

Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Local Assurance Framework



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Introduction

Purpose of the Assurance Framework

- 1.1 This is the Local Assurance Framework for the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA). The Assurance Framework sets out how public money is managed effectively and how accountability is provided to residents and businesses within our region.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Assurance Framework is to ensure that the necessary systems and processes are in place to manage funding effectively, and to ensure the successful delivery of the ambitions of the Greater Lincolnshire Plan. Its focus is to ensure that necessary practices and standards are implemented to provide the Government and the Combined County Authority with assurance that decisions over funding (and the means by which these decisions are implemented) are proper, transparent and deliver value for money.
- 1.3 The Assurance Framework covers expenditure on programmes and schemes funded by Government and is utilised when considering, decision making, approvals, funding bids, projects. The Assurance Framework also describes how investments will be tracked in relation to progress and impact as well as the evaluation process.
- 1.4 The Assurance Framework sits alongside several key governance and policy documents to shape the way that the activities and functions of the GLCCA are delivered, including the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal and Devolution Proposal; The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Regulations 2025; the GLCCA Constitution including the GLCCA Financial Regulations and the budget and policy framework; and the Greater Lincolnshire Plan.

Updating the Framework

- 1.5 The Assurance Framework is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and signed off by the Combined County Authority and the relevant statutory officers in line with requirements set by Government.
- 1.6 The Combined County Authority will notify the Government Department for Local Government (currently MHCLG) when considering any significant changes and submit any new drafting in order to engage in a review process, including obtaining Government Department approval before re-publishing.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

- 1.7 The Seven Principles of Public Life (the 'Nolan principles') are central to this Assurance Framework to ensure that the GLCCA, including members and officers, are upholding the highest standards of conduct and ensuring responsible management of resources. The principles are:
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership

About Greater Lincolnshire

The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority

- 2.1 The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) was established in 2025 to bring together local councils and businesses to provide strong local leadership and work with the Government in addressing key local challenges and opportunities, including the delivery of infrastructure and investment to boost growth and create high skill high wage jobs, tackling productivity and skills gaps to spread and improve access to opportunity, unlocking transformative regeneration and housing opportunities, and working together to tackle climate change.
- 2.2 The GLCCA was established as part of devolution in Greater Lincolnshire, based on an initial devolution prospectus agreed between the 3 Constituent Councils – Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and North Lincolnshire Council - in December 2022. The Prospectus set out a policy position for devolution, informed by a long-term vision for Greater Lincolnshire, with the recommendation that a formal agreement (deal) should be sought with government.
- 2.3 The devolution deal between the Constituent Councils and the government was formally announced in November 2023 worth £720 million over a 30 year period. The deal centred around transport related powers, education and skills, housing functions and economic development.
- 2.4 A draft devolution proposal was prepared by the 3 Constituent Councils and consulted on from 4 December 2023 to 29 January 2024. The consultation received 4,101 responses. Relative to its total population of 1.1 million, Greater Lincolnshire achieved a higher response rate (0.31%) than devolution consultation for any of the existing mayoral combined authority areas.
- 2.5 The Government confirmed in May 2024 and again in September 2024 that Greater Lincolnshire had passed the statutory tests for devolution and that it was minded to progress devolution for the region.
- 2.6 The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority Regulations 2025 confers the following devolved functions:
 - **Transport-related powers** including in relation to highways, traffic management and permit scheme functions.
 - **Adult education and skills functions** thus enabling decision-makers to closer align spending on skills with the opportunities and needs in the local economy to engage adults and provide them with the skills needed for entering and sustaining employment, an apprenticeship, traineeship, or other further learning.
 - **Housing functions** relating to compulsory purchase, plus provision of housing and land, land acquisition and disposal, and development and regeneration of land.
 - **Economic development** – duty to prepare an assessment of economic conditions.

Elected Mayor

- 2.7 The GLCCA has a democratic mandate to invest in its local area. The directly elected Mayor provides a single point of accountability for residents and is held responsible for their decisions through the local elections, as well as through meetings of the GLCCA, mayoral question times and the GLCCA's scrutiny protocol.

Geography

- 2.8 The Greater Lincolnshire economic geography consists of the areas of North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and the County of Lincolnshire including 7 City, District and Borough Councils. The area has a population of approximately 1.1 million people.

- 2.9 Responsibility for functions and services across Greater Lincolnshire includes:



Figure 2A

- 2.10 Greater Lincolnshire's natural assets and habitats, including miles of coast stretching from the Humber to the Wash and vast areas of productive agricultural land provides the opportunity for the area to make a significant contribution to the UK's future. Greater Lincolnshire is in a position where it can be at the forefront of renewable and clean energy technologies and production and be a world-leading provider of food, seafood and associated technological innovation. It can support improvements in the nation's supply chains and maximise the strategic advantages of its ports, transforming them into the most smart, clean and efficient port clusters in the world.

The Greater Lincolnshire Plan

2.11 The Greater Lincolnshire Plan sets out shared ambitions and outcomes for the region and directs the work of the GLCCA. The purpose of the Greater Lincolnshire Plan is to:

- Set out what we want to achieve in Greater Lincolnshire
- Set the trajectory for the longer-term up to 2040
- Ensure that government and wider local and national stakeholders are clear on the priorities and ambitions of the region
- Ensure that all regional partners speak with one strong voice

2.12 Greater Lincolnshire’s ambition is a Greater Lincolnshire where 1.1 million residents have good lives, with independence, wealth and good health. Where our communities are connected and working together we ensure national food security, logistic networks and clean energy to power the UK’s homes and economy.

2.13 The outcomes for Greater Lincolnshire include:

- A world leading provider in renewable and clean energy providing the UK with energy security and exporting our energy and skills to the world.
- A world leading provider of food, seafood and associated technological innovation enabling the UK to reach food security and exporting our produce, technology and skills to the world.
- Maximising the strategy advantages of our ports and lead their transformation into one of the most smart, clean and efficient port clusters in the world.

2.14 The GLCCA’s Strategy Framework includes a suite of policies, plans and strategies aligned to the Greater Lincolnshire Plan and key areas of delivery. Investment decisions of the GLCCA are informed through a Greater Lincolnshire Investment Strategy which is an enabler to the Greater Lincolnshire Plan.



Figure 2B

2.15 Annual State of the Region reporting provides progress and performance management of the Greater Lincolnshire Plan targets and wider policies, plans and strategies of the GLCCA.

Greater Lincolnshire Investment Strategy

- 2.16 The Greater Lincolnshire Investment Strategy sets out the transformational investments that the GLCCA will commit resources to, and the process required to make those investment decisions over an agreed investment period.
- 2.17 The Investment Strategy, as well as setting out the context, objectives and targets of the Combined County Authority derived from the Greater Lincolnshire Plan, will also identify the criteria that will be used to select and prioritise schemes:
- Investments with the highest potential contribution to the GLCCA’s targeted objectives and outcomes.
 - Selection of schemes must also be driven by those which support growth, drive social value, tackle market failure, maximise value for money and provide different kinds of return to the Greater Lincolnshire Investment Fund.
 - The design of the Greater Lincolnshire Investment Fund should not mean an equal share across themes or geographies and therefore places could expect to benefit in different ways and at different times.

Long term evidence led policy and strategy

- 2.18 The GLCCA takes an evidence led approach to the development of policy, plans and strategy (collectively policy of the GLCCA), considering the business voice to deliver on the ambitions of the Greater Lincolnshire Plan.
- 2.19 Policy is informed by a Greater Lincolnshire economic assessment of the region and regard is given to the existing policy of the GLCCA, its members and key partners. Policy is developed by the members and boards of the GLCCA taking evidence from key stakeholders and partnership groups. All policy is agreed at a meeting of the full GLCCA:

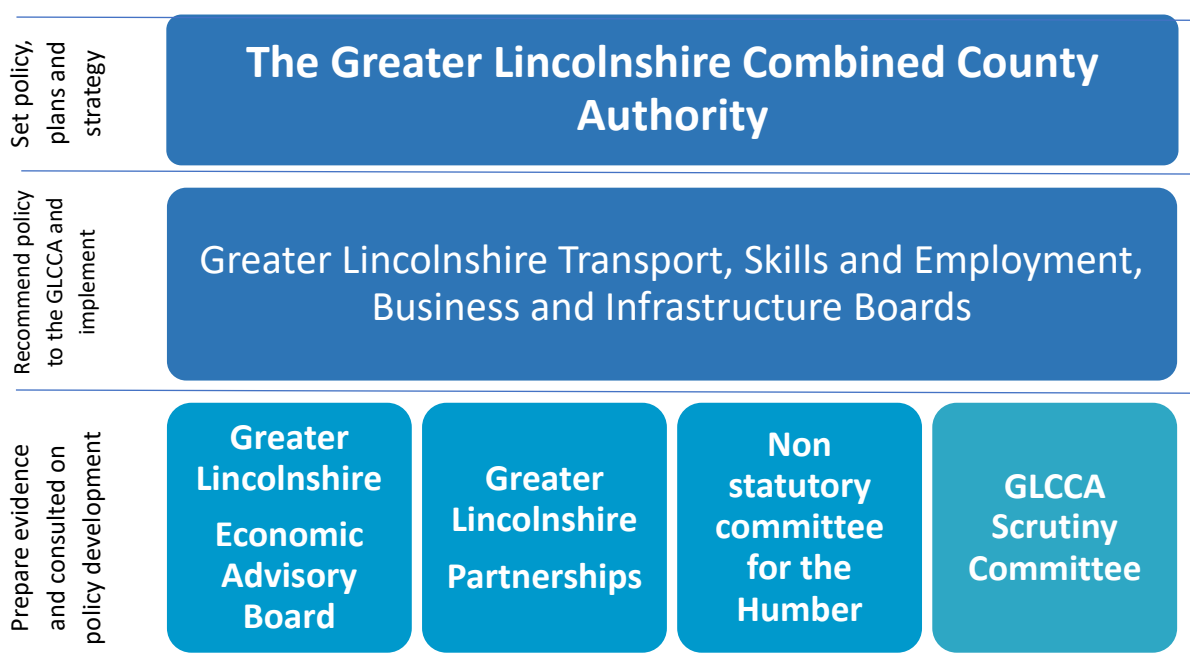


Figure 2C

Governance

Governance Structure of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority

