

**COMBINED AUTHORITY MEETING****18 March 2024****COMBINED AUTHORITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK****Report of the Director of Economy**

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**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report seeks adoption of York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Local Assurance Framework.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Combined Authority Local Assurance Framework be endorsed.

**3.0 Background**

- 3.1 The Government requires Mayoral Combined Authorities with devolution deals to produce, submit and publish a Local Assurance Framework, setting out how all devolved and awarded funding and powers, including Mayoral Investment Fund, Adult Education Budget (AEB), Net Zero Fund and Brownfield Housing Fund will be administered. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education (DfE) - must consider and approve the Local Assurance Frameworks of all Combined Authorities with devolution deals prior to funding being released. As Brownfield Housing Fund and Net Zero Fund programmes have commenced prior to the establishment of the Combined Authority (CA), bespoke assurance arrangements were approved by the Devolution Joint Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2023 and submitted to government for approval.

- 3.2 Local Assurance Frameworks are a requirement under the English Devolution Accountability Framework, and set out how Combined Authorities will use public money responsibly, make robust and lawful decisions, achieve best value for money and act in an open and transparent manner. They explain the governance structures in place for making decisions, outlines the policies and procedures in place to support decision-making, summarise how investments and interventions are appraised and managed, and how the Combined Authority will publish information.

- 3.3 The Local Assurance Framework attached at Appendix 1 has been developed in accordance with the principles of the Levelling Up White Paper, the English Devolution Accountability Framework (issued in March 2023), and HM Treasury Green Book (November 2022).

3.4 This Local Assurance Framework has been drafted in such a way to establish the Combined Authority on a compliant foundation to draw down its first allocation of resources, make robust and lawful decisions, and be well placed to build upon to bid for further devolved powers and funding where available. Whilst the Local Assurance Framework must be reviewed annually, it should be noted at this stage, that there will be several subsequent amendments required throughout 2024-2025 to incorporate the assurance requirements for emerging responsibilities such as the Adult Education Budget and Transport which will be subject to further regulations.

3.5 The Local Assurance Framework has been reviewed the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Education and Department for Transport in two stages. The feedback from both typically related to minor typographical matters and the clarification on internal processes and roles to ensure clarity and consistency. Government

3.6 The Local Assurance Framework is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **4.0 Local Assurance Framework Requirements**

4.1 The English Devolution Accountability Framework sets out a range of expectations for Local Assurance Frameworks:

- Confirm Accountable Body arrangements for funding received from government through devolution deals
- Confirm that the use of resources is subject to the usual local authority checks and balances – including the financial duties and rules which require authorities to act prudently in spending, which are overseen and checked by the responsible Chief Finance Officer (the Section 73 Officer) and to ensure that annual accounts are published. This should include reference to the Combined Authority’s overview and scrutiny and audit committee functions
- Confirm, where applicable, that investment decisions using public funds will be made with reference to statutory requirements, conditions of the funding, local objectives (e.g. transport objectives) and through formal LEP involvement
- Describe the arrangements for enabling effective and meaningful engagement of local partners and the public to inform key decisions and future strategy development.

4.2 The Local Assurance Framework should set out the key roles and responsibilities in decision making. In particular, it should set out which body (or bodies) has the authority to set strategy, budgets, and individual investment decisions, including any delegated authority. It should set out, for example, the distinct responsibilities of the Mayor and other Combined Authority members.

- 4.3 In line with the Local Government Accountability Framework, Government expects the Level 3 institution to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place so that decision-making and recording is transparent, and that requests for information, conflicts and complaints are dealt with appropriately. Government would also expect to see arrangements in place to enable effective engagement with local partners and the public.
- 4.4 Local Assurance Frameworks should set out the means by which directly elected leaders will be involved in funding allocation and decision making. No spending commitments beyond the initial 5-year allocation should be made until elected leaders are in place and have agreed to the investment strategy. This is consistent with the ambition and agreement to hold a single democratically elected leader accountable, and for their democratically invested power to influence the allocation of funding.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 The Combined Authority approved a draft of the Local Assurance Framework at its meeting on 22 January and gave delegated authority to the Interim Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Co-Chairs, to make any material changes which may be necessary for the agreement of a final version with Government.
- 5.2 The review process concluded on 26 February in consultation with the Combined Authority's Co-Chairs and the final version of the framework was published on the Combined Authority's website.
- 5.3 Government subsequently confirmed on 28 February that the first funding payment would be released on 1 March 2024.
- 5.4 Although a final version of the Local Assurance Framework has been agreed under delegated authority it is presented to the Combined Authority for endorsement at this meeting in the interest of openness and transparency.
- 5.5 Regular updates on the Local Assurance Framework will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee, and a revised version will be presented annually to the Combined Authority.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Agreement of a final draft was required to release the initial £9m Investment Fund payment.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Local Assurance Framework reflects the powers and governance arrangements set out in the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023. It describes the statutory responsibilities set out in the Order and the Combined Authority's Constitution, which should be read alongside it.

7.2 Failure to have in place an approved Local Assurance Framework would be a breach of the Combined Authority’s statutory duty.

**8.0 Equalities Implications**

8.1 No direct equalities implications arise from this report.

**9.0 Environmental Implications**

9.1 No climate change implications arise from this report.

**10.0 Combined Authority Areas Impacted (Council Areas/Wards/Divisions)**

10.1 The Local Assurance Framework is a corporate document covering a range of functions across the entirety of the Combined Authority area.

**11.0 Recommendations**

11.1 That the Combined Authority Local Assurance Framework be endorsed.

**12.0 Reasons For Recommendations**

12.1 It is a requirement of Government to produce, submit and publish a Local Assurance Framework prior to devolved funds being released to Combined Authorities.

**13.0 Contact Details**

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**Background papers**

[National Local Growth Assurance Framework \(September 2021\)](#)

[English Devolution Accountability Framework \(March 2023\)](#)

[HM Treasury Green Book \(October 2023\)](#)

[The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023](#)

**Appendices – Appendix 1 – YNYCA Local Assurance Framework**

# ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

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## 1. Introduction

### Purpose of the Assurance Framework

- 1.1 The aim of this document is to set out how the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (CA) will use public money responsibly, both openly and transparently, and achieve best value for money. This document outlines:
  - The respective roles and responsibilities of the Mayoral Combined Authority, the York and North Yorkshire Mayor and other elements of the decision-making and delivery structure;
  - The key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency, legal compliance, and value for money;
  - How potential investments will be prioritised, appraised, approved, and delivered; and
  - How the progress and impacts of these investments will be monitored and evaluated.
- 1.2 The Assurance Framework sits alongside several key governance and policy documents – most notably the Devolution Agreement and Settlement Letter, the CA Constitution the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- 1.3 The Assurance Framework has been developed in accordance with the English Devolution Accountability Framework (March 2023) the HM Treasury Green Book (November 2022).
- 1.4 This Assurance Framework takes effect from the establishment of the CA in January 2024. It will apply to all new decisions, approvals, and funding bids, regimes, and projects from this date. For continuity and consistency purposes, some existing projects commenced and managed by York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, will conclude their funding approval in line with the current Local Assurance Framework Arrangements.
- 1.5 In addition to this document, the Office of the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner observe the following assurance frameworks in respect of Police and Fire functions:
  - North Yorkshire Police – <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/police-oversight/governance/assurance-framework/>
  - North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/fire-oversight/governance/assurance-framework/>

Both documents should be read in conjunction with this assurance framework.

### Updating the Assurance Framework

- 1.6 The Assurance Framework will be subject to a review and approval process with Government at least annually, however, will remain under constant review to reflect any updates to the English Devolution Accountability Framework, the CA's constitutional arrangements or internal processes, or new guidance issued by Government. The next scheduled review of this document will take place after the Mayoral elections in May 2024
- 1.7 The first draft of this Assurance Framework was approved by the Devolution Joint Committee of North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council prior to the commencement of the CA for submission to Government, and was later ratified at the inaugural meeting of the CA in January 2024. The CA will work with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and, Communities (DLUHC), Department for Business & Trade, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education (DfE) to approve and maintain the suitability of the Assurance



Framework.

- 1.8 As further devolved funding and powers are unlocked, this assurance framework will be monitored and revised.
- 1.9 The Government's Autumn Statement (22 November 2023) announced that the Levelling Up White Paper would be updated to introduce a Level 4 Devolution package which can be drawn down by Combined Authorities. It is anticipated that this assurance framework will need to be revised in order to access funding and powers available under Level 4.

## 2. About York and North Yorkshire

### History

- 2.1 The York and North Yorkshire geographical area consists of the unitary authorities of City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council.
- 2.2 The York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Y&NY LEP) was formed in 2011 and previously covered the former nine local authority areas within York and North Yorkshire prior to local government reorganisation. It is a public-private partnership whose Board includes business, educational and Local Authority Leaders. Y&NY LEP provides strategic economic leadership to the area, driving the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan, which sets out York and North Yorkshire's vision to strengthen the area's economy and provide more opportunities for businesses and communities. The Y&NY LEP has delivered a significant number of development and growth projects which have begun to transform the area, and provide an effective framework to manage and commission the multi-million-pound investment programmes designed to improve and support the region's economy. North Yorkshire County Council currently acts as accountable body for the York & North Yorkshire LEP. All LEPs were subject to a wide-ranging review in 2021 to determine their form and function in future years. The outcome of that review was published in March 2022 and placed a requirement on all LEPs to integrate into a combined authority or democratic institution with devolved local powers to improve democratic accountability whilst still providing a strong voice of business. The LEP will become the Business Committee of the combined authority.
- 2.3 The York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal was announced on 1 August 2022 and the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority signed into law on 20 December 2024.

