# BERKSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY (BLTB)

**REPORT TO:** BLTB **DATE:** 16 March 2017

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Roger Parkin, Interim Chief Executive Slough Borough

Council, lead Chief Executive to the BLTB

#### PART I

## Item 8: Assurance Framework - Review

# **Purpose of Report**

- 1. This report reviews the existing <u>BLTB Assurance Framework</u><sup>1</sup> in the light of <u>further guidance from Government</u><sup>2</sup> (issued in November 2016).
- 2. The report proposes an approach to be adopted when conducting one- and five-year post-completion monitoring reports.

#### Recommendation

- 3. You are recommended to confirm that the BLTB Assurance Framework dated 14 November 2013 remains fit for purpose.
- 4. You are recommended to approve the approach to conducting one- and fiveyear post-completion monitoring reports set out in Appendix 2

# Other Implications

### Financial

5. There are no direct financial implications of this report; instead it asks members to consider whether or not the current assurance framework which is applied to projects seeking financial approval is fit for purpose and conforms to the latest government guidance

## Risk Management

6. The principal risk management arrangement employed by the Local Transport Body is adherence to its <u>Assurance Framework</u><sup>3</sup>, and in particular the use of White Young Green as contracted independent assessors of the full business cases put forward by scheme promoters.

 $<sup>\</sup>frac{1}{http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicInfrastructure/StrategicInfrastructure/BLTB/Assurance%20Framework%20for%20Berkshire%20Local%20Transport%20Body%2014%20November%202013.pdf$ 

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnership-national-assurance-framework http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicInfrastructure/StrategicInfrastructure/BLTB/ Assurance%20Framework%20for%20Berkshire%20Local%20Transport%20Body%2014%20November%202013. pdf

7. Liaison between government officials and the LEP has not raised any concerns about the drafting of the assurance framework currently used by the BLTB, nor with its application.

# Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

8. Slough Borough Council will provide legal support for the BLTB, should any questions arise.

# Supporting Information

- 9. One of the current activities of the Berkshire Local Transport Body is the management, on behalf of Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, of the financial contributions to transport schemes funded by successive Local Growth Deals. (Growth Deal 1 was announced in July 2014, GD2 in January 2015 and GD3 in February 2017).
- 10. To comply with the conditions of the Local Growth Deal, and to provide appropriate levels of scrutiny and transparency to the spending of public money, the LTB has adopted an Assurance Framework; the current version was first adopted on 14 March 2013, and subsequently amended twice, on 19 July 2013 and 14 November 2013.
- 11. It has operated successfully since then, and the LTB has approved 16 full business cases worth over £52m in Growth Deal contributions.
- 12. It is being reviewed now for two reasons: in November 2016, the government issued revised guidance; and the first of our schemes is coming up to the anniversary of scheme completion and we need to approve a process for the required one- and five-year post-completion monitoring reports.
- 13. The government's revised guidance covers all aspects of LEP and Growth Deal spending; the details as they apply to transport schemes are contained in Appendix B of the new guidance.
- 14. At Appendix 1 to this document is a table comparing every section of the new Appendix B to our current practice. Arising out of this detailed analysis there are six elements that need further discussion; these are set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Points requiring further discussion** 

App 1 Reference Number	Discussion Points	Officers' View
2	Note the appointment and role of White Young Green as Independent Assessors and plan to re-procure on expiry of existing contract in April 2018. This is a four-year contract and has no extension clause.	Noted. Re-procurement will commence in autumn 2017.