3.1 A structure chart of the Combined County Authority is set out below:

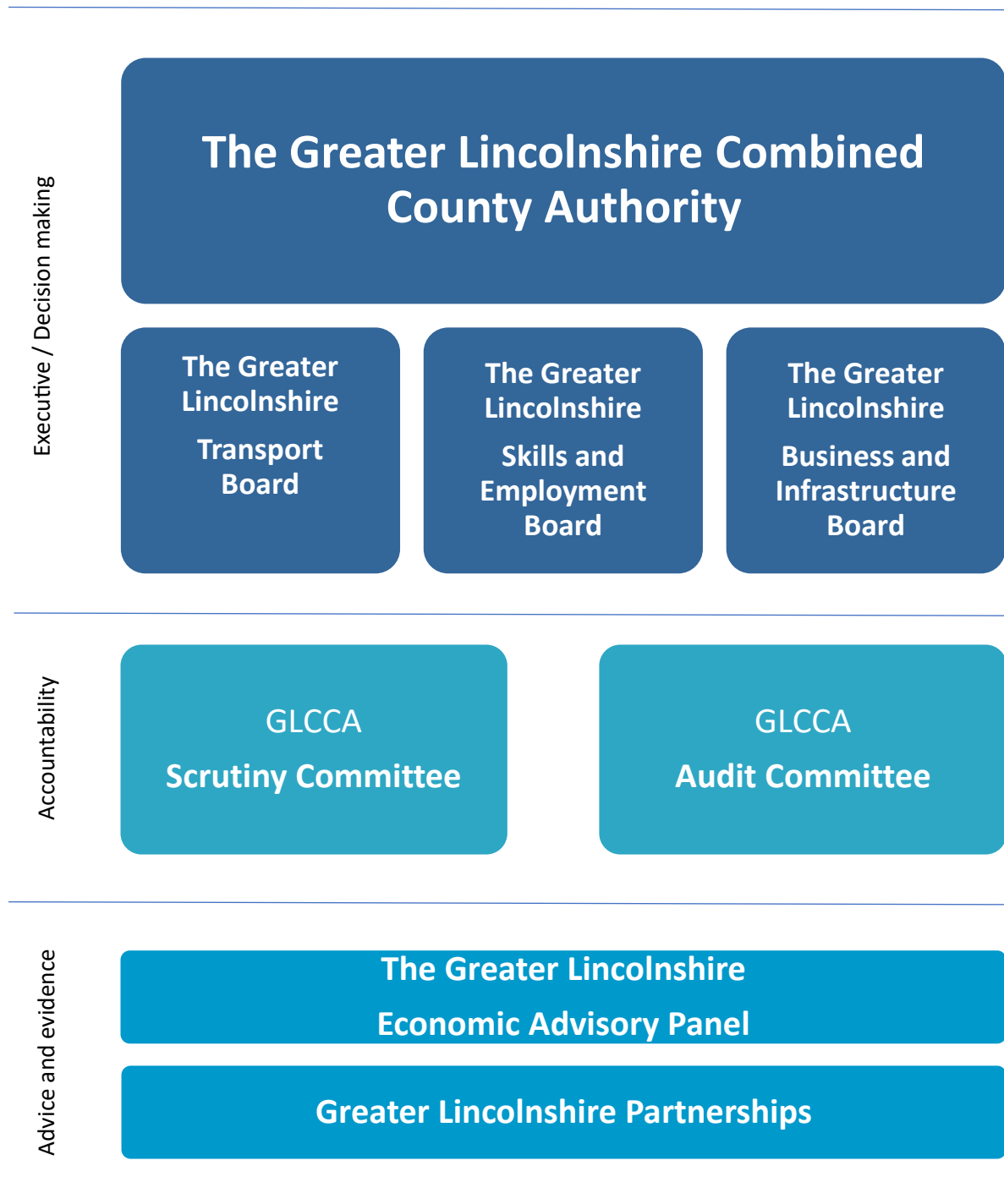


Figure 3A

Decision makers

- 3.2 The Mayor is responsible for carrying out some specific functions (Mayoral Functions). The Combined County Authority is responsible for any function of the Combined County Authority which is not the responsibility of the Mayor (any Non-Mayoral Function).
- 3.3 Any decision about a Mayoral Function (that is a function which is the responsibility of the Mayor) must be taken by the Mayor, or by
- The Deputy Mayor,
 - Another member of the Combined County Authority, under delegated authority from the Mayor, or
 - An officer of the Combined County Authority under delegated authority from the Mayor.
- 3.4 Decisions on Non-Mayoral Functions may be taken:
- By the Combined County Authority, (that is, at a meeting of the members of the Combined County Authority acting collectively), or
 - By a committee of the Combined County Authority which has delegated authority for the function,
 - Under joint arrangements with other local authorities, or
 - By an officer of the Combined County Authority under delegated authority.
- 3.5 The Mayor's vote is required in support of any decision taken at a meeting of the Combined County Authority about any Non-Mayoral Function. In exercising certain functions, the GLCCA may also require the vote or consent of certain other members, constituent councils or city, district, borough councils. These requirements are set out in detail in the GLCCA constitution.
- 3.6 The constitution also details specific voting arrangements for the amendment of the Mayor's budget and approval of the local transport plan (LTP).

Decision making committees

3.7 In addition to the Board of the GLCCA, the following Committees have decision - making powers:

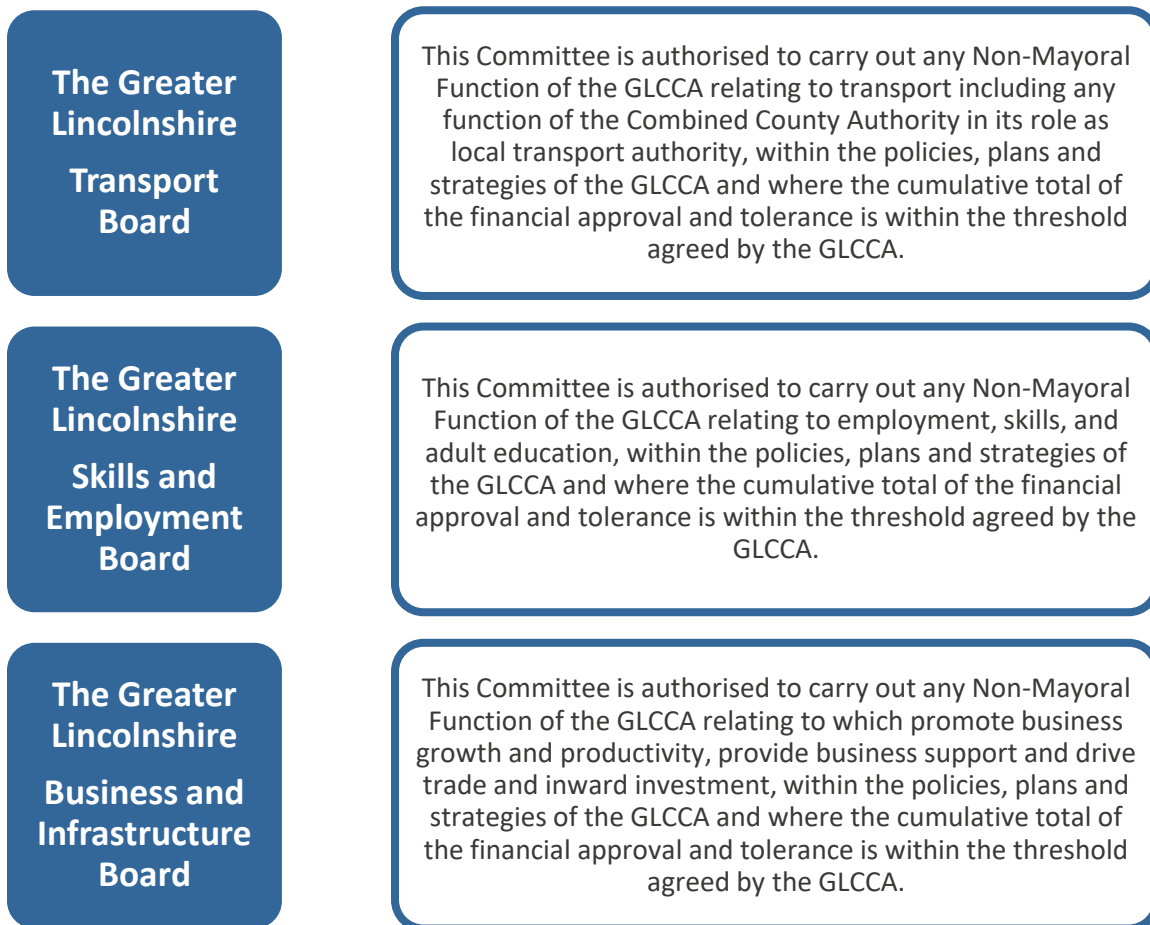


Figure 3B

Other committees of the GLCCA

3.8 The GLCCA also has the following Committees:

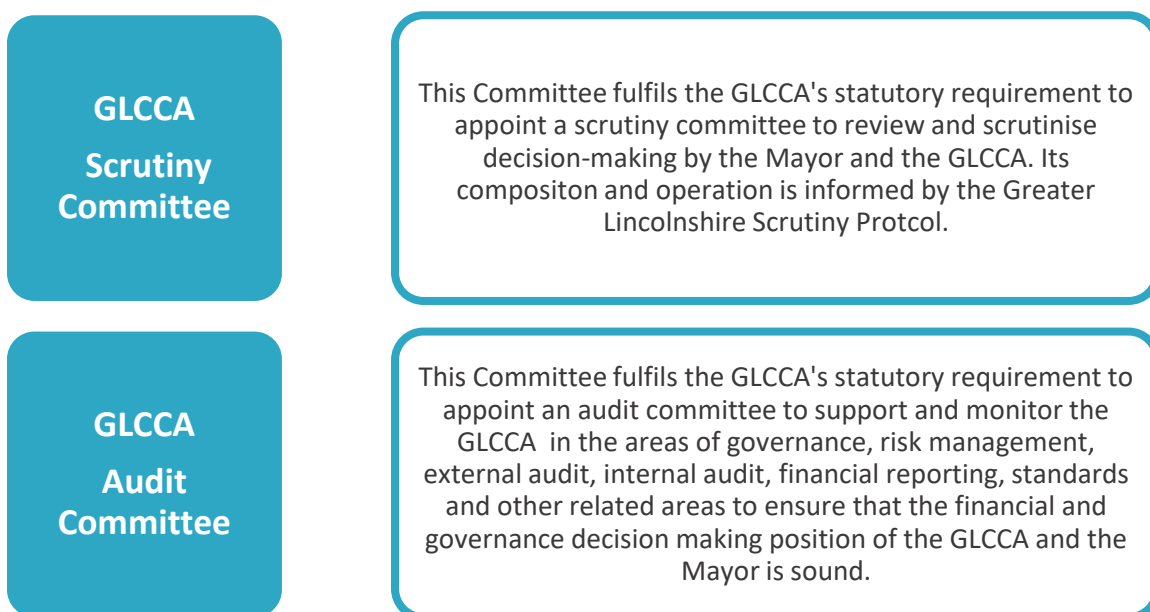


Figure 3C

Greater Lincolnshire Economic Advisory Panel

3.9 The Economic Advisory Panel is a core component in the governance arrangements for the GLCCA. It provides the opportunity for decision makers to engage proactively with business leaders from across the area in the development and implementation of economic policy for Greater Lincolnshire. The key features of the Economic Advisory Panel are:

- The Economic Advisory Panel is made up of business leaders, who together will work with the GLCCA and the Mayor to shape thinking on short and long-term issues of importance to businesses and the region's economic future
- The Economic Advisory Panel will support the GLCCA to prepare the region's economic assessment and other evidence that inform the design of innovative policies and programmes across Greater Lincolnshire
- The Economic Advisory Panel will ensure that the region's economic needs and strengths are heard and considered by local and national decision makers.

3.10 To support its work and delivery of the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal, the Economic Advisory Panel operates a number of thematic and sector advisory groups to include wider business expertise, in particular from the game changing sectors of the Greater Lincolnshire economy - food, energy, ports and logistics and defence.

3.11 The Economic Advisory Panel coordinates business engagement with locality groups such as Town Fund Boards and nominate business voice or LEP members for such groups as set out in the English Accountability Framework

Other arrangements – Greater Lincolnshire Partnerships

3.12 The Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal includes arrangements for a number of strategic partnerships across the economic region, these are the:

- Greater Lincolnshire partnership for Food – “the UK Food Valley Board”
- Greater Lincolnshire partnership for Innovation – “Innovation Board”
- Greater Lincolnshire enhanced partnership for Water
- Greater Lincolnshire strategic partnership for the Coast
- Greater Lincolnshire collaborative partnership for culture, heritage, sport, communities and the visitor economy
- Greater Lincolnshire partnership for Rail
- Non statutory committee for collaboration across the Humber, and Humber Energy Council.

