

## **MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the West of England Combined Authority’s approach to Monitoring and Evaluation.

## 2. Background

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) was established in 2017 as part of a Devolution Deal with Government. Its overarching aim is to deliver clean and inclusive economic growth.

WECA is formed of three Councils, Bath & North-East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It is responsible for management of a devolution investment fund of £30M per year, together with the £103m Transforming Cities fund Funding decisions relating to the WECA investment fund, and other WECA activities, are made by the West of England Combined Authority.

WECA also supports the West of England LEP, which includes North Somerset Council. Funding decisions relating to the Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund, One Front Door Programme and LEP activities are made by the West of England Joint Committee.

These governance arrangements are illustrated below.

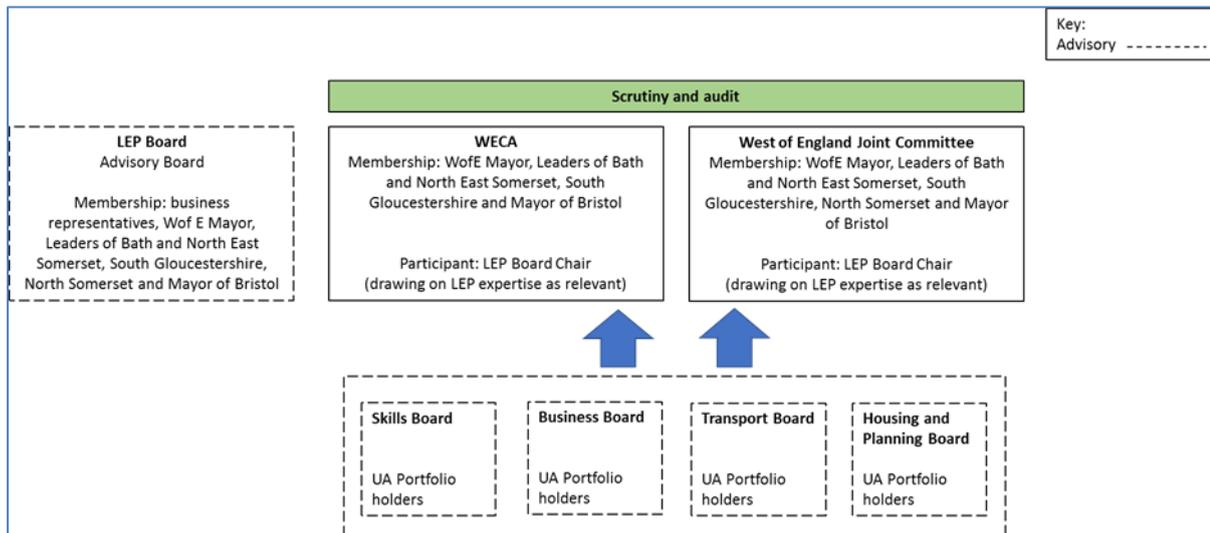


Diagram One: Governance Arrangements

The detailed processes for managing the WECA Investment Fund and West of England One Front Door Programme are set out in the [Local Growth Assurance Framework](#) which details the agreed prioritisation, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation requirements for each scheme. <sup>1</sup>

In June 2019 the WECA Committee agreed an overall funding envelope of £350m for the period up to March 2023, reflecting the strong ambitions to drive forward projects which would bring very significant, positive improvements and impacts for residents right across the region.

<sup>1</sup> A single, aligned, Local Growth Assurance Framework was agreed through the WECA and Joint Committees in April 2019. This brings together and replaced the WECA Single Pot Assurance Framework and LEP Assurance Framework.

### 3. Approach to Monitoring & Evaluation

WECA's overall approach to Monitoring and Evaluation is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Reporting requirements are locally defined and support delivery of local strategies
- Evaluation is meaningful and proportionate
- Data is collected once and used many times
- 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 development

Our approach is structured around three levels which are illustrated in the diagram below, with details of each level set out in the following sections.



Diagram Two: Overall approach to Monitoring & Evaluation

### 4. Operating Framework and Annual Business Plan

WECA's operating framework sets out our overarching goal, to be a driving force for clean and inclusive economic growth. It identifies key priorities for infrastructure, skills and business and aligns with the themes of the [West of England Local Industrial Strategy](#).

WECA's annual business plan sets out the key activities that WECA will deliver each year. The business plan for 2021/22 aligns the activity to deliver our Local Industrial Strategy alongside our priorities for [Regional Recovery](#) and [Climate Emergency](#). It also includes details of our Local Enterprise Partnership delivery plan which we are required to report separately to BEIS.