9	Consider what further action, if any, is required to meet the minimum requirement to "set out how the assessment and scrutiny of business cases will be quality assured."	The current arrangement is for quality assurance to be an internal matter for the appointed independent consultant. As the "assessment and scrutiny of business cases" is already being performed by an independent consultant, further quality assurance steps are not considered necessary.
15	Need to check that our current practice is acceptable to meet the minimum requirement of "The VfM assessment must be signed off as true and accurate by a named officer with responsibility for Value for Money assessments within Local Enterprise Partnerships."	Currently, the VfM certificate signatory is an officer of the scheme promoter, not the LEP. Completed certificates are available via a scheme promoter's website. The truth and accuracy is checked by the independent assessor on behalf of the LEP. Further scrutiny steps are not considered necessary.
27	Need to decide how to respond to the recommendation that "Business cases must be published (and publicised) before funding approval decision is made so that external comment is possible" and that "the above period should be at least 3 months"	As noted in response to the accompanying minimum requirements, the current practice is to make Full Business Cases publicly available in advance of considering funding approval. The officers see no merit in introducing a minimum notice period of 3 months for schemes that have already been exposed to public notice and scrutiny via planning, traffic regulation or other public notice procedure.
36	Need to decide how to respond to the recommendation that "Local Enterprise Partnerships should prepare an evaluation 'handover pack' as part of the appraisal process"	The LEP's independent assessors are responsible both for reviewing the Full Business Case for each scheme, and for assuring the one- and five-year post-completion evaluation.  We consider that in these circumstances a 'handover pack' is not necessary  See elsewhere in this report a detailed process for one- and five-year post-completion monitoring.
37	Need to decide how to respond to the option to "Set out how Local Enterprise Partnerships will share best practice obtained from evaluation and monitoring reports"	See elsewhere in this report a detailed process for one- and five-year post-completion monitoring, including the requirement to identify significant "lessons learnt"

# Proposed process for one- and five-year post-completion monitoring

15. Paragraph 17 of the current Assurance Framework says the following, "Evaluation post implementation. Evaluation post implementation will be in accordance with DfT guidance. This will be conducted by the LTB's independent assessors. The LTB will publish an initial report based on data collected at least one year post scheme opening; and a final report based on both 'one year after' data and further data collected approximately five years after scheme opening."

- 16. Now that our first scheme to complete, 2.07 Bracknell Coral Reef, is approaching its first anniversary, we have drafted a process for complying with this requirement, which is set out at Appendix 2.
- 17. We expect to receive the first one-year post-completion report on the Coral Reef scheme in November 2017.

#### Conclusion

18. The Assurance Framework currently in use is fit for purpose, and does not require further amendment to comply with the requirements of the government's latest guidance to LEPs.

# **Background Papers**

19. The source papers used in compiling this report have been referenced in the text.

## Appendix 1

This Appendix gives a detailed comparison of the recommendation in Appendix B of <u>Local Enterprise</u>

Partnership National Assurance Framework<sup>4</sup> and the <u>existing BLTB Assurance Framework</u><sup>5</sup>

2.1 \	/alue f	or Money		
DCL0		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
1	Commentary	Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to be satisfied that the proposed schemes will achieve value for money.	See Current Assurance Framework (CAF) para7 Strategic Objectives and Purpose "To ensure value for money is achieved from individual schemes and the overall investment programme"	No action necessary
2	Commentary	Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to demonstrate that they have established processes to ensure that the modelling and appraisal is sufficiently robust and fit for purpose for the scheme under consideration. This should describe how they will ensure that the modelling and appraisal of schemes meets the guidance set out in WebTAG.	CAF para 15, "TVB LEP will appoint consultants to perform the role of independent assessors"  White Young Green were appointed for a four-year term in April 2014. There are no extension provisions in the contract.	Note the appointment and role of White Young Green as Independent Assessors and plan to re-procure on expiry of existing contract in April 2018.
3	Commentary	The use of WebTAG, which is mandatory for all schemes, does not preclude additional assessments or methodologies (e.g. wider economic benefits) being employed to prioritise and assess the overall business case for a scheme.	CAF para 14, step 2, "The scheme proposer will develop a full Transport Business Case in line with current DfT guidance" This applies to scheme which have reached Programme Entry Stage. Our prioritisation procedures use a range of metrics.	No action necessary