- 3.13 The Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal recognises that the Humber is one of the UK's most significant industrial areas with several distinctive assets which play an important role for the UK economy. The economy has great potential built around clean energy generation, manufacturing, and globally strategic ports which play on the vital role of the Estuary as an international trading gateway and which benefit from Freeport status and the incentives that brings in supporting trading businesses, attracting inward investment and jobs, as well as wider economic activity to the area.
- 3.14 The Greater Lincolnshire Mayor and constituent council leaders meet with key stakeholders across the Humber on a non-statutory basis to understand need, opportunity and to inform the future use of mayoral functions across the Humber area of both regions.
- 3.15 The Joint Committee for the Humber will develop the evidence base and proposals for:
- Strategic management of Humber Estuary asset (including Humber 2100+ and Humber Natural Capital Plan).
 - A Humber Economic Plan and a supporting Humber Investment Strategy within the framework and aligned to the Greater Lincolnshire Plan and Greater Lincolnshire Investment Strategy.
 - Green Energy Transition to Net Zero by 2040, including the development of a Net Zero Strategy underpinned by strong collaboration between public and private sector partners across the Humber. The Strategy which will form part of the wider Humber Economic Plan and align to wider Greater Lincolnshire policy.
 - Attract and deliver new investment, including Humber-wide place promotion aligned to and to compliment wider Greater Lincolnshire place promotion.
 - Sector growth in Ports, Logistics and collaboration with the Humber freeport.

Other arrangements

Mayoral Rural Transport Group

- 3.16 The Greater Lincolnshire Mayor convenes a rural transport group to lead the national debate on transport in mayoral rural areas. The group brings together other rural combined authorities to champion innovation and work in partnership with the Department for Transport to identify pilot projects to address rural connectivity and accessibility.

Other arrangements – Council for Nations and Regions

- 3.17 The Greater Lincolnshire Mayor is a member of the Government's Council for the Nations and Regions.

Investment Decisions

Decision making

- 4.1 Investment decisions will be taken at a meeting of the GLCCA. The GLCCA may seek specialist and/or external advice or establish an advisory panel of experts to inform investment decisions.
- 4.2 The GLCCA is a new organisation that needs to build the trust and confidence of government, stakeholders and the public, in relation to the ability to take investment decisions. Promoting transparency in its decision-making is a key part of this. The GLCCA are committed to keeping records which demonstrate that all legal obligations are met, and all other compliance requirements placed upon us, and these are accessible as set out below.
- 4.3 All investment decisions are made by reference to:
 - How well they contribute to the ambitions and strategic priorities as set out in the Greater Lincolnshire Plan, the Greater Lincolnshire Investment Strategy and any specified policy, plan or strategy of the GLCCA.
 - Statutory requirements.
 - Any grant conditions attached to funding.
 - Funding programme objectives.
- 4.4 Decisions are based on merit, taking into account all relevant information.
- 4.5 The GLCCA designates a statutory Monitoring Officer who is responsible for ensuring that decisions conform to the relevant legislation and regulation. A key part of the Monitoring Officer's role is ensuring that the legal responsibilities of the Combined County Authority as accountable body in relation to ensuring the transparency provisions are met.

The Role of the Accountable Body

- 4.6 The GLCCA will be the Accountable Body for all funds within a programme and will be responsible for the proper administration and financial probity of all funds received. The GLCCA will ensure the effective use of public money and have responsibility for the proper administration of funding received and its expenditure.
- 4.7 As the Accountable Body, the GLCCA will be responsible for overseeing policy, the prioritisation of funding, ensuring value for money, evaluating performance and managing risk.
- 4.8 The GLCCA will:
 - Hold investment programme funds and make payments in accordance with the decisions of the Combined County Authority or relevant decision-making body.
 - Ensure that funding is approved and allocated in a manner that is lawful, transparent, evidence-based, consistent and proportionate.
 - Ensure that the decisions and activities conform to the legal requirements with regard to equality and diversity, environmental regulations and other relevant legislation and guidance.

- Ensure through its s.73 officer that the funds are being used appropriately and responsibly, ensuring they are in accordance with decisions made by the Combined County Authority or relevant decision making body
- Record and maintain the official record of formal meetings relating to decisions made on all investment projects
- If a decision related to funding does not adhere to this assurance framework, then the Combined County Authority, will not action this decision

Transparency and Accountability

Accountability

- 5.1. The transfer of power through devolution enables decisions to be made closer to the communities they affect, enhancing responsiveness and efficiency. Accountability means that those who have power must answer for and explain their choices and actions to the public. The English Devolution Accountability Framework identifies 3 key forms of accountability:
 - local scrutiny and checks and balances
 - accountability to the public
 - accountability to the UK government
- 5.2. The GLCCA has a robust constitution that captures the key structures and boundaries for accountability, responsibility, and the delegation of authority to make decisions. The GLCCA seeks to achieve best practice approach towards accountability and transparency and has adopted the principles of the Government Scrutiny Protocol.
- 5.3. The protocol ensures that there is appropriate voice from across the Greater Lincolnshire area and that there is proper opportunity to ensure scrutiny on decision making, including through the GLCCA's overview and scrutiny committee, which meets in public and has broad powers to request information and the attendance of decision makers, and make recommendations for improvement.
- 5.4. Engagement with all stakeholders including the public is central to the operational activity of the GLCCA. Engagement supports policy and strategy and inform the objectives of the authority. This will include engaging with stakeholders to inform the development of key strategies, plans and following any specific guidance required by Government.
- 5.5. Mayor's Question time will take place 4 times a year which provides public and stakeholders with opportunities to put questions to the Mayor on local issues that are of particular interest to them.
- 5.6. The GLCCA is committed to continuous improvement with regular performance assessments of policy and the delivery of functions considering a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- 5.7. The GLCCA has robust performance management arrangements including State of the region reporting which is published and used to measure progress against plans annually. In addition the GLCCA proactively publishes data in accordance with requirements of the English Accountability Framework and the Transparency Code, funding arrangements, and as requested by the Office for Local Government (OFLOG).
- 5.8. The GLCCA is required to appoint or designate several statutory officers to support the lawful and effective operation of the authority, consistent with the regulatory requirements placed on it.

The roles include:

- A Head of Paid Service responsible for ensuring the GLCCA's functions are properly coordinated, organising staff, and appointing appropriate management.
- A Monitoring Officer responsible for monitoring the lawfulness of the GLCCA's actions and, if necessary, complying with their duty under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to report unlawfulness or maladministration to their authorities.
- A Section 73 Chief Finance Officer responsible for administering the GLCCA's financial affairs in accordance with Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985.
- The GLCCA will also designate a Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Data Protection Officer, Senior Information Risk Officer, and the GLCCA Returning Officer.

5.9 The GLCCA may also enter into arrangements for the delivery of functions by another body such as a constituent council or a third party. Such arrangements will be managed through a service level agreement in accordance with the GLCCA's constitution, policies and assurance framework as relevant.

Publication of Meetings and Agenda Items

5.10 The GLCCA has established appropriate arrangements to ensure that formal meetings of the GLCCA, its committees and sub-committees are published as required by law.

5.11 The dates of all formal meetings will be published on the GLCCA website and documents for each meeting are also published in advance, which will allow the public to keep up to date with the operational activity of the GLCCA. Other documents required for publication such as a Forward Plan of upcoming key decisions and notices relating to exempt information items will also be published on the website.

Information and Data Protection

5.12 The GLCCA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and responds to statutory information requests in accordance with approved procedures.

5.13 The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and to publish information covered by the scheme. The GLCCA fulfils this requirement.

5.14 The GLCCA is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 and must by law appoint a Data Protection Officer. They will assist the CCA Authority on the monitoring of compliance with the data protection legislation, advises on data protection obligations, provides advice regarding Data Protection Impact Assessments and is the contact point for data subjects and the supervisory authority.

- 5.15 The GLCCA is fully compliant with Data Protection legislation. Requests made by data subjects under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 will be dealt with in accordance with approved procedures.

Use of Resources and Accounts

- 5.16 The use of resources by the GLCCA is subject to the usual local authority checks and balances, including the financial duties and rules which require councils to act prudently in spending. These are overseen by the Combined County Authority's Section 73. This post has statutory responsibility to administer the Combined County Authority's financial affairs and is responsible for ensuring that funding is used legally and appropriately.
- 5.17 The Combined County Authority has clear accounting processes in place to ensure that all funding sources are accounted for separately and that funds can only be used in accordance with formal approvals made under the Combined County Authority decision-making arrangements.
- 5.18 The Combined County Authority has a statutory duty to keep adequate accounting records and prepare a statement of accounts in respect of each financial year. This statement of accounts is published here usually in June in draft and in September as fully audited, although this may change in accordance with legislative requirements. The statement will cover expenditure funded from the Greater Lincolnshire Investment Fund and other funding sources, including those received from Government.
- 5.19 The Combined County Authority publish a public notice each year, setting out a specific period during which any person may inspect and make copies of the Combined County Authority's accounting records for the financial year.
- 5.20 During the same period, the external auditor must give a local government elector (someone registered to vote in the local elections) within Greater Lincolnshire (or their representative) an opportunity to question the external auditor about the accounting records, and objections may be made to the external auditor about any relevant item.

Audit

- 5.21 The Combined County Authority complies with statutory requirements relating to audit arrangements, principal elements of which are:
- Appointing an audit committee
 - Inspection by external auditors
 - Adopting internal audit, risk and fraud arrangements
- 5.22 The Combined County Authority's Governance and Audit Committee fulfils the requirement to appoint an audit committee. By law this must include at least one independent person.
- 5.23 An annual independent audit is conducted by externally appointed auditors ensuring the Combined County Authority operates a robust financial management and reporting framework

- 5.24 The Combined County Authority's internal audit function carries out independent and objective appraisals of relevant systems and processes, including ensuring that effective procedures are in place to investigate promptly any alleged fraud or irregularity. The Combined County Authority's internal auditors provide assurances to the Combined County Authority through its Governance and Audit Committee, the Section 73 Chief Finance Officer.
- 5.25 The Combined County Authority's financial regulations set out further detail in relation to the Combined County Authority's audit arrangements.

Conflict of Interest

- 5.26 The Code of Conduct provides an overview of how conflicts of interest are managed.
- 5.27 Officers of the authority must comply with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Officers, which also reflects the Nolan Principles of public life and requires officers to register interests. Officers also need to comply with a Gifts and Hospitality policy
- 5.28 The GLCCA also has policy for anti fraud, bribery and money laundering.

Complaints Policy

- 5.29 The GLCCA will consider any complaints in accordance with the agreed approach.

Whistleblowing Policy

- 5.30 The GLCCA will adopt a whistleblowing policy, to investigate and resolve any case where it is alleged by stakeholders, members of the public or internal whistle-blowers that the GLCCA is acting in breach of the law, failing to adhere to the framework or failing to safeguard public funds.

Funding of the CCA

- 5.31 The statutory instrument creating the GLCCA indicate that the authority will be funded by the three Constituent Member Councils. The costs of establishing the GLCCA will be met from the overall resources of the GLCCA which includes Mayoral Capacity Funding of £500,000 in 2024/25, £1 million in 2025/26, and £500,000 in 2026/27.
- 5.32 The Mayor has powers to issue a precept and impose a levy, and the CCA has powers to borrow. It is expected that the running costs of the CCA will be met by either continued central Government support or with funding from the Constituent Councils.
- 5.33 Government has committed to investment of £24 million per year for the next 30 years into the region through the Mayor/CCA. The general powers the CCA has around finance and funding are expected to be substantially the same as local authorities.
- 5.34 The significant programme costs associated with major projects and schemes across the CCA footprint will be funded from other sources, the CCA has powers to borrow whilst the bulk of the funding needed for the CCA/Mayor will be provided by Government for the next thirty years.