### Geography

- 2.4 The CA's geographical boundary is York and North Yorkshire.



- 2.5 This geography provides a functional economic area for the region and parallels the geography of North Yorkshire Police.
- 2.6 York and North Yorkshire contains two national park authorities – North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales. Each national park is also the planning authority for their respective geographies.

**Economic Framework**

- 2.7 The CA’s Economic Framework was approved by the Devolution Joint Committee on 15 December 2023.
- 2.8 It is illustrated in the diagram below:



- Key:
- = Overarching ambitions
  - = Health and wellbeing should be reflected through all priorities
  - = Thematic priorities

- 2.9 The Framework is under-pinned by three strategic ambitions;
  - Transition to a carbon negative region: A carbon negative, circular and more resilient economy;

- Deliver good economic growth: A global, innovative, productive economy with strong and thriving businesses;
- Increase Opportunities for all: A thriving and inclusive economy.

- 2.10 Health and wellbeing has been embedded across the framework, recognising the role in supporting the wider determinants of health (e.g. transport / air quality, good housing, good jobs etc.).
- 2.11 The strategic ambitions, coupled with a commitment to improving health and wellbeing should be at the heart of decision making for all aspects of the Framework.
- 2.12 In order to deliver the over-arching ambitions, the framework sets out 8 priority themes under which investment plans will be developed:
1. Great Places sit at the heart of the plan, reflecting their importance to the economy of York and North Yorkshire and reflecting they often act as the link between the other seven investment themes.
  2. A Well-Connected Economy, reflects the importance of transport and digital in connecting businesses and people to opportunities;
  3. Housing, with a particular focus on increasing affordable and sustainable homes;
  4. A Thriving Workforce will develop clear opportunities and skills pathways for all;
  5. A Green & Circular Economy, reflects the value of our natural capital and economic potential of a sustainable energy sector;
  6. A Global Economy, will develop the inward investment potential of the region prioritising high growth sectors;
  7. A Productive & Innovative Economy will drive the performance of established core sectors, innovation and R&D;
  8. Culture & Heritage, reflects the world leading status of our assets and will seek to strengthen and increase investment into our cultural assets;

### **Devolved Powers and Funding**

- 2.13 The York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal provides the ability to establish a single pot of funding to invest in economic development, including the Mayoral Investment Fund (Gainshare), the Adult Education Budget, a consolidated transport budget and other devolved monies as detailed below. Further information on how decisions are made and assured to invest the fund is provided elsewhere in this document.

### **Mayoral Investment Fund**

- 2.14 The Gainshare (grant-based investment funding) allocation for York and North Yorkshire through the Devolution Deal is £18m per annum for a period of 30 years. This consists of 35% capital and 65% revenue funding and is to be invested in the delivery of the CA's strategic and economic priorities.

### **Transport**

- 2.15 The CA is the local transport authority ('LTA') and integrated transport authority ('ITA') for the Combined Authority Area and has all the functions of an LTA and ITA.
- 2.16 The CA will develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and will prepare and publish a local transport plan containing its policies and proposals for their implementation.

## **Adult Education Budget (AEB)**

- 2.17 From August 2025 the CA assumes responsibility for the revenue-based Adult Education Budget (AEB) in York and North Yorkshire. Devolution of AEB supports the delivery of high- quality adult education at NVQ Levels 1,2 and 3 to individuals aged 19 years and above. This equates to around £10.8m per academic year.
- 2.18 Prior to commencement of the CA, the ongoing development and management of the AEB implementation phase will be undertaken by the LEP's Skills and Employability Board. Following commencement of the CA, this role will be undertaken by a Skills and Employability Working Group which will report directly to the Combined Authority.
- 2.19 The formal devolution of AEB will be detailed in a statutory instrument in the future and this assurance framework will be reviewed in light of all:
- (a) statutory duties relating to adult education and training which have been transferred to the mayoral combined authorities under Statutory Instruments
  - (b) statutory entitlements to education and training of adults living in devolved areas, and policy entitlements where relevant
  - (c) statutory and non-statutory guidance.
- 2.20 The CA will observe the requirements of the English Devolution Accountability Framework (2023) and ensure that devolved skills funding will align to local skills plans (name of relevant plan/strategy) while also addressing national priorities.
- 2.21 Each year the CA will produce an Annual Assurance Report on delivery of Adult Education Budget functions in accordance with the criteria set out in the Monitoring and Evaluation section of the English Devolution Accountability Framework.

## **Brownfield Housing Fund (BHF)**

- 2.22 The CA was allocated £12.7m in 2023 to deliver a capital programme of housing schemes on brownfield sites over the next 5 years through the Government's Brownfield Fund.

## **Net Zero Fund (NZF)**

- 2.23 The CA was allocated £6m in 2023 to deliver a capital programme of grants for project delivery, enabling the delivery of net zero projects that otherwise would not happen, through the Government's Net Zero Fund.
- 2.24 The CA was allocated £1m in 2023 to deliver a revenue programme of Project Development Support, supporting the development of net zero projects from idea to investor-ready, through the Government's Net Zero Fund.

## **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**

- 2.25 The UKSPF is the Government's major economic development fund to replace EU Structural and Investment Funds. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious levelling up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. The ambitions are based around the government's 3 investment priorities: communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.
- 2.26 In addition, NY has secured Rural England Prosperity funding (capital funding only) to

support the agenda in our most rural communities.

- 2.27 York and North Yorkshire collectively have been awarded £28.5m in total, to be distributed over 3 years between April 2022 and March 2025. The focus of North Yorkshire’s plan is to materially improve the life chances of residents (especially the most deprived), support business growth and boost pride and confidence in the region:
- North Yorkshire has been allocated just over £22.3m in total from the funds for 3 years between April 2022 to March 2025 (UKSPF £16.8m / REPF £5.4m)
  - York has been allocated c£6.2m in total from the funds for 3 years between April 2022 to March 2025 (UKSPF £5.8m / REPF £400k).
- 2.28 At present both constituent authorities have detailed plans on the distribution of this funding based on ‘programmes’ under each of the 3 Governmental investment priorities with a heavy weighting on spend allocated to year three 2024-2025. Largely co-designed with a wide range of stakeholders the programmes are designed to support the further development and implementation of both Authorities economic, skills and environmental strategies as well as meet the expected outcomes and outputs identified by the Government for their Levelling Up agenda.
- 2.29 Collaboration has begun on the development and promotion of ‘shared programmes’ - where opportunities are offered across the entirety of the CA geography. This will support the future planning of a united SPF Round 2 application in the near future. Discussions to work up a combined SPF Investment Plan for the future will commence in January 2024.

## **Multiply**

- 2.1 In 2022, North Yorkshire was awarded £2.6m and York was awarded £741,000 from the Government’s Multiply funding via UK Shared Prosperity Fund to invest in the provision of numeracy and maths courses for adults to increase the levels of functional numerary in the UK adult population.

<b>Year</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>York</b>
<b>1</b>	£806 587	£224 111
<b>2</b>	£930 678	£258 559
<b>3</b>	£930 678	£258.559
<b>Total</b>	£2.6m	£741 000

## **Powers**

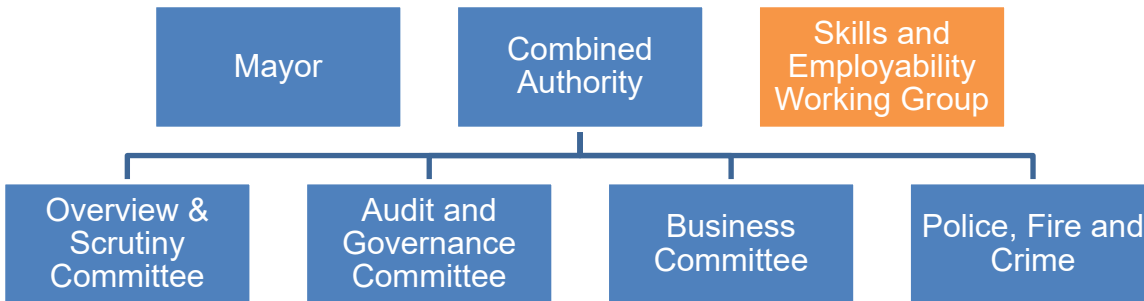
- 2.2 Under the York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal, the CA and Mayor were granted the following devolved powers from Government:
- The full devolution of the 19+ Adult Education Budget for college and training providers
  - The ability to borrow against funds
  - To improve the supply and quality of housing and secure the development of land or infrastructure
  - To create a non-statutory Spatial Framework for York and North Yorkshire
  - The option to establish Mayoral Development Corporations

- To provide grants and make agreements with other bodies on the management of the strategic highway network
- The option to introduce a Mayoral precept.

