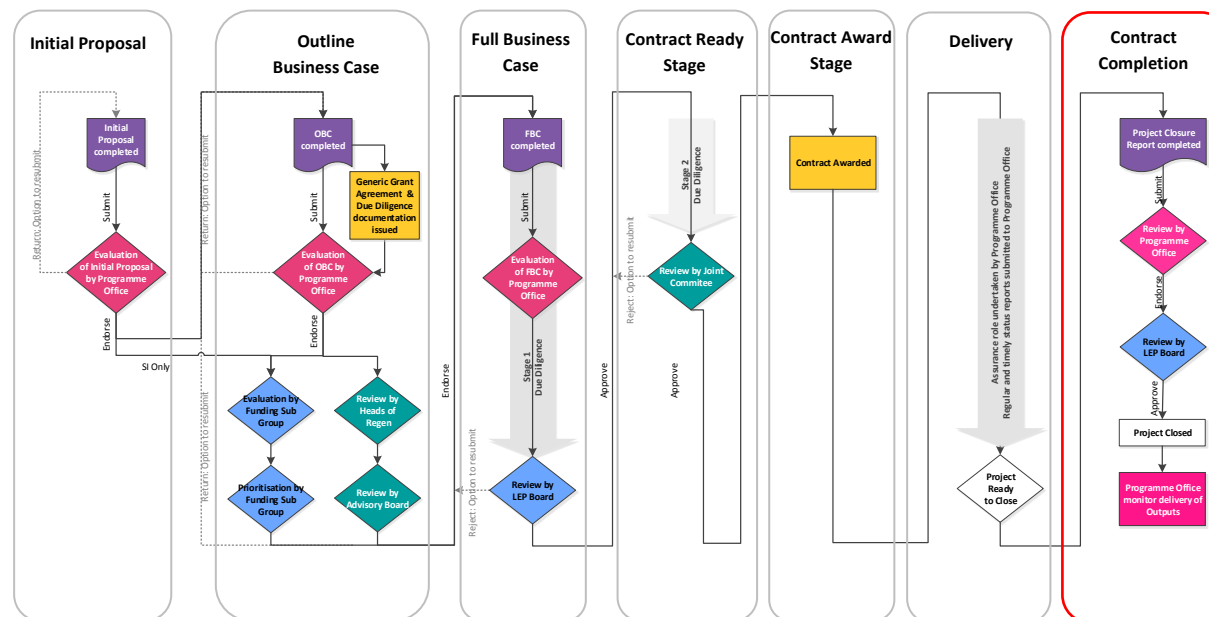


- d. The project is now in Delivery and continues to be subject to monitoring and change control, as well as ongoing contractual monitoring by the Accountable Body.
- e. The identified Project Manager must provide timely and accurate status information to the Programme Office using the Project Status Report (PSR). Any identified possible deviation away from the contracted schedules must be highlighted as early as possible via the PSR. In some circumstances

the Programme Office will require a formal Exceptions Report. This monitoring is supported by the reporting against agreed deliverables to the Accountable Body which forms the grant claims process.

- f. Any request to change from the agreed baseline scope, cost, timescale and outputs must be managed through a formal Change Request.
- g. Changes to forecast cashflows must be notified immediately, but will not require a Change Request proposal, unless significant.
- h. The Programme Office will provide the Assurance function to the LEP Board and may undertake detailed assessments and analysis of in-flight projects at any time.
- i. The Programme Office will provide timely and accurate RAG KPIs to the LEP Board and other appropriate stakeholders on the performance of in-flight projects.

5.14.8 Contract Completion / Project Closure



- a. On completion of the agreed scope of work the project must be formally closed.

- b. Closure will be reviewed by the Programme Office who will make recommendations to the LEP Board to approve or reject closure based on completion work, quality, benefits, cost and schedule. The Accountable Body will complete a Project Closure Visit once this has been confirmed by the Programme Office.
- c. The LEP Board will approve or reject closure of the project.
- d. Lessons Learned will be captured as part of the Closure Report completed by the project team. The Programme Office will assess lessons learned and share these with other projects and stakeholders as deemed useful, provided these are not commercially confidential.
- e. The Programme Office will continue to monitor outputs as required to support the original approved Full Business Case and approved

5.15 Contract Claims Process

5.15.1 Projects will need clear guidance for recovering the Grant aided element of their expenditure throughout the Grant year.