Members allowances

- 5.35 The statutory instrument creating the GLCCA sets a position on the payment of allowances to members of the authority. Remuneration will not normally be payable to constituent and non-constituent members, other than allowances for travel and subsistence paid in accordance with a scheme approved by the GLCCA.
- 5.36 The GLCCA utilise the North Lincolnshire independent remuneration panel to make recommendations for the allowances payable to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor (when not an executive member of a constituent council), and any independent persons who are members of the GLCCA or its committees.

Public sector equality duty

- 5.37 The Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal and Proposal were informed by a broad and wide-ranging Equality Impact Assessment. The assessment was informed through region wide consultation and was approved alongside the formal devolution Proposal by the 3 Constituent councils.
- 5.38 The GLCCA will comply with the public sector equality duty as stated in the Equality Act 2010. The authority will ensure that the decisions and operations adhere to legal requirements with regard to equality and diversity, environmental regulations and other relevant legislation and guidance.

Local Engagement and Partnership Working

Local Engagement

- 6.1. The GLCCA is committed to working openly and transparently with its member bodies and partners to deliver their collective functions and achievement of shared ambitions including the Greater Lincolnshire Plan.
- 6.2. The GLCAA and the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor seeks to provide early engagement with members, partners and stakeholders on key issues, opportunities and decisions for the region. The GLCCA and Greater Lincolnshire Mayor collaborate with member bodies through a communications and visits protocol to provide a shared single voice and advocacy for Greater Lincolnshire.
- 6.3. The GLCAA and the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor will seek guidance from member authorities and bodies on the interpretation and applicability of their policy as appropriate to inform decision making of the authority.

Mayors and regions

- 6.4. The Greater Lincolnshire economy is interlinked with neighbouring economic areas and makes a significant contribution to the wider UK economy. The GLCCA and Greater Lincolnshire Mayor will develop relationships with these areas where it is of benefit to Greater Lincolnshire and work collaboratively with
 - Adjacent mayoral regions including: Hull and East Riding, East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Norfolk should the County progress with devolution.
 - Wider mayoral geographies such as the east coast of England, Midland Mayors or rural mayors where there are shared challenges, ambitions or opportunities to do so.
 - UK Mayors and Government led groupings such as the Council for the Nations and Regions.

Sub National Transport Bodies

- 6.5. Prior to the establishment of the GLCCA, the Greater Lincolnshire economic area was served by two sub national transport bodies (STBs) - Transport of the North and Midlands Connect. A strong relationship with both STBs is important to future economic growth across the region. Current legislation restricts the ability for the GLCAA to be a member of two STBs and through the Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal the Government has committed to resolving this.
- 6.6. It is proposed that the GLCAA will seek full membership of Midlands Connect and co-option onto Transport for the North. This will entitle GLCCA to appoint a member to sit on both the TfN Board and the Rail North Committee and, were there to be a vote, to participate in that vote.

Provision of services

- 6.7. The GLCCA receives a range of services from the other bodies including the constituent councils to support the functions of the combined county authority. These arrangements are set out in service level agreements with appropriate provisions for the timely passporting and scheduling of funding.

Assurance for Programme and Project Delivery

- 7.1 This section sets out a single assurance framework (SAF) to be applied throughout the lifecycle of programmes and projects. It is used in the development and delivery of all projects and investments. It sets out the systems, processes and protocols designed to provide the Combined County Authority with a consistent approach for appraisal, assurance, risk management, performance, monitoring and evaluation.
- 7.2 This single assurance process will be applied to the assessment of schemes and programmes that flow through the Combined County Authority, drawing on current national guidance. It provides assurance to decision-makers and Government that all the GLCCA investment proposals meet the expected standards.
- 7.3 It is designed to be used as guidance to internal and external project developers and sponsors to understand the processes associated with the application and the route to approval of all external funding opportunities.
- 7.4 The single assurance framework provides consistency of approach for assurance, independent appraisal, and informed decision making across all funding pots. Furthermore, it allows proportionality to be applied for the development of business cases through defined development routes. The Single assurance framework does not apply to projects or programmes that are defined as corporate, continuous improvement or Business as Usual (BAU) activity.

- **A SAF Programme/Project:** Projects and Programmes which follow the SAF are focused on achieving positive outcomes for the local area. They are typically funded by external sources such as devolution deals and bid applications/grant awards from Central Government, for example the Investment programme, where the GLCCA is the accountable body.

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

- **A Corporate Project:** SAF does not apply to Corporate Projects.

A Corporate project is created to address an internal business need, benefitting the organisation, for example a change to the operating systems of an organisation. Risk management should be considered with risks reviewed as part of the activity. Corporate projects will be supported by specialists across the GLCCA including Finance, Project Management, Human Resources and Legal as appropriate, to strengthen the case for funding and, the identified benefits and support effective delivery.

- 7.5 The SAF sets out the rising scale of assurance that is required against an increasing scale of value in business case approvals, alongside appropriate processes for risk profiling of a project, guidance on business case development and the documentation required for approval consideration. The Combined County Authority ensures that all funding decisions are based on impartial expert advice.

Assessing Value for Money

- 7.6 As an investor of public funds, the Combined County Authority has a responsibility to ensure that its decisions deliver best value for the taxpayer, and therefore all investment opportunities and Business Cases must include an assessment of Value for Money.
- 7.7 The SAF has been developed in line with HMTs Green Book guidelines, which require project managers to build in Value for Money processes throughout the development and approval stages. In addition, the Combined County Authority requires all Business Cases be developed in line with HMTs Five Case Model.
- 7.8 The range of toolkits (HMT Green Book, DfT TAG, DLUHC Appraisal Guidance etc) are used to demonstrate the economic, social and environmental benefits and cost over an appropriate appraisal period in order to assess the Value for Money of a Programme or project.

Entry points for investment

- 7.9 There are two entry points for Investment, they are through:
- **The Greater Lincolnshire Plan**
(and supporting Strategy Framework, Investment Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan)
 - **In Year Proposals**
This includes new funding opportunities (further devolved funding) and new policy priorities enabling the Combined County Authority to respond to economic opportunities and/or shocks at a national or local level.
- 7.10 The development of concepts, and external funding opportunities are supported by officers of the Combined County Authority in terms of coordination and providing advice and guidance. Collaboration and co-design will play an intrinsic role in the Combined County Authority's approach, working closely with delivery partners and stakeholders throughout the development process.
- 7.11 Projects for funding through the GLCCA investment programme will be identified and prioritised through the Greater Lincolnshire Plan, the Greater Lincolnshire Investment Plan and the three core plans for Transport, Employment and Skills, and Business and Infrastructure. This is known as the Strategy Framework and is explained earlier in the document. It sets our strategic vision and economic objectives to drive forward our economy to create jobs, improve skills and support companies to grow and prosper. It provides a framework for identifying, developing and prioritising investment in the Greater Lincolnshire area.
- 7.12 The Greater Lincolnshire Plan and Strategy Framework sets out the 'golden thread' from the strategic objectives and Mayoral priorities, through its overarching strategies, organisational objectives to programme and project activity directed through annual business plan activity.
- 7.13 There may be instances where items drawn down from the Greater Lincolnshire Plan for business case development require the approach of issuing a call/ expression of interest prior to Business Case development.

New Funding Opportunities

- 7.14 It is possible in-year that there may be further unexpected funding opportunities that need to be pursued. This could be a result of new or changes to Government initiatives and priorities or where there is a need to address emerging priorities.
- 7.15 Where such opportunities arise a project initiation paper will be produced in line with phase 1 of the SAF. As necessary and appropriate, processes will be expediated to enable funding to be accessed quickly.
- 7.16 Where financial liability is placed onto the Combined County Authority, the SAF is applicable throughout all stages of the project or programme lifecycle: initiation, development, approvals, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.
- 7.17 **In Year Proposals:** Constituent Councils, Partners and the Combined County Authority can submit in-year concept proposals that are not included within the Greater Lincolnshire Plan. These in-year proposals will require the completion of a Project Initiation Paper and appropriate political endorsement in alignment with the requirements set out in Phase 1 of the SAF.

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

- 7.18 **Open Calls/ Expressions of Interest:** The purpose of an Open Call proposal/ Expression of Interest would be to confirm that the proposal is consistent with the strategic context set out in the Combined County Authority Vision and the strategic objectives within the Greater Lincolnshire Plan, outline the rationale for intervention, set out the primary benefits associated with the intervention and identify a proposed preferred option with costs based on an appraisal of the available options.
- 7.19 **Business Case Development Fund/Feasibility Fund:** The Combined County Authority propose to have a Business Case Development Fund for the development of early-stage projects, or the additional capacity required to access funding to deliver activity which has potential to contribute towards the Combined County Authority's strategic objectives. Proposals seeking support from the Business Case Development Fund will be invited to complete a bespoke application form, with the Investment Board making decisions on the allocation of funding.
- 7.20 **Overview of the single assurance framework process:** This section sets out the process by which the GLCCA will identify its priority investments across a range of areas. It also sets out the minimum requirements that all GLCCA funded projects or programmes are expected to deliver. The diagram below is a visual outline of the strategic investment process as and when a new funding programme is proposed.