### 3. Structures and Roles

#### Overview

- 3.1 The CA governance model combines public sector capacity, transparency, and accountability with private sector expertise from its Business Committee.
- 3.2 The Combined Authority is the primary decision-making body.
- 3.3 The Mayor and Combined Authority are supported by committees, Working Groups, Combined Authority Leadership Team and the Secretariat. The Secretariat advises the Mayor, CA and committees on policy and investments, and manages and monitors the delivery of projects.
- 3.4 The CA's Leadership Team also support the decision-making process. Two independent committees - the Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensure that the CA and Mayor are fulfilling their legal obligations, and developing and delivering strategies and public transport services that are in the best interests of local people.
- 3.5 Below is a summary diagram of the CA's committee structure. Additional committees may be established in accordance with the CA's constitution and scheme of delegation.



- 3.6 The following sections provide a description of the different elements of the structure and their respective roles and responsibilities.

#### The Mayor

- 3.7 The Mayor is directly elected by the electorate in the region and serves a four-year term of office. The first Mayoral election will take place in May 2024.
- 3.8 Following the CA's inaugural meeting, the Mayor will be known by the designation "Mayor" in accordance with paragraph (2)(a) of section 107H of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, subsequent to section 76 of the Levelling Up Act 2023.
- 3.9 The Mayor will appoint a member of the CA to be the Mayor's deputy.

#### Role and Responsibilities of the Mayor

- 3.10 The Mayor exercises powers and functions that are devolved to the CA by central Government.



- 3.11 The Mayor will be the Chair of the Combined Authority and lead the CA in terms of proposing and agreeing the revenue and capital budgets of the CA, including allocation of the consolidated transport budget, appropriate use of the Adult Education Budget and how Gainshare is utilised to support the CA's policies. The CA will appoint a Chair and Vice--Chair to serve until the Mayor takes office.
- 3.12 The Mayor is a member of the CA's Business Committee and will promote the region as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.
- 3.13 The decision-making powers and functions of the Mayor are:
- Development of a strategy and spending plan for the delivery of mayoral functions
  - Responsibility for a consolidated, devolved transport budget, with a multi-year settlement
  - Responsibility and the power to approve franchised bus services, to support the CA's delivery of smart and integrated ticketing
  - Responsibility for an identified Key Route Network of local authority roads that will be collaboratively managed and maintained by the CA on behalf of the Mayor
  - Powers over strategic planning, including the responsibility to create a spatial framework for York and North Yorkshire
  - Ability to create Mayoral Development Areas or Corporations in agreement with the relevant CA member

### **The Mayoral Combined Authority (CA)**

- 3.14 The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority was formally constituted in law on 20 December 2024. It comprises the two constituent local authorities of North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council.

### **Role of the CA**

- 3.15 The CA is the legal and accountable body for funding devolved and awarded to the CA and Business Committee (acting as the LEP). The CA is also the Local Transport Authority for York and North Yorkshire. This role and its accompanying responsibilities are defined in the CA Constitution.

### **Responsibilities of the CA**

- 3.16 The CA's core remit is strategic economic development, housing, carbon reduction, skills, transport infrastructure and strategic and operational transport functions.
- 3.17 The CA is responsible for setting the policy direction in North Yorkshire and York and maximising financial investment to achieve economic growth. The CA is also responsible for making large investment decisions and ensuring that the policy and strategic objectives of the SEP are delivered.
- 3.18 On this basis, typically the agenda for the CA is focused on different elements of the Economic Framework and takes decisions and oversees performance on items including:
- Programme updates – on initiatives being delivered
  - Investment decisions
  - Monitoring of financial and output performance
  - Assurance, strategic risk management and governance
  - Strategies and plans

- 3.19 The constituent members of the CA are accountable for where and how public money is being spent.
- 3.20 Additional responsibilities and further powers may be devolved to the Mayor and the CA, pending agreement by Government, the Mayor, CA and the constituent authorities.

### Membership of the CA

- 3.21 Membership of the CA is set out in Table 1 below. This specifies the type of membership; constituent, non-constituent, and observer.

Table 1: Membership of the CA 2023/24

Member	Post	Membership Type
Combined Authority	Mayor	Constituent
City of York Council	Appointed Member (Lead)	Constituent
City of York Council	Appointed Member	Constituent
North Yorkshire Council	Appointed Member (Lead)	Constituent
North Yorkshire Council	Appointed Member	Constituent
Business Committee	Chair	Associate Member (Non-Voting)
<i>Combined Authority</i>	<i>Deputy Mayor (Police, Fire and Crime)</i>	<i>Constituent (Non-Voting)</i>

- 3.22 Named substitutes will be appointed by each constituent council.
- 3.23 Key stakeholders are invited to attend CA meetings in an observational capacity. These can include Government agencies (such as Homes England or Network Rail) and other partners and bodies which have close economic links with York and North Yorkshire, such as neighbouring Combined Authorities.
- 3.24 All CA members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life. These principles are embedded in the CA Members' Code of Conduct as detailed in the CA Constitution.

### Combined Authority Meetings

- 3.25 The Combined Authority will agree a schedule of meetings each year, with meetings to be held at least every two months and in public.
- 3.26 All constituent members of the Combined Authority and the Mayor have one equally weighted vote. Non-constituent members have no automatic right to vote. The CA Constitution allows for voting rights to be extended to non-constituent members at the discretion of the constituent members.
- 3.27 The voting requirements for prescribed matters are included in the CA's Constitution.
- 3.28 The Mayor's budget proposals are approved by the CA in accordance with the Combined Authorities (Finance) Order 2017 and the Constitution.

### Quoracy for Combined Authority Meetings

- 3.29 At least three voting members of the CA must be present for a meeting to be valid. If a

decision is required to meet agreed timescales and a meeting of the CA is either not possible or scheduled, written procedures for decision making apply, in line with the CA Constitution and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny regulations.

### **The Business Committee (Formerly the LEP)**

- 3.30 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) are voluntary business-led partnerships which brings together business leaders, local politicians, and other partners to promote and drive economic growth. The York and North Yorkshire LEP was established in 2010 and will become the Business Committee of the CA.
- 3.31 The Business Committee will advise on strategy and policy that will unlock the region's economic potential and stimulate growth and prosperity, and ensure that policy and decisions of the CA receive the input and views of key business leaders and take account of the views of the wider business community. It will engage with local, national and international businesses to understand the needs of different sectors and markets. It will engage business and policy makers at a national and international level in promoting economic growth in the region.
- 3.32 The Business Committee will comprise of four public sector members and eight private sector members. Private Sector Members will form the majority of the Committee. In addition, the Chair can co-opt up to five additional private sector members with specialist knowledge for specific purposes. Co-opted members will not be counted in the private sector majority.
- 3.33 Business Committee Chair – The Mayor will appoint a Chair from the private sector members who will provide strategic leadership on business growth for the region. The Chair will assist the Mayor in building the reputation and influence of the region at national and international levels. The Chair will be a non-voting member of the CA. The Vice Chair will be appointed to act as substitute who will act in the absence of the Chair.

### **Audit and Governance Committee**

- 3.34 The Audit and Governance Committee ensures that the CA and Mayor are operating in a legal, open, and transparent way.
- 3.35 In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guidance, the Committee provides a high-level focus on assurance and governance arrangements.
- 3.36 The Audit and Governance Committee monitors the operation of the organisation. Their role is to ensure that the CA is fulfilling its legal obligations, complies with statutory requirements, is managing risk effectively and has robust control measures in place for all devolved powers and funding. The Committee scrutinises, reviews, and endorses the Treasury Management Strategy, Financial Regulations, and statutory accounts, before they are finalised and presented to the CA for approval, as well as identifying any risks.
- 3.37 Membership of the Audit and Governance Committee is politically balanced and consists of 8 elected Councillors (or their nominated substitute) - 4 from each of the two constituent local authorities, plus one independent member appointed by the CA.

3.38 The Audit and Governance Committee meets at least quarterly and reports into the CA on both financial and non-financial performance. The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee is invited to present the work that the committee is undertaking to the CA at least once per year. The Chair will maintain regular contact with the CA's s73 officer, monitoring officer and head of paid service.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

3.39 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds the CA and Mayor to account for all decisions taken, including devolved powers and funding. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the authority to review and scrutinise any decision made, or action taken by the CA or Mayor. The Committee can, at their discretion, produce reports and make recommendations for change or improvements.

3.40 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for checking that the CA is delivering its objectives, and that policies, strategies and plans are made in the best interests of residents and workers in York and North Yorkshire. They provide independent scrutiny of initiatives and LEP activities and public consultation on draft strategies.

3.41 Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is politically balanced and consists of 12 elected Councillors - 6 from each of the two constituent local authorities in accordance with the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit and Governance Committees) Order 2017.

3.42 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets on a quarterly basis. The CA is required to consider the conclusions of any review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the next available meeting.

3.43 The Combined Authority will observe the guidance contained in the Scrutiny Protocol published by DLUHC on 22 November 2023.

### **Statutory Officers**

3.44 The CA appoints Statutory Officers to discharge duties and obligations on their behalf. The Statutory Officers ensure that the CA is acting in accordance with its legal duties and responsibilities, operating within the financial regulations and receiving appropriate advice on policy and governance.

