



Governance and Decision Making

January 2017

NB This is section 4 of Dorset LEP Assurance Framework highlighting governance and decision making. Please refer to Assurance Framework for appendices.

1. Funding Programme Governance

1.1 Process

There are 5 key stages in the governance process for the DLEP funding programme:

- Identification of projects seeking funding through the regular updating of the Dorset Strategic Economic Plan **(Appendix H)**
- Prioritisation of projects in relation to impact, strategic fit, value for money and deliverability **(Appendix J)**
- Development of robust business cases and due diligence **(Appendix I)**
- Robust programme management of selected projects **(Appendix F)**
- Monitoring and evaluation **(Appendix G)**

1.2 Decision making

The DLEP must provide assurance to its local partners, stakeholders and Government that decisions relating to the use of public funding are lawful, democratically accountable and transparent.

1.2.1 Lawful

All decisions on the use of DLEP funding must take into account all relevant legislation and regulations including, but not limited to;

- Environmental
- Equality
- Procurement
- Social Value
- State Aid

1.2.2 Democratic

Local democratic accountability is embedded by the following means:

- i. 4 of the 17 board members are elected members from the various local authorities and currently the leaders of Dorset County Council, the unitary authorities of Bournemouth Borough and Borough of Poole and 1 from the 6 Dorset District councils;
- ii. Accountability to the business community flows through the private sector business leaders on the DLEP Board;
- iii. There is a dedicated representative for small businesses on the DLEP Board
- iv. The DLEP website contains information on all Board meetings, including minutes and records of decision making;
- v. The requirements governing decision making by the DLEP Board are set out in the Articles of Association from s13.

1.2.3 Transparent

DLEP is committed to open and transparent decision making. The following arrangements exist to support effective and meaningful engagement of local stakeholders:

- i. DLEP Governance documentation is available on the DLEP website, including Articles of Association, relevant policies and procedures¹;
- ii. Key information relating to funding opportunities is widely disseminated in line with the DLEP Stakeholder Engagement Plan;
- iii. Key documents and policies are shared publicly on the DLEP website, including the Strategic Economic Plan;
- iv. Freedom of Information, Environmental Impact Regulations or similar queries relating to funding programmes are dealt with in a timely fashion;
- v. Key information relating to the operation and decision making of the DLEP Board is freely available on the DLEP website, including meeting dates, forward plan detailing key decision dates, agendas and minutes.
- vi. DLEP Board decision making is based on independent, impartial advice in relation to project business cases and value for money. (As set out in **Appendices I and J**)
- vii. Board minutes are agreed at the next scheduled Board meeting and then published on the website.

1.2.4 Value for money

DLEP is committed to obtaining best value for money when selecting and delivering projects funded with public money. The following arrangements seek to ensure that value for money is considered at each stage of the process for selecting and delivering projects;

- i. Application stage – project promoters are required to provide an Outline Business Case to include an assessment appraisal in order to demonstrate value for money and return on investment (**Appendix F**)
- ii. Prioritisation stage – value for money is independently assessed and a weighted and un-weighted Benefit Cost Ratio produced to inform decision making (**Appendix H**)
- iii. Due diligence stage – Full Business Case required in line with Green Book methodology to satisfy DLEP Board of project value for money (**Appendix G**)
- iv. Delivery Stage – Value for Money statement required as part of contractual arrangements (**Appendix D**)
- v. Monitoring and Evaluation Stage – continuous monitoring of project progress against stated objectives, including value for money and assessment of success during project evaluation (**Appendix E**)

1.3 Local Transport Board

The LTB's Assurance Framework was approved by the Department for Transport in January 2014 and the DLEP Board has made the decision to adopt it in relation to managing decisions on and delivery of transport projects. The adopted framework can be found on the DLEP website. The Connected Dorset group is the DLEP sub group charged with overseeing the development of Dorset's transport activity and is, in effect, the replacement for the now disbanded Local Transport Body.

¹ <http://dorsetlep.co.uk/governance/>