Assurance Framework Overview

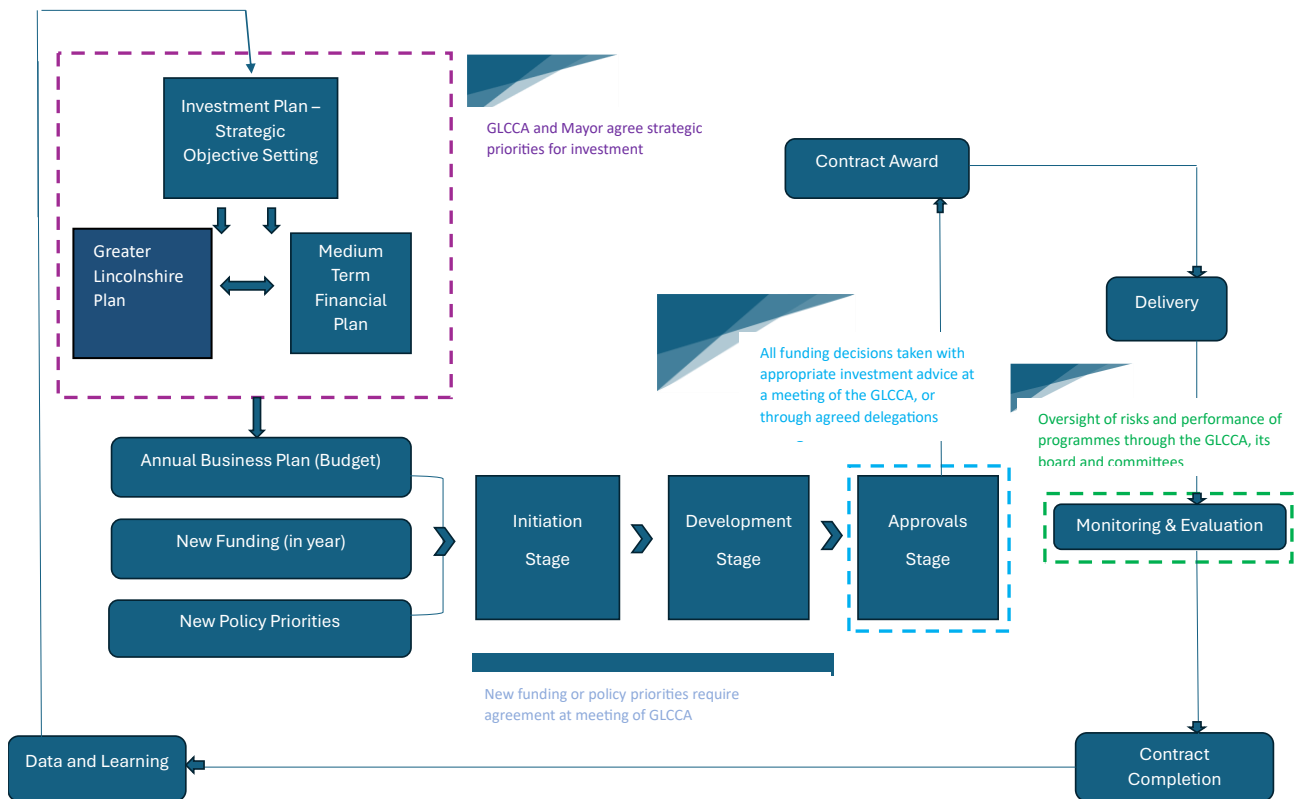


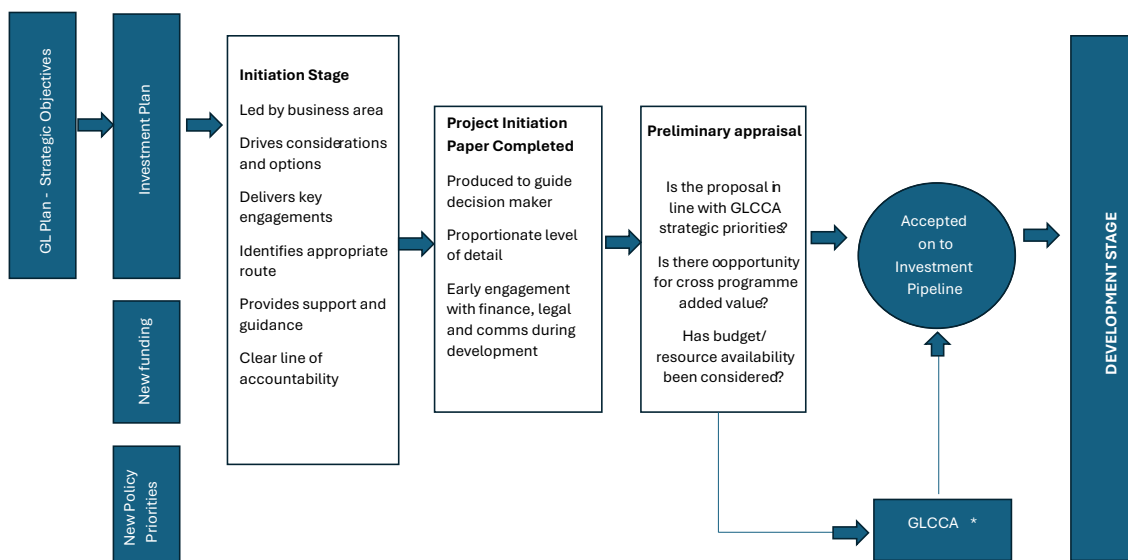
Figure 7A

Phase 1: Initiation Stage (Concept to Pipeline Approval)

- 7.21 This stage provides early assurance that investment proposals meet strategic objectives, have sufficient resources and appear to meet the necessary requirements to deliver compliantly prior to the development of a full business case.
- 7.22 The initiation stage enables the opportunity for early engagement across the GLCCA, providing the appropriate support and guidance to ensure high quality project/programme development in line with agreed standards.
- 7.23 All investment proposals are required to complete a Project Initiation Paper (PIP) which will provide a summary of the proposed investment. The content and approach to engagement will be proportionate to the scale of investment.
- 7.24 The PIP requires key information including a brief description of the proposal, the need for intervention/ case for change, the outputs (including when, how and who will deliver them), and the associated benefits. It also includes strategic fit and initial finance and risk detail. The proposed approach to evaluation should also be considered at this stage and will form the project/programme logic model.
- 7.25 The PIP provides a consistent entry point into the SAF that provides the required information to enable early assessment, prioritisation and consideration of the investment proposal.

- 7.26 The process for initiation ensures early engagement with the core areas of the Combined County Authority to enable subject matter expert input from an early stage from relevant the GLCCA business areas, Legal and Finance.
- 7.27 This stage provides preliminary assurance that proposals are in line with strategic priorities, legally compliant, and meet availability of resources and budget. It also identifies the most appropriate route for the approval of funding.
- 7.28 Strategic Investments will be considered by the GLCCA prior to being accepted onto the Investment Pipeline. Programmes or projects that have gone through the strategic planning process and have been identified for inclusion within the Greater Lincolnshire Plan are then added to the Investment Pipeline, they can be drawn down for business case development in line with the annual business plans and funding availability.
- 7.29 Projects and programmes coming forward of a lower value (below £500,000) and included within the Greater Lincolnshire Plan, will not be required to go to the GLCCA but will be reviewed by the SRO for the business area, finance and legal prior to inclusion on the Investment Pipeline and progression to the Development Stage.
- 7.30 For project or programme proposals not included within the SAF and/or Greater Lincolnshire Plan, they will be considered within the context of GLCCA Priorities and the Medium-Term Financial Plan in order to make recommendations to the GLCCA. GLCCA endorsement will be required prior to acceptance onto the Investment Pipeline and progression to the Development Stage.
- 7.31 The Combined County Authority records all project activity where projects are in a stage of development and delivery. The pipeline will set out details of the project along with the stage it is at, and whether external funding is bid for or offered by sponsoring Government department. The GLCCA will receive a bi-monthly report on the Investment Pipeline for review and to hold the relevant SRO to account for progress.

Initiation Stage



* New funding pots and ideas to ensure political support

Figure 7B

Phase 2: Business Case Development Stage

- 7.32 This stage produces a comprehensive case for funding in line with HMT Green Book principles. The business case will be subject to a technical appraisal undertaken from outside the business area, to provide assurance to decision makers that investment proposals meet the agreed standards and compliance requirements, in line with recognised best practice.
- 7.33 Identified schemes will be assessed against the agreed criteria of the GLCCA. The business case is developed (or managed where development is led outside the Combined County Authority) by the sponsoring business area, ensuring that its content meets the required standard defined within the Combined County Authority guidance in addition to meeting the requirements of the SAF and HMT's five case model Green Book compliance. It should also seek alignment to Policy Aims and Objectives, whilst meeting any funding requirements and/or milestone dates/requirements.
- 7.34 Where delivery partners are external to the Combined County Authority, they will be supported through the process by the lead business area within the Combined County Authority. The delivery partner will use the appropriate business case guidance and templates provided, subject matter experts and technical appraisers.
- 7.35 The lead business area is responsible for ensuring they or any partner meet deadlines, engage the appropriate subject matter experts and technical appraisers, and adhere to required formats when developing a business case.
- 7.36 The lead business area is responsible for ensuring they or any partner meet deadlines, engage the appropriate subject matter experts and technical appraisers, and adhere to required formats when developing a business case.
- 7.37 The GLCCA has a Programme Assurance function who can provide advice on the requirements of the SAF if needed, at the start of and during the Business Case development stage. Sponsors must ensure their business case is developed and is aligned with any external development and assurance requirements (driven by Government Departments), with the aim to eliminate duplication of effort.
- 7.38 Where projects are funded through multiple streams, the proportionate SAF approach will be agreed by the appropriate delegated authority and implemented.

Business case templates

- 7.39 Business case templates and criteria are designed to ensure necessary compliance, drive standards of project development and better enable delivery. The Project Business Case is extremely important because projects will only deliver their intended outputs and benefits if they are properly scoped, planned and cost justified from the outset.
- 7.40 The GLCCA has adopted a proportionate method for assessing value for money and the level of detail it will expect in a full business case. In order to align with government guidance, the GLCCA has adopted the principles set out within the HM Treasury Green Book. The GLCCA full business case can be located as Appendix B.

- 7.41 Business cases will require detailed evidence on the options, designs, delivery and outcomes of the project, along with strategic fit and value for money information to enable informed decision making. The business case will include a developed logic model to support effective evaluation and will set out the options available. This will be done in line with Green Book principles and include appraisal of shortlisted options including a do minimum option.
- 7.42 The do minimum option does not take advantage of any opportunities for additional changes that may occur. It may or may not be the option eventually chosen, but it is essential because it provides an important benchmark that can reveal the real value of additional changes.
- 7.43 Business case development expertise can be provided by the Programme Assurance function and/or procured externally to ensure HMTs five case model is adhered to, all business cases must be prepared using the GLCCA templates and according to the following elements:

| Case Model | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Strategic Dimension | The strategic Dimension sets out the rationale for the proposal; it makes a compelling case for change at a strategic level. It should set out the background to the proposal and explain how the project provides fit with GLCCA's strategic objectives, as well as any relevant local and/or national strategic priorities. |
| Economic Dimension | The economic Dimension is the essential core of the business case and should be prepared according to HMT's Green Book guidance. This part of the business case assesses the economic costs and benefits of the proposal to society, and spans the entire period covered by the proposal. |
| Commercial Dimension | The commercial Dimension is concerned with issues of commercial feasibility and sets out to answer the question "can the proposed solution be effectively delivered through a workable commercial deal or deals?". The first question therefore is what procurement does the proposal require, is it crucial to delivery, and what is the procurement strategy? |
| Financial Dimension | The financial Dimension is concerned with issues of affordability, and sources of budget funding. It covers the lifespan of the scheme and all attributable costs. This part needs to demonstrate that funding has been secured and that it falls within appropriate spending and settlement limits. |
| Management Dimension | The management Dimension is concerned with the deliverability of the proposal and is sometimes referred to as a programme management or project management dimension. It confirms that the capacity is available and proportionate to the delivery requirements. The management dimension must clearly set out management responsibilities and governance and reporting arrangements. If it does not, then the business case is not yet complete. The Senior Responsible Officer should be identified |

7.44 The Project Initiation Paper (PIP) is the central document from which the business case is built, each case is expanded throughout the development process to include further detail proportional to the scale of the investment. As appropriate, information to reflect key criteria for specific funding is also included.