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnership-national-assurance-framework
<sup>5</sup>http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/FileStore/StrategicInfrastructure/StrategicInfrastructure/BLTB/
Assurance%20Framework%20for%20Berkshire%20Local%20Transport%20Body%2014%20November%202013.
pdf

2.1 V	2.1 Value for Money				
DCL0		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP	
4	Commentary	Neither does it dictate the weighting or importance that decision-makers should attach to any aspect of the WebTAG assessment or any additional assessment. In particular, the Benefit to Cost Ratio is only one component of the value for money assessment and should not be the sole driver of decision-making.	Our prioritisation methodology uses six-factors, of which one, "deliverability" includes an assessment of the scheme's likelihood of demonstrating the required value-for-money rating	No action necessary	
5	Commentary	The overriding principle is that the full range of the material costs and benefits of a scheme, both quantified and unquantified, should be available to decisionmakers.	The pro-formas in use at prioritisation stage and later allow scheme promoters to describe the full range of costs and benefits associated with each scheme	No action necessary	
6	Minimum Requirement	The modelling and appraisal of schemes contained in business cases must be developed in accordance with the guidance published in WebTAG at the time the business case is submitted to Local Enterprise Partnerships for approval.	CAF para 14, step 2, "The scheme proposer will develop a full <u>Transport Business Case<sup>6</sup></u> in line with current DfT guidance"	Minimum requirement already met	

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/transport-business-case

2.1 V	/alue f	or Money		
DCLC		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
7	Minimum Requirement	Central case assessments must be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT's planning dataset). This requirement doesn't stop Local Enterprise Partnerships considering alternative planning assumptions as sensitivity tests and considering the results of these in coming to a decision about whether to approve a scheme.	CAF para 14, step 2, "Where necessary, Central Case assessments will be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT's planning dataset)."	Minimum requirement already met
8	Minimum Requirement	The appraisal and modelling will be scrutinised by Local Enterprise Partnerships to ensure it has been developed in accordance with the WebTAG. This will be undertaken independent of the management unit or authority promoting the scheme. The Local Enterprise Partnership's local assurance framework will set out how this will be done.	caf para 15, "TVB LEP will appoint consultants to perform the role of independent assessors. The appointment process will be a competitive tender. The procurement exercise will examine the credentials and capability of the bidders in respect of their: independence; their technical ability and their available resources. This will be tested against a specification which establishes the scope of the assessment, and the provision of post implementation evaluation."	Minimum requirement already met
9	Minimum Requirement	The local assurance framework must set out how the assessment and scrutiny of business cases will be quality assured.	CAF is silent on this matter. The contract with WYG includes a section "RELIANCE ON THE CONSULTANT'S SKILL AND CARE" which describes quality assurance responsibilities	Consider what further action, if any, is required to meet this minimum requirement

2.1 \	/alue f	or Money		
DCL0		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
10	Recommended	Set out mechanisms for providing early advice to scheme promoters on whether the study approach is fit-for-purpose, particularly in relation to modelling and Social & Distributional Impacts (which both can have significant lead times)	The WYG contract anticipates that a scheme promoter will produce Option Assessment and Appraisal Specification Reports for review prior to submission of a Full Business case. This has been the practice.	Recommended practice already used
11	Optional	A description of how Local Enterprise Partnerships will ensure that WebTAG will be applied by scheme promoters in a proportionate and robust way.	The application of WebTAG is the responsibility of each scheme promoter, not the LEP. The LEP commissions an independent consultancy who provide robust reports on the application of the scheme	Current practice meets the outcome envisaged in this option
12	Optional	A description of the circumstances under which external scrutiny or audit of the appraisal or modelling of schemes would be commissioned e.g. controversial or particularly costly schemes.	All schemes are subject to external scrutiny, either by WYG, our independent consultants, or, in the case of retained major schemes, by the DfT	Current practice meets the outcome envisaged in this option
13	Commentary	Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to put in place a process for producing a Value for Money (VfM) statement for all schemes put forward for approval summarising their overall assessment of the economic case. This VfM statement will need to be reviewed and updated at each approval stage.	CAF, para 14, step 2, " all schemes will include a VfM statement signed by a senior responsible officer."  The reference to multiple approval stages does not apply, as we operate a single approval stage.	No action necessary