The operating framework and business plan are published on the WECA website [here](#) and the diagram below illustrates how our key strategies are aligned.

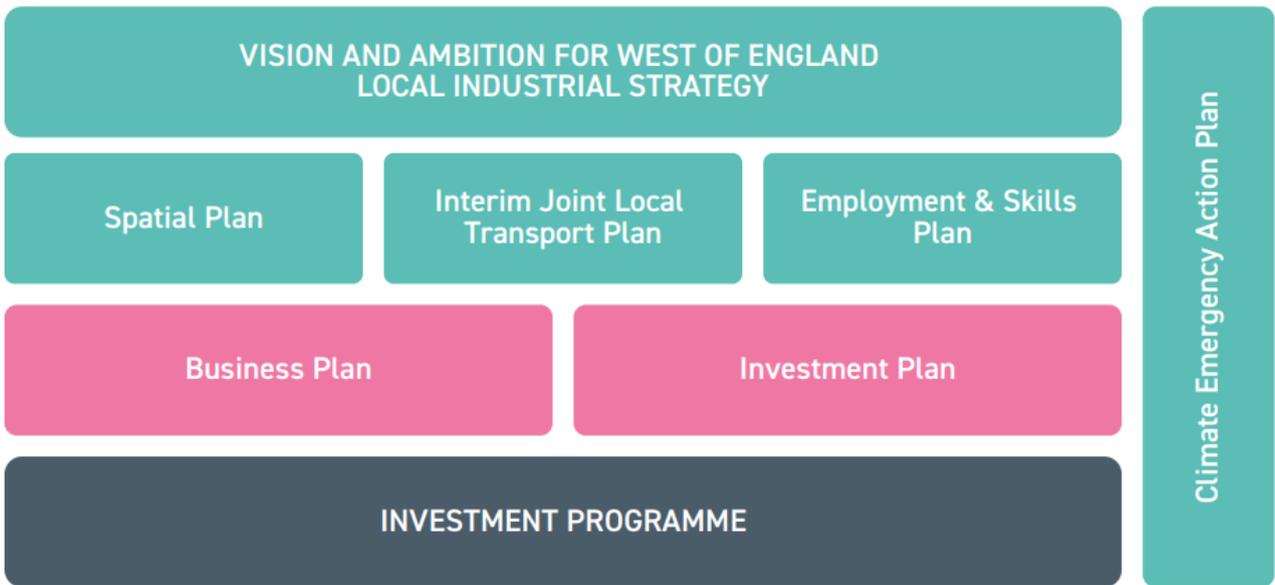


Diagram Three – Strategic alignment

Quarterly reports on progress in delivering the business plan are taken to WECA and Joint Committee. Overall progress is presented in an annual progress report which is published each summer.

The cycle of reporting against the business plan is illustrated below.