Business Case Approach

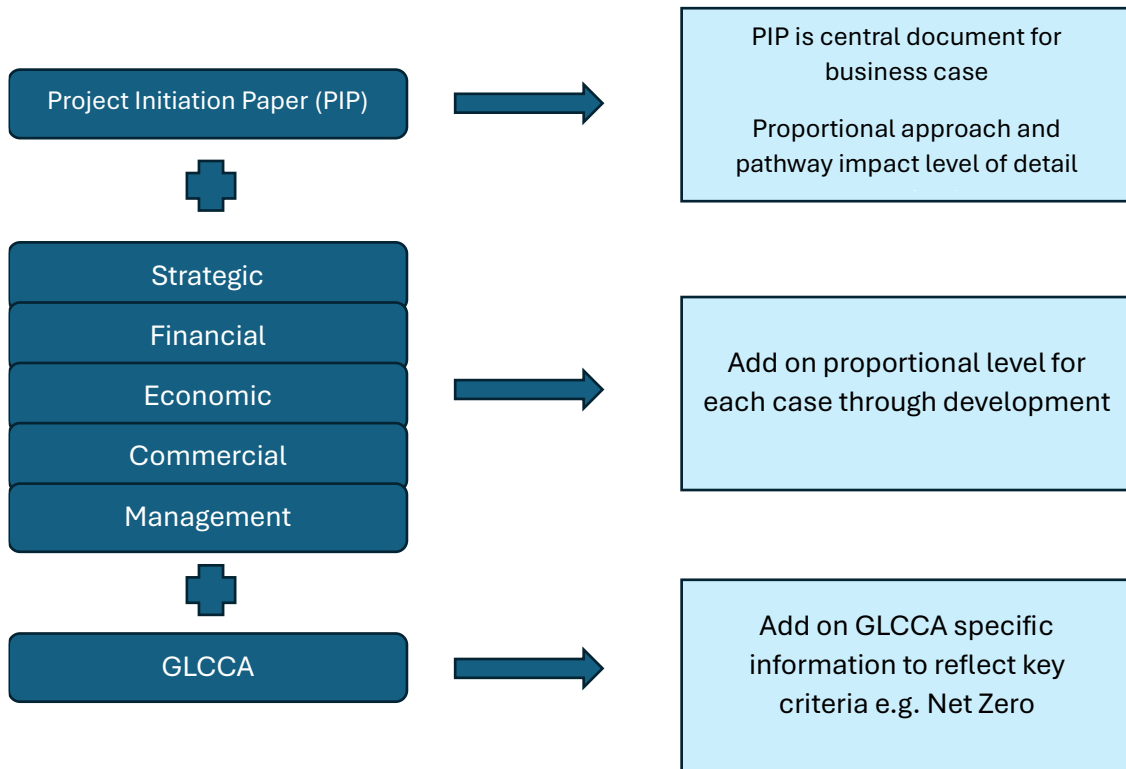


Figure 7C

7.45 **Technical appraisal:** The S.73 Officer is responsible for ensuring that all business cases are subject to a technical appraisal against the five cases and additional criteria (as required). Objective appraisals will be undertaken outside of the business area leading on the development of the investment proposal ensuring a clear separation of duty. In some instances, for example particularly high value, contentious or novel investments, appraisals may be undertaken by external technical experts appointed by the GLCCA.

7.46 The Combined County Authority will make investment decisions based on a range of evidence, such as the strategic case and other local impacts and analysis of cost effectiveness (including GVA impact at the local level), as well as the wider VfM appraisal. This evidence will be consistent with HM Treasury’s Green Book and other relevant departmental appraisal guidance.

7.47 Where appropriate for the scale of funding (Over £7.5m) and type of activity, the appraisal will assess the Benefit to Cost ratio (BCR). Whilst recognising the national Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) will remain the universal metric to assess VfM, the Combined County Authority will take account of a range of evidence when deciding to invest in a project (such as the local impacts on the economy and investment unlocked) within the context of a wider VfM appraisal. In the event that a scheme does not offer at least ‘high’ VfM (i.e., that the national BCR is below 2 and once significant non-monetised impacts and key uncertainties have been considered), the Combined County Authority may still decide, exceptionally, to invest in a project based on the strength of evidence presented within the overall business case, including the strategic case and local impacts. When assessing the BCR the Assessment Panel will use the following scale (not including transport where VfM is assessed in line with DfT guidance):

- BCR < 1: Poor VfM
- 1 < BCR < 1.5: Low VfM
- 1.5 < BCR < 2: Medium VfM
- BCR > 2: High VfM

7.48 Subject to SRO agreement, following review of the completed technical appraisal, Investment proposals will progress to the approval stage.

7.49 The business case development process operates as follows:

Development

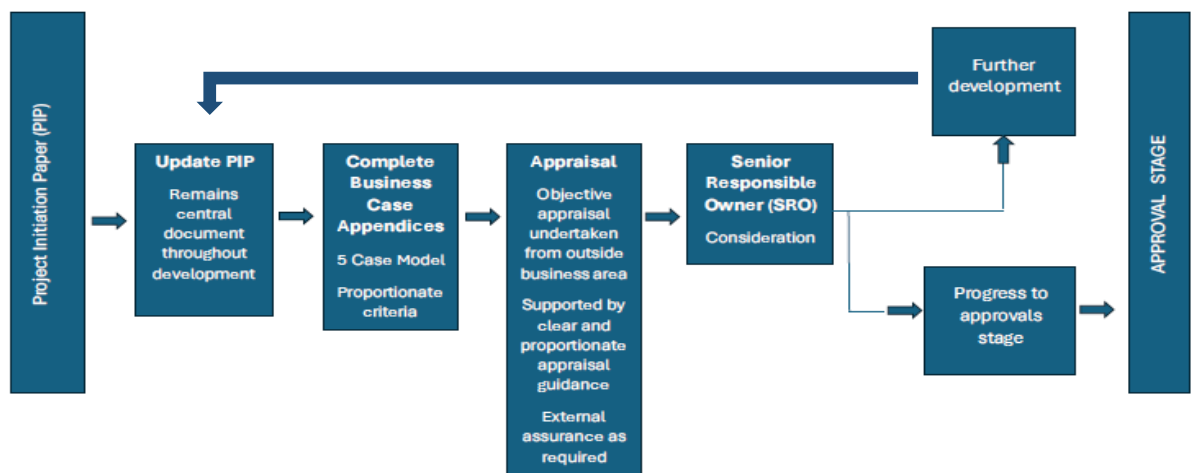


Figure 7D

Phase 3: Approvals Stage

- 7.50 This stage is to take funding decisions on business cases developed following the principles set out above, in line with the Combined County Authority's constitution. The approvals phase has been designed to ensure an ever-increasing level of assurance can be provided to the Combined County Authority relevant to the level of financial commitment. To support this and achieve better informed decision making the SAF has been developed to enable:
- Appropriate front end initiation process that drives strategic fit
 - Proportionate business case development process that meets national and Combined County Authority standards of best practice
 - Appropriate use of expertise to support business case development.
 - A skilled Programme Assurance Function to provide support and guidance throughout the SAF
 - Use of out of business area/second line of defence assurance principles and processes to undertake proportionate appraisal
 - Technical officer support through Technical Officer's Group (TOG) to focus GLCCA and Mayoral considerations and inform the decision-making process.
- 7.51 The approvals process is therefore supported through delivery of the following elements of assurance prior to entering the approvals phase:
- i. Front end project/programme initiation process that seeks Senior Management Team support, ensures involvement of relevant business areas from an early stage.
 - ii. Delivers a Principle of Approval by ensuring the GLCCA provides an approval for concept to enter the business case development phase either through inclusion in the Investment Plan or via approval of in-year proposals.
 - iii. Delivers business cases that must be developed in line with HMTs Green Book and Combined County Authority standards regarding strategic fit that drive value for money considerations and quality of content within business cases.
 - iv. Delivers second line defence appraisal of business cases in line with HMT Green Book principles.
 - v. Delivers an objective appraisal report from a Programme Assurance Function on all business cases to inform the GLCCA SRO in progressing them to the approvals phase and assuming responsibility for their content.
- 7.52 Approvals are based on proportionate financial delegation i.e. a request of £100,000 will not be scrutinised to the same level as a request for £5million. Time taken to reach an approval decision is also reflective of the financial ask.
- 7.53 The business case approvals phase begins following successful progression through the SAF Development Stage, which requires a Director (SRO) decision to progress the business case into approvals.

Approval Routes

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

- £0.5 million and under:
Chief Operating Officer (COO) Approval in consultation with the mayor
- Over £0.5 million and up to and including £2.5 million:
Chief Operating Officer Approval in consultation with the relevant Board of the GLCCA (Transport; Skills and Employment; Business and Infrastructure)
- Over £2.5 million:
GLCCA Approval at a meeting of the GLCCA (Mayor and all Members)

7.55 These approval routes are supported by Technical Officers Group (TOG) who provide a technical test and challenge of business case proposals and make recommendations to the Chief Operating Officer, Boards and Combined County Authority.

7.56 TOG members will be expected to not only push the key lines of enquiry relevant to producing a quality business case, but also to ensure that agreed priorities of the GLCCA have been adequately addressed.

7.57 The Boards will consider the advice provided by TOG in coming to a decision on approval for business cases between £0.5 million and £2.5 million. Business cases over £2.5 million must be approved by the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority. To support the Combined County Authority the relevant Board may be asked to consider such approvals first and make a recommendation on approval to the GLCCA.

7.58 These approval processes also involve an option of escalated progression to support the decision-maker if they have any concerns regarding a business case approval that has a significant reputational and/or political risk. In such circumstances approvals can be escalated to GLCCA for final approval.

Business Case Approval Process

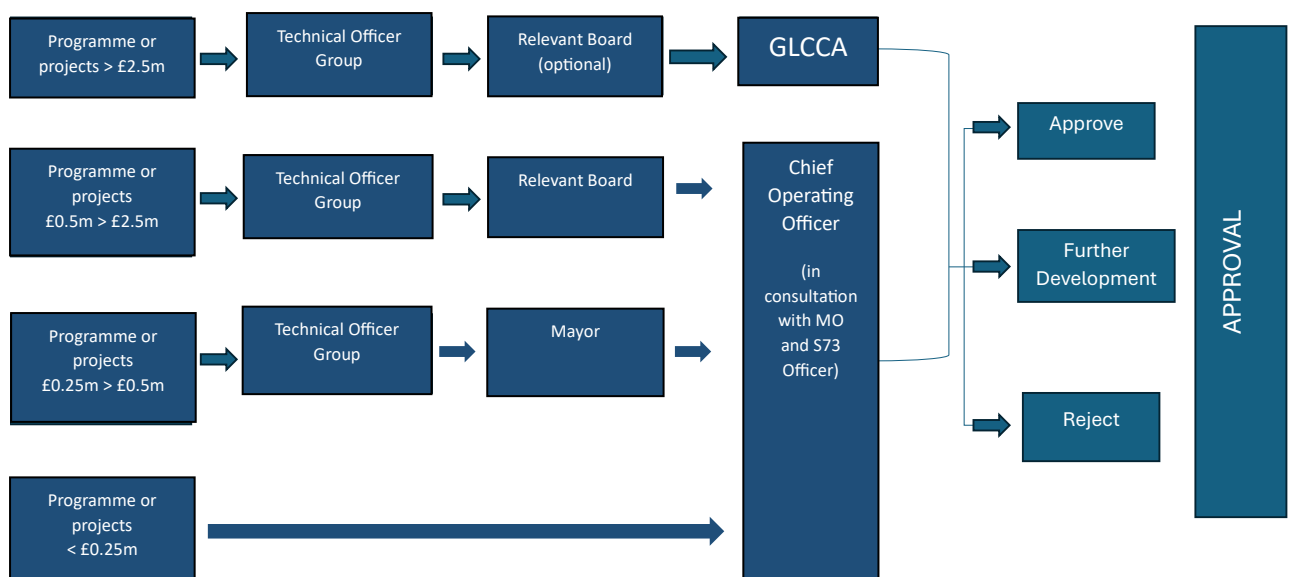


Figure 7E

- 7.59 Formal decisions by the Combined County Authority to commit funding on the basis of a business case approval will be made in accordance with the Combined County Authority's constitution by the GLCCA, Mayor or by officers under delegated powers.
- 7.60 **Externally Commissioned Due Diligence and Expertise:** For some high cost or novel business cases external due diligence may be required to be undertaken prior to investment being finally approved and an offer of funding formally made.
- 7.61 Key issues to be considered as part of the due diligence assessment would include development appraisals of individual schemes, and cost appraisals (where required) obtaining Red Book Valuations (where required) and for these to be provided by applicants. A review of mechanisms for investment would also be fundamental to ensure funding is UK Subsidy compliant.
- 7.62 Commissioned due diligence process would incorporate verification of outputs and a value for money assessment. Independent legal advice would be commissioned by applicants providing a report in respect of UK Subsidy in the context of GLCCA investment into the projects proposed.
- 7.63 The GLCCA will ensure that all decisions and activities conform with all relevant law (including UK Subsidy and public procurement) and that records are maintained so this can be evidenced.