3.45 The Statutory Officer roles are defined in the CA Constitution and comprise:

- **Head of Paid Service** – The Interim Director of Delivery fulfils the role of the Head of Paid Service. The Head of Paid Service discharges the functions in relation to the CA as set out in section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- **Section 73 Officer** – the role of Section 73 Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 1985. The Section 73 Officer administers the financial affairs of the CA. The Section 73 Officer is equivalent to a Section 151 Officer.
- **Monitoring Officer** – The Monitoring Officer discharges the functions in relation

to the CA as set out in section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

- **Scrutiny Officer** – The Scrutiny Officer promotes the role of the overview and scrutiny committee as set out in Article 9 of the Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit and Governance Committees) Order 2017
- **Data Protection Officer** – As required by the Data Protection Act 2018. This role will be undertaken by Veritau Ltd.

### **Independent Remuneration Panel**

- 3.46 An independent Remuneration Panel convenes to identify the salary and allowances that should be paid to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor for their term of office. The CA does not currently have a Deputy Mayor.
- 3.47 The Remuneration Panel reports their recommendations in a report to the CA who decide the salary and allowances that will be paid.

### **The CA Secretariat**

- 3.48 The CA is supported by the CA Secretariat. The CA Secretariat is a dedicated resource that provides impartial advice and works in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.
- 3.49 The role of the Secretariat is to advise and support the CA and Mayor execute the decisions made.
- 3.50 The Secretariat are employed by the CA and support the following activities:
- **Develop and Propose Policy** - supporting the CA and Mayor to draft key policies to inform decision-making on investment
  - **Initiate and Recommend Project Ideas** – support project applicants in identifying and bringing forward viable project ideas that will deliver the CA's strategic objectives
  - **Develop and Commission Solutions** – ensure projects in the funding pipeline are fully developed and that delivery options are fully explored
  - **Advise Funding Applicants** – on how to develop a robust and comprehensive Business Case by working collegiately with the applicant to develop the project, and advise on the assurance process
  - **Manage the Investment Appraisal Process** – ensure that funding applications follow the correct process, and manage the independent review and appraisal of business cases and funding applications including contracting specialists and subject experts to undertake technical reviews as required
  - **Advise the CA and Mayor** – on the value for money, risk, and deliverability of funding applications
  - **Programme and Project Design and Development** – design and develop investment programmes and projects to deliver the agreed policy objectives of the Mayor and CA, in line with the agreed Investment Plan, including the preparation and submission of funding bids to central Government or in response to specific calls and opportunities that may arise
  - **Programme and Project Monitoring** – monitor and report on the delivery, performance and achievements of programmes and projects to the CA and its committees, DLUHC, DfT and DfE as per the Government's requirements
  - **Manage the Evaluation Process** - manage the monitoring and evaluation

framework, ensure that all programmes and projects are appropriately evaluated and provide regular reports and updates to the CA and its committees, individual Government departments and nationally appointed evaluators

- **Administration and secretariat function for the CA and Committees** – ensuring CA and its committees are planned and arranged in a timely fashion and communicated
- **Compiling Papers and Reports** - for the Mayor and CA/Committee members
- **Enquiries** – dealing with the media and handling general enquiries from the public
- **Publishing Information** – ensuring that minutes, agendas, and papers of the meetings of the Combined Authority, Business Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee are published promptly on the CA website and publishing information on CA policies and procedures
- **Inward Investment** – to potential investors and the public as a place to invest, work and live
- **Growth Hub**

3.51 The functions of the Secretariat are organised to maintain 'ethical walls' and ensure that there are no opportunities for conflicts of interest between project and programme commissioning and project appraisal.

3.52 Some of the duties outlined at 3.50 may be contracted and undertaken by other authorities or organisations within formal Service Level Agreements.

#### **4. Accountability for Public Funds**

- 4.1 Several measures are in place to ensure that the Mayor and CA manage and administer public funds in a responsible, efficient, transparent, and accountable manner.

#### **The Accountable Body**

- 4.2 The CA is established as a legal entity under the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023 and will act as the legal and accountable body for powers and funding devolved by Government and be responsible for all decisions and expenditure
- 4.3 Prior to its establishment, North Yorkshire Council acted as accountable body on an interim basis for the commencement of advanced devolved funding programmes. I.e. Brownfield Housing Fund.
- 4.4 The CA holds all funding, enters contractual arrangements and processes payments. The CA also provides programme management to account for the funding and ensures that the impact of investment is assessed.
- 4.5 The CA is accountable for:
- Ensuring that its decisions and activities conform with legal requirements regarding equalities, environmental and UK and European legislation (such as Subsidy Control), and that records are maintained so that this is evidenced
  - Retaining overall responsibility for the appropriate use of public funds by the CA
  - Ensuring that the approved Assurance Framework is being adhered to
  - Ensuring that all contracts entered discharge their duties
  - Maintaining and publishing annual accounts (including devolved and other funding sources received from Government), in accordance with the relevant regulations, each year in draft form by 31 May and finalised in July.
- 4.6 In accordance with section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the CA delegates certain decisions to the Statutory Officers. The Scheme of Delegation in the CA's Constitution specifies the delegations for funding and decision-making that are available to the Head of Paid Service, the Section 73 Officer, and the Monitoring Officer.

#### **Section 73 Officer**

- 4.7 The Section 73 Officer is fully engaged in the operation of the organisation, ensuring that devolved funds are managed responsibly and allocated through a robust application process.
- 4.8 The Section 73 Officer is accountable for:
- Ensuring that devolved funds, including the AEB, are used legally, appropriately and are subject to the usual local authority checks and balances, including discharging financial duties under the Financial Regulations
  - Ensuring that the CA acts in a manner that is lawful, transparent, evidence based, consistent and proportionate, including the publication of annual audited accounts
  - Signing-off Value for Money Statements for all funding applications during the appraisal process as true and accurate
  - Certifying that funding can be released under the appropriate conditions (in line with statutory duties)
  - Accepting grants for funding on behalf of the CA, where the CA has approved the

submission of a funding bid to Government

- Accepting tenders or quotations for the supply of goods, materials or services provided that the spend is within the CA approved budget or capital programme
- Signing-off quarterly reports to individual Government departments on programme performance and expenditure
- Ensuring that the established professional codes of practice are applied
- Ensuring that strong governance arrangements policies are in place to ensure that the CA is operating robustly and transparently (by providing an Annual Assurance Statement).

### **Internal and External Audit**

- 4.9 The CA has an established process for internal and external audit. Internal audit is a contracted service provided by Veritau. The CA will appoint external auditors under the Public Sector Audit Appointments scheme. The Combined Authority will provide those external audit services. The audit arrangements cover the CA's funding and activities, including devolved monies, and transport operations.
- 4.10 In conjunction with the internal audit team, the CA Head of Paid Service, Section 73 Officer and Monitoring Officer will prepare Audit Policy and an annual Internal Audit Plan at the start of each financial year, which is reviewed towards the end of the financial year. The Internal Audit Plan includes all aspects of the appraisal, assurance, monitoring and evaluation processes and transport operations. This provides independent and objective assurance to the CA. The Plan is approved by the CA and progress against the plan is discussed by the Audit and Governance Committee at each meeting.

### **Audit and Governance Committee**

- 4.11 The Audit and Governance Committee reviews in detail the opinions of the internal and external auditors on behalf of the CA. The Committee holds the Statutory Officers to account for any improvements identified and required and contributes to the audit opinion at the end of each financial year.
- 4.12 The Audit and Governance Committee has an annual Work Programme, which includes undertaking a detailed review of the strategic risk management and financial management processes that are in place, assessing the level of risk, reviewing elements of the CA funded programmes in detail, and contributing to the setting and approval of the Internal Audit Plan.

### **Overview and Scrutiny**

- 4.13 The independent Overview and Scrutiny Committee holds the CA and Mayor to account on behalf of the public. They have the authority to review and scrutinise any decisions made including the investment of devolved funds, or actions taken. The Committee can at their discretion, make recommendations for change or improvement.
- 4.14 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has an annual Work Programme of topics that they will scrutinise. Committee members are encouraged to propose additional topics for scrutiny.

### **Ensuring Value for Money**

- 4.15 All projects and programmes that apply for funding are appraised and assessed for Value for Money (VfM) using the HM Treasury Green Book and appraisal guidance published by individual Government departments such as the Department for Education, Department for Transport and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 4.16 The VfM assessment considers the potential costs, benefits, risks, uncertainties and impacts of the project. A Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is calculated for the project wherever



possible, but this is just one of the basket of metrics considered in the VfM assessment. All the wider monetised and non-monetised impacts and benefits of a project are quantified wherever possible and non-quantifiable benefits are also assessed qualitatively. Non-monetised costs and disbenefits are also qualitatively assessed.