2.1 V	/alue f	or Money		
DCLC		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
14	Minimum Requirement	A value for money statement for each scheme in line with published DfT WebTAG guidance and DfT advice on assessing VfM must be presented for consideration to Local Enterprise Partnerships at each approval stage.	CAF, para 14, step 2, " all schemes will include a VfM statement signed by a senior responsible officer."  The reference to multiple approval stages does not apply, as we operate a single approval stage.	Minimum requirement already met
15	Minimum Requirement	The VfM assessment must be signed off as true and accurate by a named officer with responsibility for Value for Money assessments within Local Enterprise Partnerships.	CAF, para 14, step 2, " all schemes will include a VfM statement signed by a senior responsible officer."  The signatory is an officer of the scheme promoter, not the LEP. The truth and accuracy is checked by the independent assessor on behalf of the LEP.	Need to check that our current practice is acceptable
16	Recommended	Set out what processes will be put in place to ensure that all impacts of a scheme (monetised and non-monetised) will be assessed by officers on a consistent basis and are based on reasonable assumptions.	The requirement of our CAF is for the scheme promoter's Full Business Case to be WebTAG compliant. The independent assessor checks it for  Completeness Accuracy Relevance Value for Money Evaluation arrangements	Current practice meets the outcome envisaged in this recommendation
17	Commentary	Local Enterprise Partnerships will need to confirm that they agree to only approve schemes that meet a minimum VfM threshold and put in place the appropriate checks and balances to ensure compliance with this requirement.	CAF para 14, step 4, "Where a scheme can demonstrate high value for money and receive a positive assessment, and have this validated by the independent assessor, a report to this effect may be prepared for the LTB recommending approval"	No action necessary

2.1 V	alue f	or Money		
DCLC		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
18	Commentary	The overwhelming majority of local major schemes funded in recent years were assessed by the Department as offering at least "high" value for money.	No comment	No comment
19	Commentary	We would like to ensure that the value for money of major transport investment is maintained and therefore would expect that Local Enterprise Partnerships would only in exceptional circumstances agree to fund schemes with lower than "high" value for money.	No comment	No comment
20	Commentary	If Local Enterprise Partnerships wish to retain the flexibility to fund schemes assessed at less than "high" value for money, the assurance framework should clearly set out the circumstances under which funding for such schemes would be considered, and outline any additional scrutiny or conditions that would apply.	CAF para 14, step 4, "Where a scheme can demonstrate high value for money and receive a positive assessment, and have this validated by the independent assessor, a report to this effect may be prepared for the LTB recommending approval"	No action necessary
21	Minimum Requirement	Local Enterprise Partnerships must either; only approve schemes that offer at least "high" value for money, as assessed using DfT guidance, or; set out the limited circumstances under which schemes offering lower than "high" value for money would be considered.	CAF para 14, step 4, "Where a scheme can demonstrate high value for money and receive a positive assessment, and have this validated by the independent assessor, a report to this effect may be prepared for the LTB recommending approval"	Minimum requirement already met

2.1 V	2.1 Value for Money				
DCLG heading		DCLG Text (see Appendix B page 18)	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP	
22	Minimum Requirement	Schemes must be assessed against the relevant thresholds at each approval stage.	We operate a single approval stage	Minimum requirement already met	
23	Commentary	Local Enterprise Partnerships are required to demonstrate separately (in other sections of the assurance framework) that they are transparent and open when reporting the results of modelling and appraisal, and that they have plans in place to obtain the necessary resources to fulfil the requirement to secure Value for Money.	All scheme promoters are required to make their Full Business Case publicly available via their web site	No action necessary	