Additional Considerations: Assurance of Transport Schemes

- 7.64 The Assurance Framework ensures a flexible and proportionate approach, enabling transport business cases to retain the benefits of local assurance in terms of speed of decision making. For the purposes of the Single Assurance Framework (SAF) a transport scheme is defined as any scheme that significantly changes the transport network infrastructure or its operation, whatever the objective of the scheme.
- 7.65 For transport schemes, the Combined County Authority will ensure that modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration, and that modelling, and appraisal meets current DfT guidance for all schemes but for schemes with low cost (amount to be determined by GLCCA), a more proportionate approach may be taken. In addition to TAG, other robust or evidence-based assessments or methodologies may be employed to prioritise and assess the overall business case for a scheme. Transport Project Business Case assessments will be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT's planning dataset).
- 7.66 For transport investments, scheme promoters are required to complete bespoke templates that allow for more detailed transport specific criteria consistent with DfT guidance. For smaller scale and relatively straightforward transport schemes a specific template will be used, structured around the five cases business case model, which seeks to capture the critical aspects of the business case in a comprehensive but proportionate way.

- 7.67 The expectation is that all schemes must meet the defined business/operational need of the Combined County Authority and be measured against appropriate objectives from the early conception of the project. Project objectives will be independently assessed and applied to viable options that consider cost and benefit delivery at or above the “do minimum” option. The Combined County Authority will, as part of the assessment process commission a specialist transport consultant, fully independent from the scheme promoter and with no involvement in the development of the scheme being appraised, to fully assess and analyse the full business case for the project where appropriate. This analysis will include a full analytical and assurance statement including verification of the projects Net Present Social Public Value/BCR. The independent assessment will be published and made available to the GLCCA or relevant decision maker as part of the decision-making process.
- 7.68 Notwithstanding the above the GLCCA will be able to exceptionally approve transport schemes with lower NPSV/BCR having regard to specific circumstances including:
- The ability of the scheme to address multiple Combined County Authority policy objectives.
 - Significant levels of match funding being provided by the scheme promoter.
- 7.69 Examples of such exceptional circumstances could include where a transport scheme:
- Unlocks a major development site.
 - Stimulates significant land value uplift which can subsequently be captured.
 - Has a low NPSV/BCR but is part of a programme that can evidence a ‘high’ BCR as a minimum.
- 7.70 The justification will be clearly set out in the report before the Combined County Authority or at the point of decision making.
- 7.71 The recommendations to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority or relevant decision-maker will clearly explain the rationale for approving a scheme with medium or worse VfM and the implications of the recommendation.

Additional Considerations: Applications for Feasibility Funding

- 7.72 Subject to the availability of a feasibility fund, and available resources, the GLCCA may wish to support the development of strategic ideas or programmes or indeed pilot activity through this route. This will help support the case for future business case development or provide evidence to support subsequent major investment for a particular innovation or site inked to priority sector activity.

Feasibility Project Under £100,000

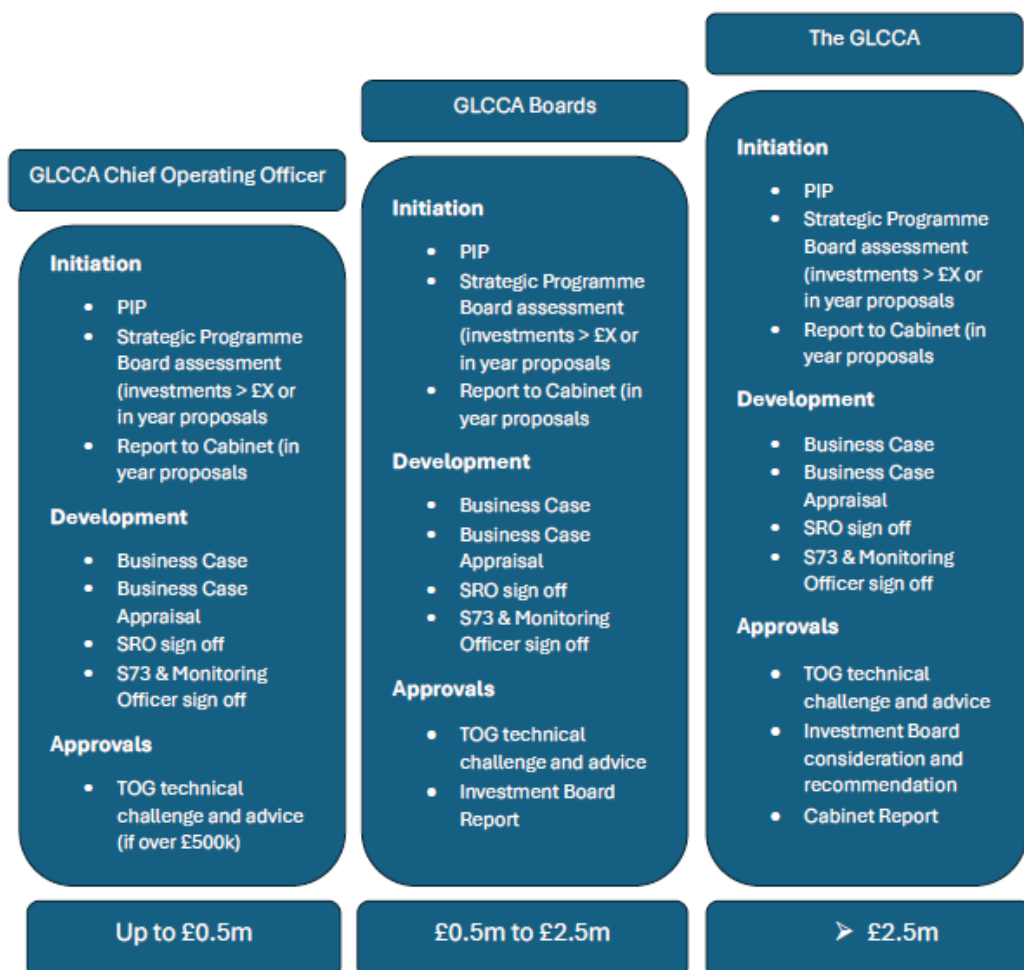


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Figure 7F

Summary of required documents

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



Business case approvals up to £250k

- 7.74 Are approved by the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the S73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, under delegated authority. Business cases are progressed for approval following sign off by the relevant GLCCA (SRO), who approves the business case as complete and takes on responsibility for its progression through the approvals phase.
- 7.75 The Chief Operating Officer will then consider the business case for approval under delegated authority.

Business case approvals over £250k and up to £0.5 million

- 7.76 Are approved by the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and the S73 Officer and Monitoring Officer, under delegated authority. Business cases are progressed for approval following sign off by the relevant GLCCA (SRO).
- 7.77 Business cases are initially reviewed by TOG in order to deliver a technical assessment, test and challenge the proposal. The TOG will provide the Chief Operating Officer with a summary on each business case proposal, noting observations to consider, including the strengths and weaknesses of a proposal, observations on the level of investment risk, key lines of enquiry to follow up on and providing any recommendations for improvement or to mitigate risks. This may lead to conditions to be added to funding agreements, conditions for withdrawal of support, additions to monitoring and evaluation plans. The Chief Operating Officer will then consider the business case for approval under delegated authority.

Business case approvals over £0.5 million and up to and including £2.5 million

- 7.78 As set out above approvals over £0.5 million and up to £2.5 million in value are initially reviewed by TOG, who will provide the relevant Board (Transport; Skills and Employment; Business and Infrastructure) with a summary on each business case proposal. This may lead to conditions to be added to funding agreements, conditions for withdrawal of support, additions to monitoring and evaluation plans.
- 7.79 The Board will then consider and make a recommendation to the Chief Operating Officer as they have the delegated authority to approve.
- 7.80 Where a business case forms part of a wider programme or scheme with a cumulative value in excess of £2.5m the business cases will be approved by the GLCCA.

Business case approvals over £2.5 million

- 7.81 For approvals over £2.5 million the process is as for approvals over £0.5 million and up to and including £2.5 million, with a review by TOG of each business case proposals. The decision to approve is made at a meeting of the GLCCA, rather than the Chief Operating Officer. The GLCCA may ask the relevant board (Transport; Skills and Employment; Business and Infrastructure) to consider and recommend the approval before determination by the GLCCA.

UK Subsidy Control

- 7.82 The Combined County Authority will ensure that all public funded programmes and projects are delivered in line with Subsidy Control law. This will include assessing all applications against the relevant requirements (which at this time are primarily set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 as clarified in the Statutory Guidance) and where necessary making referrals to the Competition and Markets Authority prior to an award being made.
- 7.83 All grant funding agreements will contain appropriate legal conditions on Subsidy Control. Where a misuse of a subsidy is identified, the Combined County Authority may exercise its right under Section 77 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 7.84 Subsidy Control will be considered as part of the decision-making process. The Combined County Authority will conduct appropriate legal due diligence should it determine that the characteristics of the proposal require additional scrutiny, including if a proposed measure is novel, contentious or repercussive.
- 7.85 Records of compliance will be kept. The transparency requirements set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 will be satisfied, in line with the relevant timescales.

Management of contracts and funding awards

- 7.86 Following Approval, the Programme Assurance Function will send out a Funding Offer Letter, which includes the following: Project Name, Applicant, Maximum Funding contribution (£), with details regarding when payment is to be issued, what is eligible expenditure, commencement and completion dates. This will be subject to review and sign off by the GLCCA Legal team prior to issue.
- 7.87 The Funding Offer Letter will also set out the monitoring and evaluation requirements and process to be followed. Contracts for Investment Funds are managed within the Programme Assurance Team.

Delivery, monitoring and evaluation

Release of Funding

- 8.1 Funding claims submitted to the Combined County Authority are checked against the approved project baseline information, which is included within the original funding agreement/contract including financial profiles, outputs and outcomes. Subject to a satisfactory review, payments will be released quarterly in arrears unless otherwise agreed.
- 8.2 A mechanism for 'claw-back' provision is to be included within funding agreements/contract to ensure funding is spent only on the specified scheme and linked to the delivery of outputs and outcomes.
- 8.3 Sample testing of invoices against expenditure and sample testing to verify outputs forms part of the monitoring process. This is part of the programme assurance role of the Combined County Authority.

Performance Reporting

- 8.4 The Combined County Authority Performance Management Framework works in close alignment with the Strategic Investment Framework to ensure there is a consistent, streamlined and joined-up approach to performance. The framework sets out our performance management approach, governance and processes.
- 8.5 The English Devolution Accountability Framework (EDAF) provides guidance on how Combined County Authorities and elected Mayors should be accountable to local scrutiny, the public and UK Government. Our Performance Management Framework supports us to comply with the standards in the EDAF, and how the Combined County Authority is committed to delivering good governance and strong measures of accountability.
- 8.6 The performance management framework includes how we are accountable to:
 - Local Scrutiny – through corporate performance reporting, committee reporting, and project reporting.
 - The Public – through Committee Meetings, Mayoral Question Time, Social and Digital Media, Performance Dashboard, Engagement with Partners and State of the Region Review.
 - UK Government – through reporting to various Government departments

Risk Management

- 8.7 The Risk Management Framework has been based upon the principles of the HMT Orange Book (2020); these are governance, integration, collaboration, processes, and continual improvement. The objective of the framework has been to adapt these principles to the Combined County Authority's ways of working, ensuring compliance with our SAF.
- 8.8 Risk management, is an essential and integral part of the Combined County Authority's planning and decision-making, enabling us to successfully meet our objectives.