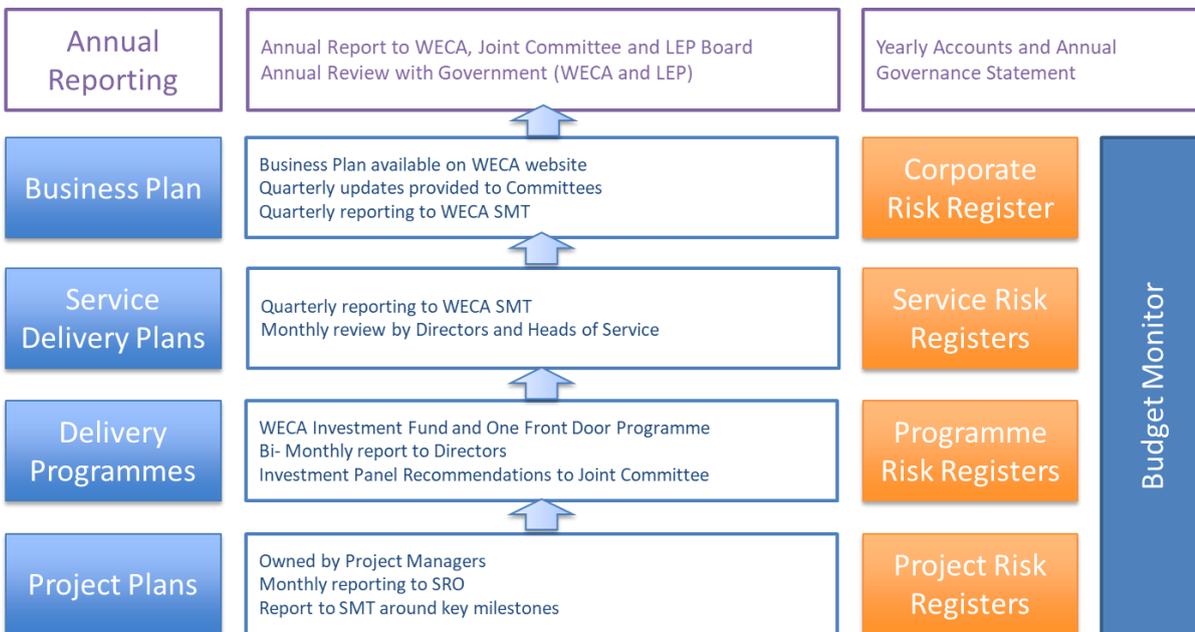


Diagram Four – Business plan reporting cycle

## 5. Strategic Outcomes

Our strategic outcomes provide a framework for understanding the collective impact of all of our projects and the benefits they deliver. In addition to the direct benefit of jobs and economic output, WECA's programme will contribute to our objectives of clean and inclusive growth, and addressing the climate emergency through:

- enabling residents to take public transport
- increasing rates of walking and cycling
- supporting the development of affordable housing and employment space
- helping people across the region to gain skills and access jobs
- improving the innovation and productivity of businesses across the region
- supporting digital transformation

Our Investment Programme identifies projects across all of WECA's funding streams, for delivery up to 2023, and approved business cases to date identify the following short-term outcomes against our strategic themes:

### Economic growth

- £1.7bn of economic output (gross value added)
- Over 14,000 new jobs

### People and Skills

- Over 45,000 learners gaining new qualifications or skills
- 1,870 people supported to gain increased earnings, and many more moving into work
- 470 small businesses benefiting from skills and training support

### Business

- Approximately 7,000 business receiving enterprise support
- 195 businesses supported to bring inward investment to the region, and hundreds of new businesses started

### Innovation

- 90 new products or services brought to market through WECA support
- 110 new research and development projects carried out
- Engage 1,000 small businesses in innovation and provide intensive support to 470, including registering intellectual property rights

### Infrastructure

- 73,700m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace enabled
- 500,000 new bus journeys per year, and significant improvements locally
- 1,380,000 new rail journeys per year
- Six new railway stations opened
- Delivery of 13km of improved cycle and walking paths
- Delivery of flood defences to protect and enable
- 19,400 jobs and £3.8bn of GVA

WECA also tracks a small number of [regional indicators](#) across the region, across the priorities of our Operating Framework. These indicators summarise the state of the region for each priority area, and we expect the activities set out in business plan to contribute to positive change. We do not have total control over these measures because many other factors play a role, but it is important we understand the current position.

## 6. Equalities

WECA is committed to achieving inclusive economic growth across the Region. All schemes supported through the Investment Fund and LEP funding streams are required to produce an equalities analysis and plan as part of their full business case.

## **7. Risk Management**

WECA is committed to deliver its strategic objectives whilst having a clear focus on the potential risks and opportunities that face our business activities on an ongoing basis.

Risk management is an integral part of WECA's reporting against delivery of the business plan, as shown in diagram three. WECA's risk management framework is reviewed annually and will be brought to the February 2021 Audit Committee for approval.

## **8. Project and Programme Evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of WECA policies, investments and interventions enables the authority to:

- Demonstrate local accountability. Show how funding is being spent and benefits achieved against local strategies and action plans, demonstrating the value and effectiveness of local decision making and shaping future priorities
- Comply with external scrutiny. Together with the Assurance Framework demonstrate progress and delivery to the constituent council members, senior government officials and Ministers
- Understanding what works. Provide a feedback loop and enables the lessons learnt to be fed back into policy making and communicated to stakeholders, as well as supporting the case for further devolution and investment in the area.
- Developing an evidence base. Provide a mechanism for collecting, collating and analysing data which can be used across the organisation and by others, following the principle of collecting data once and using many times.
- Ensure quality assurance. For interventions funded through WECA investment fund and One Front Door Programmes a Monitoring & Evaluation plans form part of business case submissions and these are independently reviewed and published to support business case approval decisions by the WECA or Joint Committee

In line with the Local Growth Assurance Framework it is a requirement for all projects funded by streams in scope of the framework to undertake monitoring and evaluation in line with the activities set out in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan approved as part of the business case. The Framework states:

All projects funded through the investment programme, regardless of the size, will have an effective monitoring and evaluation plan in place which will form a key part of the business case. This will enable assessment of the effectiveness and impact of investing public funds, and the identification of best practice and lessons learnt that can inform decisions about future delivery. The monitoring plan will guide the collection of data from individual projects and will be designed to ensure that it captures information required by WECA and government.