Specific process guidance will be needed to ensure compliance with year-end cut off procedures deployed by Walsall Council as the Accountable Body.

This will need to be documented with supporting graphics in the house style of section 5

5.15.2 Evaluation

The LEP Board and partners are clear on what we need to achieve in order to deliver economic growth for the Black Country. We have a long-established, politically endorsed Performance Management Framework in place against which we monitor our progress in relation to the targets established by the Black Country Strategy. The **Performance Management Framework** sets out our clear ambitions for the area. It provides a comprehensive knowledge base over the period of the programme so that the initiatives and interventions can be tracked and aligned. As this knowledge base grows and builds, this will create a legacy that can inform emerging strategies and initiatives to ensure future policy is informed by a robust knowledge base drawn from the real life expertise of the partners and participants to this project.

For each of the 12 SEP Programmes we are clear on the current baseline position and the scale of impact required in order to achieve our long term targets. These are monitored and reported to the LEP Board via the BC Economic Intelligence Unit. The evaluation and overall impact of all activity is critical for the LEP Board.

5.15.3 Evaluation of the Growth Deal

It is a requirement by BIS that LEP produce evaluation plans for their growth deal allocations. These Plans are owned by the LEP and are in response to the challenge that has been set by the Public Accounts Committee to progress the quality of evaluation of local growth interventions.

The growth deal as a whole will be evaluated and assessed in terms of the economic impact on the Black Country in the context of the Black Country Performance Management Framework and the SEP utilising Outcomes and Impact Evaluation techniques.

A series of selection criteria have been developed, through which the LEP will determine the shortlist of projects to be evaluated:

Criteria	Description
Timing	<i>Projects on which work will begin during 2015/16 will be prioritised.</i>
Importance to LEP/Relevance to SEP	<i>Projects should contribute to meeting the needs of the LEP, providing data and intelligence that are of practical use and have a clear relation to themes set out in the SEP.</i>
Project Innovation	<i>Projects involving or supporting innovative activities should be selected, where possible. On this criterion, highly innovative projects with smaller budgets will be prioritised over larger, more standard schemes, in order to facilitate learning and capture best practice.</i>
Size	<i>Projects must be large enough for impact to be measured and should receive proportionate evaluations - larger public investments justify fuller evaluation. The suggested size ranges are: <£5 million= small, <£50 million = medium, £50 million and above = Large.</i>
Availability of Evidence	<i>Priority should be given to projects in areas with weak existing evidence bases.</i>
Evaluation Cost	<i>Projects should be prioritised where evaluation costs will not be unreasonably high and where the best value for money can be achieved with the evaluation.</i>
Technical Feasibility (1) Practicality	<i>Projects should be prioritised where a basic level of evaluation evidence can be obtained, using a reasonable amount of resource.</i>
Technical Feasibility (2) Robustness	<i>Projects should be selected, if possible, where robust evaluation is feasible. Projects should be judged based on their score on the Maryland Scale (1-5), with 1 being "Poor" and 5 indicating "Gold Standard". Gold standard is unlikely to be practicable for Growth Deal projects</i>
Data Collection	<i>Projects must avoid relying only on self-reported outcomes for impact assessment, cross-referencing wherever possible to Government statistics. Self-reported outcomes include data provided through beneficiary surveys, stakeholder consultations and other primary research methods, which are considered less robust than Government data, although this may not be available at the required level of detail.</i>

In all cases evaluation should be proportionate and selective; taking into consideration the scale, value and scope of an intervention.

Growth deal Project sponsors are required to work with the LEP to outline the most appropriate evaluation approach e.g. Process evaluation, Theory based evaluation, Outcomes evaluation or Impact evaluation for their project and provide the LEP with evaluation reports as agreed.

Each type of evaluation question applied to a specific level of coverage serves a slightly different audience but in general the uses of evaluation can be characterised as:

**INSERT
IMAGE
HERE**

Demonstrating growth deal delivery and value for money (particularly important for programmes that may later seek additional funding)

- Learning lessons about what works, either to create desired impact on outcomes or to ensure **efficient delivery of outputs**
- Providing the evidence base to influence future decentralisation policy