- 4.17 The VfM Statement is published on the CA website, along with the business case. The initial, adjusted, and final BCR for transport projects is calculated in accordance with the DfT's Value for Money Advice Note for Local Transport Decision Makers. The VfM statements and the technical assessment, conducted are proportionate to the level of risk, complexity and funding sought.
- 4.18 The Combined Authority's Assurance Team are responsible for providing independent oversight of the VfM process and will maintain ethical walls with project sponsors and delivery officers. The Section 73 Officer is responsible for signing-off VfM Statements on behalf of the CA's Leadership Team upon completion and this must be done before a project can progress and a funding agreement can be signed.
- 4.19 The VfM Statement for each project, is presented to the appropriate board or committee. The Statement includes the Assurance Panel's justification and recommendation on whether the project should be approved, deferred, or rejected and any conditions that should be put in place if funding is approved.
- 4.20 The ambition is always to support projects that demonstrate High VfM. However, projects that are appraised as offering lower VfM, may still be funded where the project will deliver the strategic and economic objectives in the Economic Framework and aligns with HM Treasury Green Book principles, or where the project is essential to unlock or enable other development to take place. However, the CA can decide to remove a project from the programme if the appraisal identifies Poor or Low VfM.

### **Managing Risk**

- 4.21 The approach to risk management is comprehensive and in accordance with HM Treasury's Orange Book principles and other project management guidance. The Director of Resources of the CA is the named officer for managing risk.
- 4.22 Robust control measures and a Risk Management Strategy are in place to provide accountability and support due diligence. The Risk Management Strategy guides the identification, assessment, and management of risks for all activities.
- 4.23 Risk management controls and mitigation action plans are agreed and added to the Risk Registers. A plan is then constructed to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring and/or decrease the impact of a risk, should it occur.
- 4.24 Funding applicants are required to include risk and contingency plans as part of their application for funding. Once a project has received funding approval, the Secretariat works with project applicants to monitor delivery of the contract and risks. Quarterly Monitoring reports are compiled to identify any issues with delivery, perceived or actual risks to the project, any corrective action, and any change requests (for example, a reduction in grant or an extension to the timescale for delivering key milestones).

### **Annual Reviews by Government**

- 4.25 The CA holds a review meeting with Government each year to discuss delivery of the Devolution Deal and Devolution Mayoral Investment Funds (known as Gainshare). The meeting is an opportunity to identify achievements and successes and any areas for improvement.
- 4.26 In addition, the CA is required to submit annual reports to individual Government departments on specific devolved funding programmes including AEB, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Multiply, to publicly state how the funding is being invested in York and North Yorkshire and to report on the achieved outputs and outcomes to date.

4.27 The LEP had been reviewed twice a year by Government; a Mid-Year Review and an Annual Performance Review. The reviews considered the governance arrangements that are in place, strategic approach and performance against profiled expenditure and outputs on funding awarded to the LEP. The Annual Performance Review meeting has been attended by the LEP Chair and LEP Deputy Chairs. The next iteration of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework will confirm if these reviews will continue in future.

## 5. Robust and Transparent Decision-Making

- 5.1 In accordance with transparency codes and Government guidance on best practice, the Mayor, CA and its committees will act in the interests of York and North Yorkshire when making investment decisions. All decisions are made via an approved process, free from bias or perception of bias and in accordance with the seven Nolan principles on conduct in public life.
- 5.2 To ensure decision-making is robust and transparent, all meetings of the CA, Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee are held in public. The CA also publishes a monthly Forward Plan of Key Decisions to alert the public to decisions that will be taken, in advance of the decision being made. The decision-making process is detailed at Appendix 1 to this assurance framework.
- 5.3 There is no legal requirement to live stream public meetings online but the CA will endeavour to do so where it practical and proportionate to do so.

## Budget Setting and Allocation

- 5.4 The annual Mayoral Budget is developed by the Mayor, alongside the CA revenue and capital budget. The budgets are presented to the CA in draft form in December and again for final approval each February. The budgets must be agreed in accordance with the Combined Authorities (Finance) Order 2017 and the CA's Constitution.
- 5.5 All approved capital and revenue budgets are published on the CA website. Budgets are monitored on a quarterly basis with reports submitted to the relevant committee. Quarterly financial monitoring reports on individual programmes and projects are also submitted.

## Commissioning and Open Calls

- 5.6 In accordance with the agreed policy, programme and project applications for funding usually originate from two sources:
  - **Secretariat** – the Secretariat, in discussion with partners and stakeholders, may identify a need for a programme or project that either meets the policy objectives and strategic outcomes of the Economic Framework or other strategies which will respond to an economic shock. These details may be held within an agreed Delivery Plan.
  - **Via a targeted Open Call for Project Applications** – open calls inviting applicants to bid for funding or propose a project are published on the CA website. Calls have a specific focus, such as delivering an investment priority or targets in the Economic Framework. Project applicants will then submit a response or bid.
- 5.7 The procurement process for programme delivery follows its legal duties, appropriate guidance, established rules and best practice for procurement including the latest HM Treasury Green Book and appraisal guidance and will seek best value for money.

## The Appraisal Process

- 5.8 All schemes seeking investment undergo a proportionate process to assess the merits of the application, its strategic fit and value for money.
- 5.9 Each project and application for funding is assessed on its own merit, including where there are potentially competing applications for funding.
- 5.10 For transport schemes, central case assessments must be based on forecasts which are consistent with the definitive version of NTEM (DfT's planning dataset). This requirement does not prevent the CA from considering alternative planning assumptions. Sensitivity test results of alternatives assist in reaching a decision on whether to approve a scheme.
- 5.11 The Secretariat assesses the broad anticipated equality and environmental impacts of programmes and projects at various stages of the appraisal process, alongside social

value, value for money and Benefit Cost Ratio. This ensures that the CA considers economic, social, and environmental impacts of its investment from the outset.

- 5.12 At the earlier stages of project development, funding applicants are required to hold a workshop with key staff, senior officers, and stakeholders where necessary, to discuss the options and possible delivery models for the project or scheme. This assists the applicant in identifying the long-list and short-list of viable options for delivering the scheme in line with guidance from the HM Treasury Green Book.
- 5.13 The steps involved in the full appraisal process are detailed and illustrated at Appendix 1. However, the CA can agree a revised process if circumstances demand it and will ensure compliance with all the relevance conditions and guidance.
- 5.14 The steps involved in the fast-tracked appraisal process are also included in Appendix 1. Fast-tracked appraisals should by exception and justifications must be provided for why the full appraisal process cannot be utilised.
- 5.15 In cases where there is a departure from the process, the CA will agree a revised process and CA Statutory Officers will confirm this based on an assessment of risk, complexity, value for money, uniqueness and funding availability. This will always be in line with HM Government advice and best practice; and existing CA transparency commitments.

## **6. Contract Management**

- 6.1 Once funding is approved for a project, either for project development costs or full award, contracts are issued and regular communication with the project applicant or scheme promoter is maintained throughout the project's lifetime.

### **Contracting**

- 6.2 A Grant Letter (for project development costs) or Funding Agreement (for full award) between the CA and project applicant/scheme promoter sets out the conditions relating to the CA's agreement to fund the project and the responsibilities of the CA and applicant/scheme promoter in managing, delivering and monitoring the project. A Grant Letter will only be required where projects are drawing down development cost funding ahead of full approval and full award.
- 6.3 The Funding Agreement specifies that grants and loans are capped, and applicants/scheme promoters bear the risk for all overspend on the project beyond the approved amount.
- 6.4 The Funding Agreement also stipulates the expected outputs and outcomes that the project will deliver.

### **Payment Against Claims**

- 6.5 Payment milestones are agreed with the project applicant/scheme promoter at the point of contract. The milestones depend on the complexity, cost, and timescales of the project. This forms part of the programme management role of the CA, which is subject to external audit.
- 6.6 Each grant claim is crosschecked against the approved project baseline information as part of the reporting processes. Prior to payment of grant, evidence checks are conducted on approximately 10% of the claim value. The value of the required checks is determined by the level of risk and project performance to date.

### **Managing Contract Performance**

- 6.7 The Secretariat manages the delivery of the contract and works with the applicant/scheme promoter to monitor the project's progress and risks. Monitoring conditions are set out initially in a grant determination letter from Government for each funding source, so the Secretariat is required to adopt a flexible approach to managing contract performance. This may be dependent on the funding source, value or risk of a particular programme or project.
- 6.8 The Secretariat monitors the delivery of the project, and the progress made in achieving the outputs and outcomes, in line with the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- 6.9 The Secretariat is responsible for immediately addressing any slippages or concerns regarding project delivery and taking corrective action, including updating the Risk Register as necessary.
- 6.10 A change control process is in place to ensure that variations to an approved project are discussed with the project applicant and agreed with the Secretariat. Variations to a project are logged on the project's file and reported to the CA when appropriate. Minor changes can be agreed between the project applicant and Secretariat where the change does not affect the principles of the project and does not exceed the CA funding allocated for the year. The CA is however, notified of any changes that are significant or contrary to the terms of the Funding Agreement.
- 6.11 Where there is significant underperformance or cause for concern, a project will be referred to the CA for a decision and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.

## **Clawback**

- 6.12 The Grant Letter and Funding Agreement include a mechanism for clawback based on an assessment of risk. This ensures that funding is only spent on the specified eligible activity and is linked to the delivery of outputs and outcomes. It also gives the CA the option of clawing back funds for poor performance, misuse or defrauding of funds.