Individual monitoring and evaluation plans will be proportionate, correspond with procedures for appraisal, and be in line with the latest government department guidance where relevant. These plans will identify the resources required to deliver the proposed monitoring and evaluation activities.

Unless there are reasons otherwise as set out in the business case to vary the timing, guidance requires that a standalone scheme Evaluation Report should be produced at intervals of one and three years post-delivery.

## 9. List of Schemes and links to Monitoring & Evaluation Plans

A [full list of all projects in delivery](#) is available on our website with funding streams are indicated for all activities. Funds devolved to WECA as part of the West of England Devolution Deal are referred to as 'Investment Fund'. The Investment Fund also incorporates the £103m funding awarded through the Transforming Cities Fund in one integrated programme. Funds managed through the Local Enterprise Partnership are identified as 'West of England' or by fund name.

Where available links are included to individual scheme Monitoring & Evaluation plans with details of logic models and specific project measures that may be required to meet funding agreements. Our overall logic model that underpins the WECA Investment Fund is produced below. Data requirements are determined for each project in line with national requirements where appropriate.

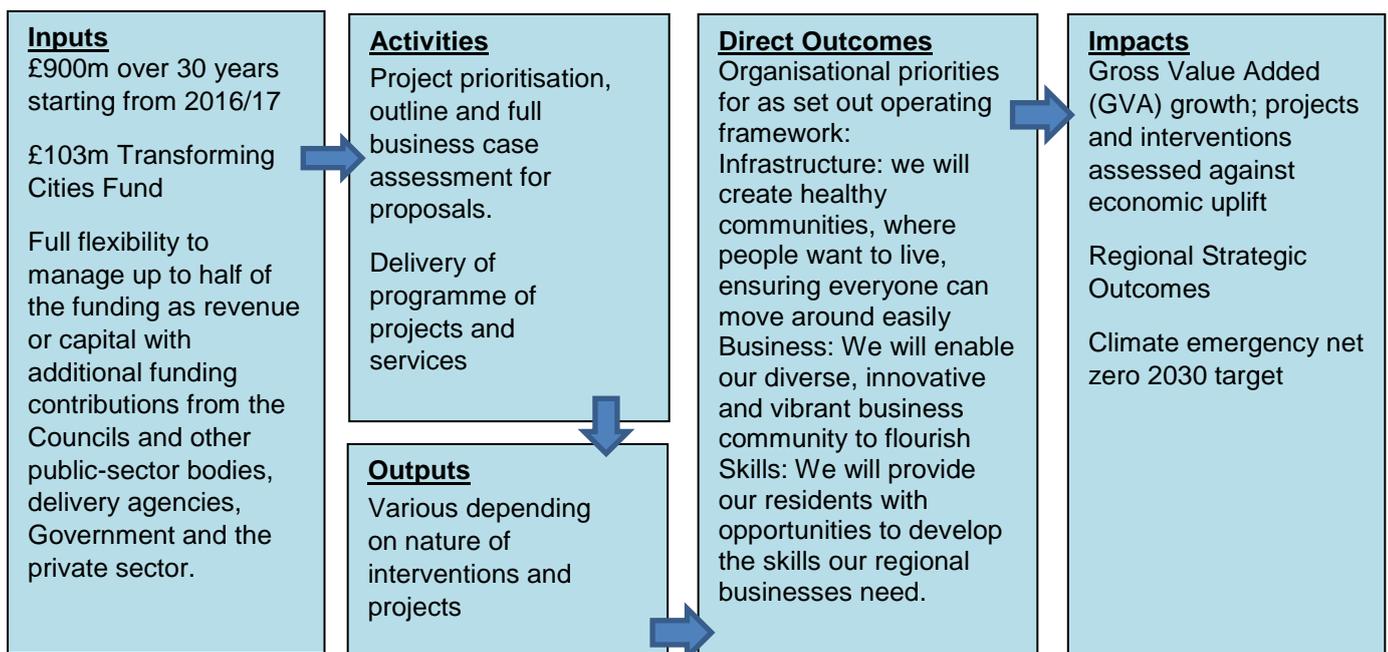


Diagram Five - Overall Logic Model

## 10. Organisational Impact

WECA's overall aim of achieving clean and inclusive economic growth will require longer term measurement which takes into account the impact of key schemes that are yet to be delivered.

We are working closely with the national suppliers who are leading the Gateway review work across the Combined Authorities on the evaluation of the West of England Investment Fund. The Final Report from the independent evaluation of the Investment Fund was submitted to Government in November, and it is expected that the outcome will be known in February/March 2021. In parallel WECA submitted a [Complementary Report](#) which sets out the wider context surrounding the use of the Investment Fund.