# Table 2 (continued)

2.2 Externa	2.2 External views on business cases				
DCLG	DCLG Text	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB		
heading			LEP		
Commentary	This section should outline what arrangements exist for Local Enterprise Partnerships to invite and consider any external comment and/or scrutiny of business cases prior to approval. In previous DfT guidance, bidding Local Authorities were required to place their business case on their own websites when bids were submitted for funding and that practice should continue.	CAF para 16, "all Schemes seeking final approval will arrange for their business cases to be published, and for any comments from interested parties or the public to be collected and reported to the BLTB prior to any decision being made". In addition outline descriptions of schemes are available post Programme Entry stage	No action required		

2.2 E	xterna	al views on business cases		
DCLG head		DCLG Text	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB LEP
25	Minimum requirement	Business cases must be published (and publicised) before funding approval decision is made so that external comment is possible.	CAF para 16, " all Schemes seeking final approval will arrange for their business cases to be published, and for any comments from interested parties or the public to be collected and reported to the BLTB prior to any decision being made"	Minimum requirement already met
26	Minimum requirement	Opinions expressed by the public and stakeholders must be available to relevant members or boards of Local Enterprise Partnerships when decisions are being taken.	CAF, para 16, "all Schemes seeking final approval will arrange for their business cases to be published, and for any comments from interested parties or the public to be collected and reported to the BLTB prior to any decision being made"	Minimum requirement already met
27	Recommended	The above period should be at least 3 months.	Not sure that a full three months between Full Business Case submission and decision is achievable or desirable.	Needs further discussion
28	Recommended	Local Enterprise Partnerships should make public how they have taken external comments into account	CAF, para 16, "all Schemes seeking final approval will arrange for their business cases to be published, and for any comments from interested parties or the public to be collected and reported to the BLTB prior to any decision being made"	Recommendation already met

# Table 2 (continued)

2.3 Evalua	tion and Monitoring		
DCLG	DCLG Text	TVB LEP current practice	Suggested action for TVB
heading			LEP

29	Commentary	The following requirements on the evaluation and monitoring of outcomes apply to all transport schemes.	No comment	No comment
30	Minimum requirements	Local Enterprise Partnerships must put in place mechanisms to ensure that schemes are monitored and evaluated in line with the latest DfT guidance on the evaluation of local major schemes. In particular Local Enterprise Partnerships should:	CAF para 17, "Evaluation post implementation will be in accordance with DfT guidance. This will be conducted by the LTB's independent assessors. The LTB will publish an initial report based on data collected at least one year post scheme opening; and a final report based on both 'one year after' data and further data collected approximately five years after scheme opening.	Minimum requirement already met
31	Minimum requirements	set out proportionate evaluation and monitoring (M&E) plans that clarify: 1) requirements for individual schemes including funding of M&E activities; 2) responsibility for undertaking M&E, how minimum standards will be met and timescales for completion and decisions.	The LEP has a M&E plan, which includes some small (under £5m schemes) and some large (over £5m schemes) with a detailed schedule of data to be collected and published one year and five years post completion.	Minimum requirement already met
32	Minimum requirements	ensure that, for each scheme, there is clarity about how spend against delivery of outputs will be reported.	Promoters submit a scheme pro-forma, including spend against delivery and outputs, 6 times a year to an Officers' meeting and 3 times a year to the Local Transport Body	Minimum requirement already met