## **7. Measuring Performance and Success**

- 7.1 Monitoring and measuring the performance of projects and programmes provides important lessons which are used to improve future decision-making. This increases the likelihood of successful delivery of future projects.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

- 7.2 A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for the CA is in place which has been designed in accordance with the most recent HM Treasury's Magenta and Green Book principles and other monitoring and evaluation guidance, such as that published by the What Works Centre.
- 7.3 The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework sets out the key principles for how the CA will manage evaluations across various levels, including: project/programme level, investment fund level (e.g. Mayoral Investment Fund, Adult Education Budget), and the overall impact of the CA through its various funding allocations on strategic priorities. Ultimately, the Framework demonstrates the CA's commitment to integrating robust evaluations within its processes; ensuring that the CA can identify its impact on the economy, but equally, opportunities to improve efficiencies and ensure future policy decisions are evidence-led.
- 7.4 The framework sets out several logic models (linked to the CA's Economic Framework priorities) and identifies high-level performance metrics and indicators that are used to assess the impact of a project or programme and its contribution to delivering the Devolution Deal and the CA's priorities within its Economic Framework objectives. This includes any specific objectives and targets within individual devolved funding programmes. Also, where appropriate, alternative indicators may be considered if they link to the delivery of the CA's ambitions.
- 7.5 Alongside the CA's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, where there are statutory requirements, further evaluation strategies will be in place, aligning with the CA's overarching framework and any government department requirements. For example, Government's five-yearly Gateway Review process for the Mayoral Investment Fund requires a separate Local Evaluation Framework.
- 7.6 The process for monitoring and evaluating project and programme performance is summarised in the sections below.

### **Monitoring**

- 7.7 All project applicants/scheme promoters and delivery partners are required to provide regular financial and delivery information, including progress made in achieving the expected outputs and outcomes, to the Secretariat. Performance Reports are expected quarterly as a minimum, however, reporting frequency is based on the assessment of risk. Where a project or programme is considered high risk, the frequency of formal monitoring increases to monthly. The frequency of reporting on the delivery of outputs and outcomes can reduce to every six months following the completion of works or activity. Again, the frequency is determined by the level of risk.
- 7.8 The applicant/scheme promoter and AEB delivery partner submits quarterly reports to Secretariat. All quarterly reports are signed-off by the Section 73 Officer. This enables the CA to fulfil its duties on reporting and accounting for public monies.
- 7.9 Site visits to project applicant/scheme promoters and delivery partners are conducted once per year as a minimum. Site visits may by exception, be conducted more or less frequently based on an assessment of risk.
- 7.10 Project Applicants/scheme promoters and delivery partners are responsible for informing the Secretariat of any changes to the scope, costs, and implementation timescales for their project. The Secretariat assesses the impact of any changes on the overall programme, budget, and expenditure. Cost increases, financial slippage and significant changes to

outputs and outcomes are reported to the appropriate Board where necessary. The CA does not guarantee that it will meet any cost increases either in full or in part.

- 7.11 The Secretariat presents Performance Reports on project and programme delivery, to the CA. This ensures that members are informed of progress on projects and are sighted on any issues that will result in financial slippage or underperformance.
- 7.12 Performance Reports are also submitted to the relevant Government department, specifically Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department for Education and the Department for Transport. The frequency of reporting is determined by the relevant Government department although it usually consists of the submission of quarterly updates to the department and a formal annual report.
- 7.13 Following devolution of the AEB in 2025 academic year, the CA will be required to submit an annual report to Government each January on the delivery of AEB functions from the previous academic year to date including:
- York and North Yorkshire policies for adult education
  - Expenditure against AEB
  - Data analysis of AEB delivery in York and North Yorkshire

## **Evaluation**

- 7.14 The frequency and type of evaluation conducted, depends on the contract value, duration, and complexity of the project. The level of evaluation required is determined at Outline Business Case stage so that adequate resource can be allocated to fund the cost of evaluation prior to the project's approval. This enables evaluation to be factored into a project and programme's design from the outset.
- 7.15 Pilot projects and major schemes such as UKSPF and the Mayoral Investment Fund are subject to more extensive and frequent evaluation; typically, annual interim evaluation and a final evaluation after the project has ended.
- 7.16 As a minimum, all projects will undertake a progress evaluation, reviewing progression on the outputs and financial spend and the extent that original objectives have been achieved. Impact and process evaluations will be applicable to most investments, but in exceptional circumstances this may not be required (i.e. the project is heavily tried and tested and a substantial evidence base already exists). This will be judged on a case-by-case basis, ensuring best value for money.
- 7.17 The Secretariat will procure external and independent evaluation of CA funded programmes and projects where it is appropriate and proportionate to do so, to evaluate the impact of specific funding streams, significant investments, and pilot projects.
- 7.18 The use of external evaluation experts to provide technical expertise and specialist advice on conducting project and programme evaluation, ensures that all evaluation conducted on projects and programmes funded by the CA and LEP is as objective and impartial as possible.
- 7.19 Project evaluation provides accountability for the investment made. It also provides local evidence on which to base future projects and programmes. The Secretariat reviews the results of the evaluation against the objectives of the project as set out in the business case and Funding Agreement and the most appropriate counterfactual. Evaluation results for all projects are published on the CA website.
- 7.20 Where there is a variation between a project's objectives and its outcomes, the Secretariat works with the promoter to agree corrective action. If the corrective action is unsuccessful, clawback clauses in the Funding Agreement can be invoked as a final resort and to secure the desired outcomes via alternative measures.



- 7.21 The Secretariat compiles a summary report for the CA of all projects that have completed during the previous quarter. This report confirms whether the project has delivered against its spending profile and achieved the outputs and objectives in the Funding Agreement. The report also recommends whether each project can be closed.
- 7.22 As part of the annual report to Government on the delivery of AEB functions from the previous academic year to date, the CA will also provide an update on interim evaluation findings on the impact that AEB has had in York and North Yorkshire. These findings will be derived from qualitative data such as employer and learner survey responses and quantitative data on the take-up of AEB funded provision in York and North Yorkshire and improvements in participation, progression, and attainment in statutory and non- statutory training.

## **8. Inclusive and Collaborative Working**

- 8.1 The strength and success of the CA in York and North Yorkshire is founded on good governance and partner collaboration. The former LEP and its local authority partners have built the foundations of its devolution deal on strong collaboration and engagement with one another and with all key stakeholders. Continuing this philosophy of consensus and good faith is essential to delivering the commitments of devolved powers and funding, and to unlocking future funding opportunities as they become available.

### **The LEP Network**

- 8.2 The Business Committee is an active member of the national LEP Network and is committed to developing and sharing best practice with the LEP Network and its members.

### **Collaboration with Metro Mayors, the Northern Powerhouse and LEPs**

- 8.3 The Mayor and CA are committed to working in collaboration with other Mayoral Combined Authorities, the Northern Powerhouse and LEPs, to pool knowledge and resource and enhance the effectiveness, transparency, decision-making and leadership in local economic development.

### **Engaging with Other Partners**

- 8.4 Regular meetings are held with partners to ensure an open and two-way dialogue on activity being undertaken across York and North Yorkshire, and to discuss the development of strategies and progress in delivering the SEP priorities and objectives. These meetings take place with business representative organisations, including the Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, CBI, Institute of Directors and Make UK, as well as local authority partners and the universities, such as the Business Advisory Group meetings.

### **Engaging with the Public**

- 8.5 The CA will produce and maintain a plan of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be made. The Forward Plan of Key Decisions includes decisions defined within the constitution that have a financial implication (such as projects that are seeking investment from the CA, new programmes or schemes that would be delivered across York and North Yorkshire, or new strategies) and non-financial decisions which impact on both local authority areas. The plan is refreshed and published on the CA website every month and it enables members of the public to view information on decisions before they are made so that they can comment on them.
- 8.6 The plan provides brief information on the project, programme or strategy, the date the decision will be taken, the lead officer's contact details and information on how to access any relevant reports (subject to restrictions on their disclosure).
- 8.7 The CA website also explains how members of the public can request information as well as providing feedback and submitting questions for CA meetings.

### **Formal and Public Consultation**

- 8.8 In accordance with the CA's statutory obligations, the Secretariat undertakes a public consultation exercise when appropriate. The consultation period runs for between 6 and 12 weeks. Information on the consultation is posted on the CA website with a draft document and details of how to submit views, comments and supporting evidence electronically and by post. Information on any scheduled consultation events is also displayed.

8.9 Comments and evidence submitted by partners and individuals during the public consultation period are logged, analysed, and categorised, with records kept on how the final draft of the strategy has been amended to reflect the comments and evidence received.

## **9. Publishing Information**

9.1 The CA is subject to the same Transparency Code that applies to local authorities. To deliver the responsibilities under the code, the CA has developed a robust, but proportionate, approach to sharing and publishing information so that it is accessible to the public.

9.2 The CA is subject to the Localism Act 2011, the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. It will publish on its website data including, but not limited to, the following:

- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Its organisational chart
- Senior salaries
- The combined authority's constitution
- Pay policy statements, including gender pay gap reporting

## **Access to Information**

9.3 The CA Constitution includes a publication scheme which sets out how and when agendas, minutes, papers, and other documents produced by the CA and Secretariat will be made available to the public. It also sets out any exceptions to publishing information, such as not disclosing information that is prohibited by law or which is exempt under the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A or Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9.4 The Publication Scheme is published on the CA website. CA and committee papers clearly state whether the paper will be published under the Publication Scheme and whether any exemptions apply.