- 8.9 Our Risk Management Framework includes:
- Our Corporate Risk Appetite
 - Escalation procedure
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - The various levels of risk management at a Corporate, Service/Programme and Project level.
 - Our processes and tools within our risk procedure document.
- 8.10 The GLCCA is committed to implementing an organisation wide risk management culture that demonstrates high levels of risk maturity and best practice in the identification, evaluation and effective management of risk in respect of current activities and new opportunities. Each project put forward for consideration must have and maintain a risk register as a component of an effective monitoring and evaluation plan.
- 8.11 The Audit Committee is responsible for overseeing the Combined County Authority's Risk Management Framework and Procedures and the Corporate Risk Register, to ensure that risk management is being undertaken to the appropriate standard and in line with the Risk Management Framework.

Change Requests and Funding Clawback

- 8.12 Change Control is the process through which all requests to change the approved baseline of a project or programme are captured, evaluated, and then approved, rejected or deferred. A change request form is required when the tolerances that were set out in the approved Business Case are or will be breached. This includes changes to Time, Cost and Scope.
- 8.13 All early warnings and project change requests must be clearly documented, with evidence of approvals and notifications saved where applicable and recorded.
- 8.14 Approval routes should always be led by the delegation amount and proportionate, this means change requests do not need to be approved by the 'original approver' if the change is minor and could unnecessarily delay project progress.
- 8.15 Where an increase in funding is required over 10% of the over project, this will need to go to the appropriate Board or the GLCCA for approval, in line with agreed delegations. Early warning notifications should be reported to the SRO and Programme Assurance at the earliest opportunity, who will escalate as appropriate. Under 10% the Head of Paid Service could review and approve the request unless they deem the decision to be novel or contentious.
- 8.16 Change tolerances above those detailed within the approved business case and/or above the tolerance levels set out in the Change Management procedure must be considered for approval by Investment Board.
- 8.17 Funding clawback and recovery processes for underperforming projects are to be clearly addressed in the funding agreement/contract.

Monitoring and Evaluation

8.18 The Combined County Authority Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be developed in accordance with HMT's Magenta (Guidance for Evaluation) and Green (Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation) Books. The overall approach to monitoring and evaluation is underpinned by the following principles:

- Reporting requirements are locally defined and reported to the Senior Management Team in a consistent fashion.
- Evaluation is meaningful and proportionate.
- Data is collected once and used many times to inform other critical documents, such as the Business Planning process and Annual Report
- Baseline information is consistent across key initiatives.
- Monitoring and evaluation is a core part of all activities.
- Lessons learned are used to inform future policy, projects and programmes, especially in the strategic planning process.

8.19 All projects that go through the SAF, will have an effective monitoring and evaluation plan which will form an important component of the business case. This will help assess the effectiveness and impact of investing public funds, and the identification of best practice and lessons learnt that can inform future delivery.

8.20 The monitoring plan will guide the collection of data from individual projects and will be designed to ensure that it meets the requirements of both the Combined County Authority and Government. This framework aims to ensure that these commitments are delivered by setting out the approach, principles, role and responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes both in the Devolution Deal and within any wider Combined County Authority activity.

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

8.22 The Combined County Authority has a varied level of evaluation depending on the nature of each project as per the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, this will depend on the following questions:

- Is the project funded through Investment (Gainshare) funding (in the GLCCA's case the core agreement with central government to devolve £24m per year over 30 years)? If so, it is subject to the agreed independent national evaluation framework process.

- Is the project funded through other streams and identified as being important in terms of the expected benefits to be achieved? If so, it is subject to a full independent evaluation commissioned by the GLCCA locally.
 - Is the project identified as one where significant learning is available that would help to inform future policy making either locally or nationally? This will include projects that are innovative or considered 'pilots'. If so, evaluation work in this case would either be commissioned independently or carried out locally within the public sector.
 - Other projects not included above would be subject to 'self-evaluation' based on an agreed approach within submitted business cases. The funding partner may be responsible for this.
- 8.23 The approach to evaluation will be set out within the initiation documentation and Business Case and agreed through the approval stage. Where the GLCCA is awarded funding from Government, they will meet the required obligations regarding monitoring and evaluation on the acceptance of grant funding.
- 8.24 By having a clear monitoring and evaluation framework in place the Combined County Authority is able to:
- **Provide local accountability** to the public by demonstrating the impact of locally devolved funding and the associated benefits being achieved.
 - **Provide accountability to Government** and comply with external scrutiny requirements i.e. to satisfy the conditions of the Devolution Deal.
 - **Understand the effectiveness of policies or investment** and to justify reinvestment or modify or seek alternative policy.
 - **Develop an evidence base for input into future business cases and for developing future funding submissions.** The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will define the principles of collection, collation and analysing data which can be utilised for future work and especially in relation to economic impact of particular interventions creating 'benchmarks'.
- 8.25 Lessons learnt from evaluation will be reported to the GLCCA and across the governance framework as required and the SAF itself will undergo review by Audit Committee within the conditions set out earlier for review of the local assurance framework.
- 8.26 **Five-Year Gateway Review:** The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority will be subject to five-yearly Gateway Reviews to assess investment impact of the Investment Fund and has developed a Local Evaluation Framework, in line with Government expectations to support this process. The GLCCA will be subject to an independent panel review to assess the impact of its Investment Fund expenditure

Communications

- 9.1 **Engagement of Local Partners and the Public:** A suite of communications guidance for funding streams has been developed. Communications objectives are to:
- Keep the public and stakeholders informed about the progress and milestones of devolution.
 - Encourage the public and stakeholders to get involved in engagement or consultation activities.
 - Build support for the Greater Lincolnshire devolution by sharing the vision, ambitions and the benefits it will have for local people.
 - Ensure the Greater Lincolnshire CCA's position is presented fairly and accurately in any related media coverage.
- 9.2 All communications activity complies with the code of recommended practice issued under the Local Government Act 1986. The code requires that any publicity describing the Combined County Authority's activities and aims should be as objective as possible, concentrating on facts or explanation or both. Any comment should be objective, balanced, informative and accurate. All publicity and comments are free from political bias.
- 9.3 Primary communications tools are:
- Website: All information about the Greater Lincolnshire CCA, including background information, timelines, news and events, will be published on the Greater Lincolnshire CCA website.
 - Social media: All news, updates and events will be shared via social media.
 - A suite of funding publicity guidance for beneficiaries/ delivery partners will also be available on the website.
- 9.4 **Working with the media:** The Greater Lincolnshire CCA will actively engage with the media to amplify messages to the broadest possible audiences.
- 9.5 **Accessibility:** All communications relating to the Combined County Authority are accessible and transparent. Stakeholders and the public will be kept updated with progress, delivery and decision making. It also supports effective and meaningful engagement activity to encourage participation in the relevant activities and enable local partners and the public the opportunity to inform key decisions and future strategy development. The communications approach takes into account the requirements of the following:
- Project applicants
 - Governance requirements
 - Wider partnership requirements
 - Communities' requirements

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Mayoral Functions

The main functions that are the responsibility of the Mayor:

- a) Transport
 - (i) Power to draw up a local transport plan and strategies (although the Combined County Authority may amend these).
 - (ii) Power to direct on the key routes network.
 - (iii) Bus franchising powers.
 - (iv) Ability to pay grants to operators.
- b) Housing and regeneration
 - (i) Land acquisition powers to support housing, regeneration infrastructure and community development and wellbeing subject to consent from specified Combined County Authority Members.
 - (ii) Power to designate a Mayoral Development Area and then set up a Mayoral Development Corporation subject to consent from specified Combined County Authority Members.
- c) Finance
 - (i) Setting a precept on council tax to fund Mayoral Functions.
 - (ii) Power to charge business rate supplement (subject to ballot).

The Full list of functions is included in the Powers Table of the GLCCA constitution

Appendix 2 – Non- mayoral Functions

The majority of the functions of the proposed GLCCA will be utilised by the GLCCA as a whole. The proposed functions, powers, consent and voting for the GLCCA are set out in full as an appendix to the Proposal.

These would include:

- (i) The duty to set a budget for the CCA (including funding for the functions of the CCA);
- (ii) Economic development and regeneration functions, including the preparation of an economic assessment for the area; to embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into local democratic institutions and to carry out strategic economic planning that clearly articulates the area's economic priorities and sectoral strengths.
- (iii) Adult education and skills functions;
- (iv) Transport functions, including to identify, agree, set up and coordinate a Key Route Network (KRN) on behalf of the Mayor;
- (v) Housing supply, regeneration and place-making functions, along with provision of housing and land, land acquisition and disposal and the development and regeneration of land functions;
- (vi) Power to borrow up to an agreed cap for all functions;
- (vii) Data sharing with the Constituent Councils in areas relating to the MCCA functions
- (viii) Power to establish joint arrangements
- (ix) Incidental powers in relation to its functions (the power to do anything which is incidental to the exercise of its functions).
- (x) A functional power of competence (this means that the CCA will have the power to do anything reasonably related to the exercise of their functions).

The Full list of functions is included in the Powers Table of the GLCCA constitution

Appendix 3- Adult Skills Fund (ASF)

1. All investment decisions made in relation to this funding are undertaken having given full consideration to:
 - Statutory duties relating to adult education and training which have been transferred to the Combined County Authority under Statutory Instruments.
 - Statutory entitlements to education and training of adults living in devolved areas, and policy entitlements where relevant.
 - Statutory and non-statutory guidance.
2. Building on our devolution prospectus and proposal, a Greater Lincolnshire Employment and Skills Strategy will set out a ten-year skills vision for the area. This will bring together employment and skills priorities from our sectors, our employers, from our places and our people, incorporating the evidence base from the GLLEP and the locally designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) responsible for the Local Skills Improvement Plan.
3. A Greater Lincolnshire Strategic Skills Plan (SSP), required as part of our readiness conditions for devolution, will set out the strategic vision and priorities specifically for the Adult Skills Funding (ASF) programme. This will provide a clear direction of how the Adult Skills Fund will be commissioned. The Employment and Skills Strategy and the ASF Strategic Skills Plan support the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority's strategic objectives set out in the Greater Lincolnshire Plan and the GLCCA Investment Plan.

Annual Assurance Report

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

Funding Requirements

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

Stakeholder Engagement

7. The Combined County Authority regularly consults with its key stakeholders, including providers and learners, in order to best inform policy direction and decision making.

Monitoring and Evaluation

8. The Adult Skills Fund reporting will operate in line with the English Devolution Accountability Framework, it will be included within the Greater Lincolnshire monitoring and evaluation submissions as required under the devolution agreement.

9. The Combined County Authority has submitted our policies for adult education, these were required as part of the readiness conditions and have been published as part of the commissioning process. The Combined County Authority's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be used for the Adult Skills Fund activity including the use of logic models. It will meet the national requirements together with locally determined requirements so that it can be used to inform and shape the criteria for future funding awards. This formal evaluation is undertaken on an annual basis.

Assurance

10. The Combined County Authority is responsible for assuring the use of funds by all training providers and colleges delivering the Adult Skills Fund. Wider assurance includes internal controls such as performance management and monitoring, risk management and quality assurance review.