33		ensure that M&E plans	The LEP M&E plan is	Minimum requirement
	Minimum requirements	are in place for schemes by the time that funding is signed off or before any data collection is programmed.	already in place	already met
34	Minimum requirements	<ul> <li>put in place processes to ensure that the results of any evaluation and monitoring are published.</li> </ul>	CAF para 17, "The LTB will publish an initial report based on data collected at least one year post scheme opening; and a final report based on both 'one year after' data and further data collected approximately five years after scheme opening.	Minimum requirement already met
35	Recommended	Local Enterprise Partnerships should have the results of any evaluation and monitoring reviewed independently of the scheme promoter.	CAF para 17, "Evaluation post implementation will be in accordance with DfT guidance. This will be conducted by the LTB's independent assessors"	Recommendation already met
36	Recommended	Local Enterprise Partnerships should prepare an evaluation 'handover pack' as part of the appraisal process that documents all key assumptions so that those responsible for scheme evaluation can fully understand how appraisal estimates were produced and can examine the potential drivers of any differences between forecasts and outturns.	The LEP's independent assessors, WYG are responsible both for reviewing the Full Business Case for each scheme, and for assuring the one year on evaluation.  We consider that in these circumstances a 'handover pack' is not necessary	Consider what further action, if any, is required to meet this recommendation
37	Optional	Set out how Local Enterprise Partnerships will share best practice obtained from evaluation and monitoring reports.	Not yet reached	Consider what further action, if any, is required to implement this option

38	Commentary	Local Enterprise	No comment	No comment
		Partnerships and scheme		
		promoters should refer to		
		published DfT frameworks		
		for advice on monitoring		
		outcomes (e.g. reducing		
		congestion, improving		
		journey reliability etc.)		
		measures, data collection		
		methods and potential		
		data sources.		

## Appendix 2

Guidance for one- and five-year-on monitoring reports for BLTB funded local transport schemes

- 1. This guidance is for promoters of transport schemes part funded by Berkshire Local Transport Body, and for the BLTB's independent assessors.
- 2. The BLTB Assurance Framework currently says
  - "17. Evaluation (Guidance Paragraphs 76-77): Evaluation post implementation. Evaluation post implementation will be in accordance with DfT guidance. This will be conducted by the LTB's independent assessors. The LTB will publish an initial report based on data collected at least one year post scheme opening; and a final report based on both 'one year after' data and further data collected approximately five years after scheme opening."
- 3. In addition, the LEP's overall Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Growth Deal has identified 4 transport schemes to be subject to extended monitoring and evaluation.
  - 2.01 Newbury King's Road Link Road
  - 2.06 Reading Green Park Station
  - 2.08 Slough Mass Rapid Transit
  - 2.14 Reading East Reading Mass Rapid Transit

Further, 2.04 Wokingham Distributor Roads, which is a Department for Transport (DfT) retained scheme is included in the LEP M&E plan

- 4. In general terms, one- and five-year monitoring reports should follow the DfT guidance which is available at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-local-authority-major-schemes">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-for-local-authority-major-schemes</a>
- 5. BLTB monitoring reports will focus on the following basic questions about the scheme
  - a. did it get built?
  - b. was it to plan?
  - c. was it on time?
  - d. was it to budget?
  - e. is it working ok?
  - f. what impact has it had?
  - g. any learning points?
- 6. For BLTB schemes we will make a distinction within the DfT's "standard" category (up to £50m scheme cost) for small schemes (less than £5m scheme cost). This will be to ensure that the burden of monitoring reports is proportional to the size of the scheme.

- 7. For small schemes (up to £5m scheme cost), the scheme promoter will propose a monitoring methodology that is proportional to the small size of the scheme. Where it is appropriate to add to or subtract from the standard monitoring listed in the DfT guidance, the proposed methodology will explain why such changes are necessary.
- 8. For larger schemes (greater than £5m scheme cost), the same provisions will apply, but with the expectation that the DfT's "standard" category requirements will be applied.
- 9. It is anticipated that for both smaller and larger schemes the methodology will include an introduction to the scheme and its context, including reference to the original justification for the investment, explaining whether this was an economic development reason, or a transport one. It is also anticipated that this introduction will highlight any differences between the relevant monitoring period and the business model forecast period.
- 10. The role of the independent assessor will be to
  - a. review the proposed methodology
  - b. give the scheme promoter any feedback prior to compilation of the monitoring report
  - c. on receipt of the draft monitoring report, check for compliance with the proposed methodology
  - d. give the scheme promoter any feedback prior to the publication of the final report
  - e. notify the LEP of any issues regarding the accuracy, completeness and relevance of the monitoring report.