9.5 The CA is subject to the Local Government Act 1972, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Acts of 1998 and 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) the Environmental Impact Regulations 2004 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

9.6 The public are made aware of their right to access information through the CA website. Requests for information are dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation and information is not unreasonably withheld. The Secretariat elects to publish more information on activities and decisions than is stipulated in Government guidance, so that Freedom of Information requests are less necessary.

9.7 All data supplied to the CA and Secretariat, including personal, financial, confidential, and sensitive information is processed and handled in line with data protection legislation. Personal information is stored securely to maintain privacy. This process is detailed in the Privacy Policy.

## **CA Website**

9.8 Core information regarding activity being undertaken by the CA and Mayor will be available on the CA website.

## **Meeting Papers**

- 9.9 The schedule of Combined Authority, Business Committee, Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for the year ahead will be published in advance on the CA website.
- 9.10 The notice of the meeting, the agenda and accompanying papers are published five clear working days in advance of the meeting. Where papers contain commercially sensitive information or are subject to one of the exemptions under the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A or Freedom of Information Act 2000, they are not published and are categorised as a private item.
- 9.11 Draft minutes of meetings are published will be published in accordance with section 100C of the Local Government Act 1972 and the National Local Growth Assurance Framework.

## **Notice of Decisions**

- 9.12 As stated in previous sections, the CA will publish a Forward Plan of Key Decisions that will be taken by the CA at least 28 days before the decision is made to enable members of the public to view and comment on them.
- 9.13 Details of all project approvals made by the CA are recorded in the Minutes of the meetings. In addition, the Secretariat maintains and publishes a Grants and Contracts Register on the CA website which provides details of all contracts and agreements signed, a summary of the project, and the value of the contract.
- 9.14 A Delegated Authority Report will be produced for decisions taken under the CA's Scheme of Delegation. The report will describe all decisions taken, including any approval given to projects within the delegated authority limit and any endorsement, deferment or rejection of projects that exceed that delegation.

## **Information on Combined Authority Members**

- 9.15 The following information on Combined Authority and Committee Members will be available on the CA website:
- Biography – including name, role, constituent authority represented, membership of Committees and any special responsibilities
  - Appointments to outside bodies
  - Individual Register of Interests
  - Declarations at Meetings
  - Attendance Record
  - Gifts and Hospitalities Record
  - Term of Office
- 9.16 Business Committee members are not remunerated. Members are entitled to claim back travel and subsistence costs incurred whilst undertaking pre-approved duties and responsibilities on behalf of the CA in accordance with the CA's Member Allowances Scheme. The Secretariat publishes details of all expenses and subsistence claimed by Business Committee Members and authorised by the Head of Paid Service in Quarterly Expenses Reports.
- 9.17 The Secretariat also publishes any gifts or hospitality accepted and received by Business Committee members with a notional or actual value that exceeds £100. Gifts and hospitality are recorded in each Business Committee Members' Individual Register of Interest.

## **Financial Information**

- 9.18 A range of budgetary and financial information will be published on the CA website in accordance with statutory requirements and guidance, including the Local Government Transparency Code, so that it is transparent and accessible to the public.
- 9.19 CA and Mayoral budgets are set prior to the start of the financial year within the Budget and Policy Framework.
- 9.20 The CA is also responsible for agreeing an annual programme of capital expenditure, together with proposals for the financing of that programme. This includes projects promoted and projects directly managed by the CA.
- 9.21 Regular updates on the performance of capital and revenue programmes are provided to the CA and these are published in meeting papers. Project risks will be clearly identified and any slippage in delivery will be reported to CA members.

The CA's Audit and Governance Committee will receive additional regular updates from its internal and external auditors, and statutory officers. The Committee will agree and publish a programme of business identifying its work for each year.

Updates will be provided to the CA and its committees on monitoring and evaluation of funded projects throughout the year. Overview and Scrutiny will consider these reports and may choose to conduct deep-dive reviews on a project or programme basis.

- 9.22 As stated previously in this section, funding decisions are also published on the CA website in the Grants and Contracts Register. Payments to general suppliers that have a value of more than £500 are published quarterly on the CA website.
- 9.23 The roles and salary bands of all staff employed in the Secretariat which exceed £50,000 per annum are also published on the CA website.

## **Procurement and Funding Opportunities**

- 9.24 The Secretariat will publish calls for projects on a regular basis on the CA website and social media feeds. The application templates and guidance documents for each commissioning call will be available via the CA website.
- 9.25 An open and competitive procurement process is in operation. When undertaking any procurement, all Members, officers, and staff must comply with the Contract Procurement Rules. Opportunities to supply goods and services are advertised on the CA website.
- 9.26 Information on how businesses can access advice and support services, including applying for grant-funded programmes, can be found on the CA website.

## **Branding**

- 9.27 In accordance with branding guidance on awarded and devolved funding, the Secretariat ensures that the correct logos and wording are displayed in all promotional materials for CA funded projects and programmes. Promotional materials include the CA website, websites of project applicants/scheme promoters, signage, social media posts, press notices and marketing literature.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>AEB</b>	Adult Education Budget
<b>AGM</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>BCR</b>	Benefit Cost Ratio
<b>BEIS</b>	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>BHF</b>	Brownfield Housing Fund
<b>BJC</b>	Business Justification Case
<b>CIAT</b>	Central Independent Appraisal Team
<b>CRF</b>	Community Renewal Fund
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>DLUHC</b>	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and, Communities
<b>DIT</b>	Department for International Trade
<b>FBC</b>	Full Business Case
<b>FLUTE</b>	Forecasting the interactions of Land-Use, Transport and Economy
<b>GBF</b>	Getting Building Fund
<b>LEP</b>	Local Enterprise Partnership
<b>LGF</b>	Local Growth Fund
<b>LTA</b>	Local Transport Authority
<b>CA</b>	Mayoral Combined Authority
<b>NZF</b>	Net Zero Fund
<b>OBC</b>	Outline Business Case
<b>OPFCC</b>	Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
<b>R&amp;D</b>	Research and Development
<b>SBC</b>	Strategic Business Case
<b>Section 73</b>	Equivalent to a Section 151 Officer
<b>SEP</b>	Strategic Economic Plan
<b>TAG</b>	Transport Appraisal Guide (formerly known as WebTAG)
<b>TCF</b>	Transforming Cities Fund
<b>UKSPF</b>	UK Shared Prosperity Fund
<b>Y&amp;NY CA</b>	York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

# **York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority**

## **Standard Assurance Process**

Development

Members

Assurance

Call for Proposal pack developed including investment priorities, eligibility criteria, appraisal criteria and deadlines

Head of Assurance reviews pack and provides feedback

Call for Proposals launched

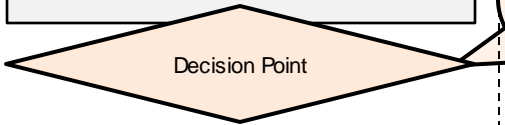
Development Officer responds to queries from applicants and provides advice and support as needed

Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted

Moderation Panel convened including Head of Assurance, Head of Strategy, Head of Delivery Service and Development Officers using a clearly defined and documented scoring system to determine which EOIs should progress - each members to be retained on file.

Prioritised list of submitted EOIs completed

Relevant Members Committee review s prioritised list and recommendations



Do Members approve or reject the proposed prioritised projects?

Yes - Development Officer contacts applicant to progress to Outline Business Case (OBC)

Yes - approve

No - rejected

See Outline and Full Business Case development process

No - Development Officer to contact applicants and inform them of outcome

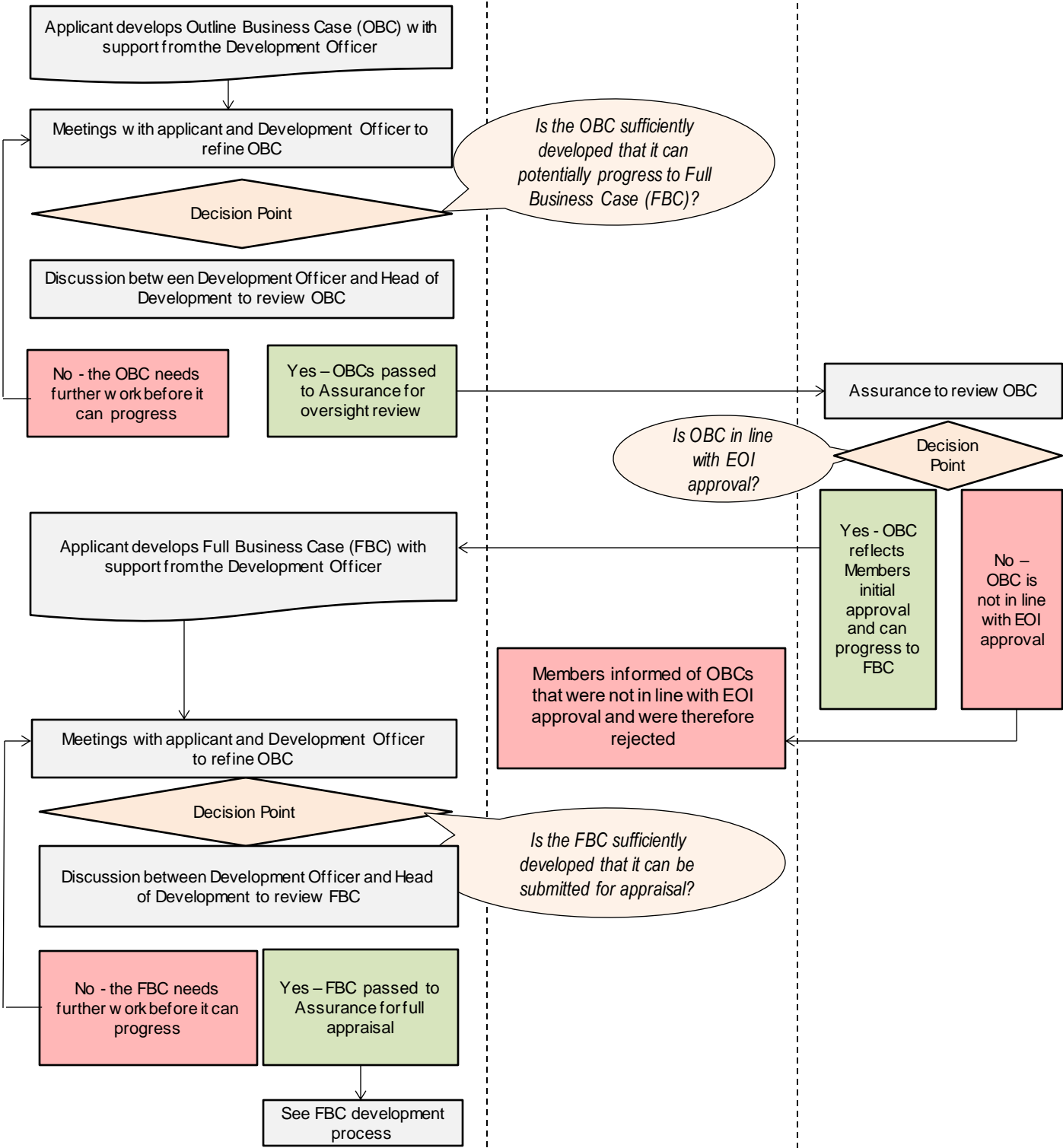
Appeals process invoked



## Development

## Members

## Assurance



Development

Members

Assurance

Applicant develops FBC with support from the Development Officer

Meetings with applicant and Development Officer to refine FBC

Is the FBC sufficiently developed that it can be submitted for appraisal?

Decision Point

Development Officer completes Gateway Review

Discussion between Development Officer and Head of Development to review FBC

Decision Point

Yes; commission appraisal

No; further information needed

No - there are significant financial or legal deliverability concerns

Members informed of FBCs that changed in scope or where significant financial or legal concerns were identified

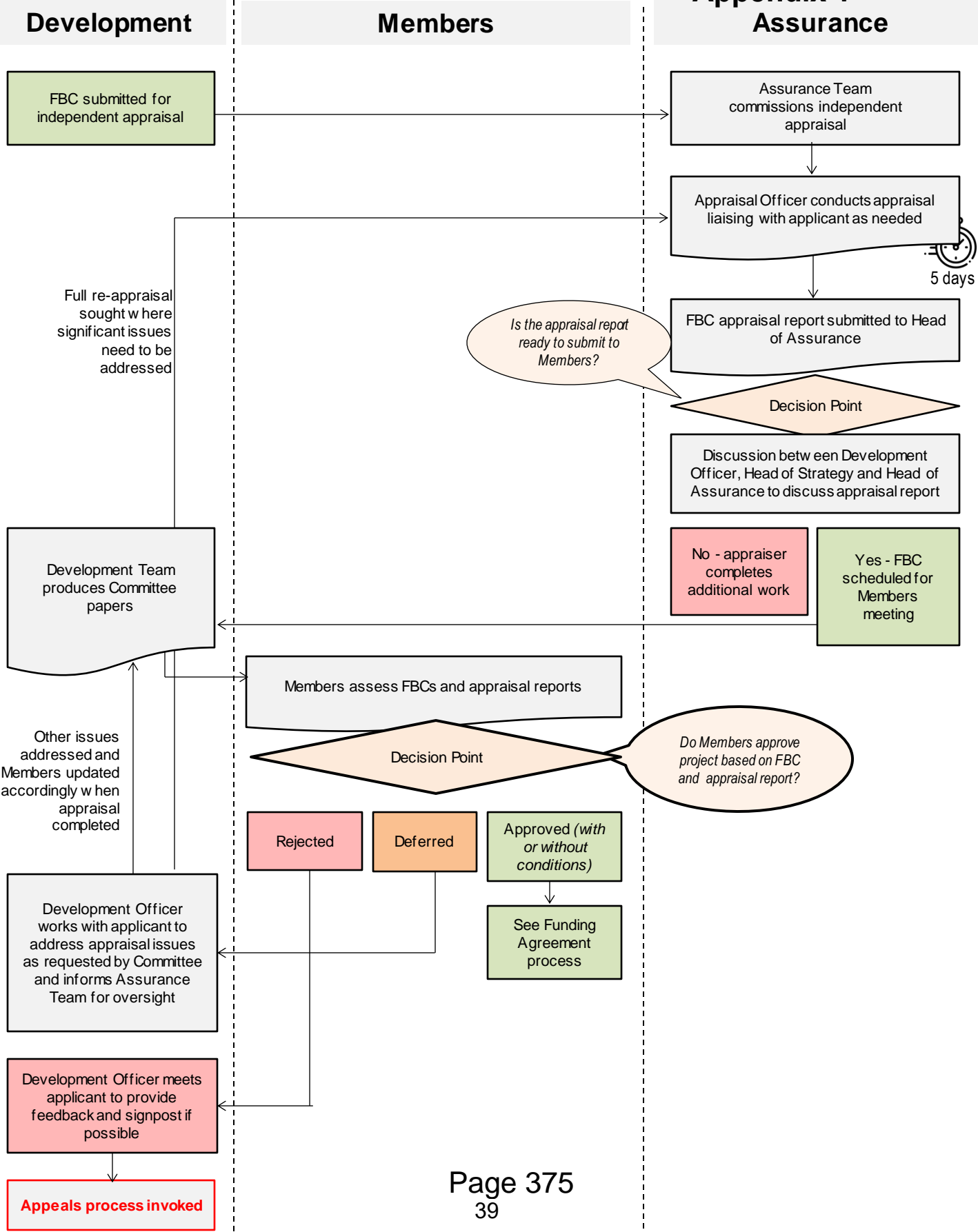
See FBC appraisal process

Development Officer asks applicant for required information

Applicant submits additional information

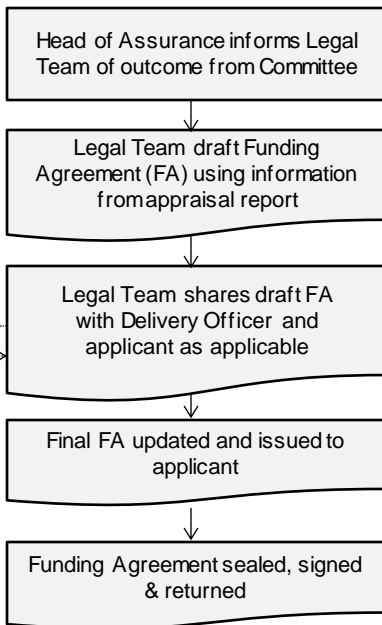
# Full Business Case appraisal (40 days)

## Appendix 1 Assurance

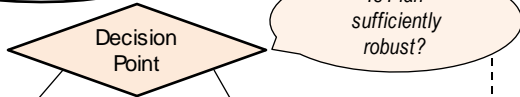


### Delivery

Delivery Officer reviews draft FA and returns with any comments for Legal Team



Applicant submits Monitoring & Evaluation Plan within 3 months of signing Funding Agreement



No; Delivery Officer arranges meeting with applicant to review the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Yes; proceed to monitoring stage

Applicant updates Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Delivery Officer signs them off when all feedback has been addressed

## Delivery

Delivery Officer contacts project lead in first 5 days of each month to discuss RAG rating

Delivery Officer receives monitoring report

Decision Point

No – Delivery Officer contacts applicant to seek to resolve concerns

Yes - no further action is required

Head of Delivery produces regular monitoring progress report to relevant Scrutiny Committee

Delivery Officer liaises with applicant to gather additional information needed to inform monitoring progress report

Delivery Officer reviews information and provides feedback to Legal Team

*Is the project on track to achieve financial, output and milestone targets?*

*Is the Committee willing to recommend any requested variations?*

Relevant Scrutiny Committee review monitoring progress report and focus on amber and red rated projects. Committee will review green rated projects as appropriate.

Decision Point

Yes

More information required

No; decision made to stop project

Legal Team drafts variation to Funding Agreement (FA)

Legal Team issues variation to FA

Applicant signs and returns variation to FA

Legal Team Solicitor issues project closure letter

Delivery Officer meets sponsor to discuss closure letter

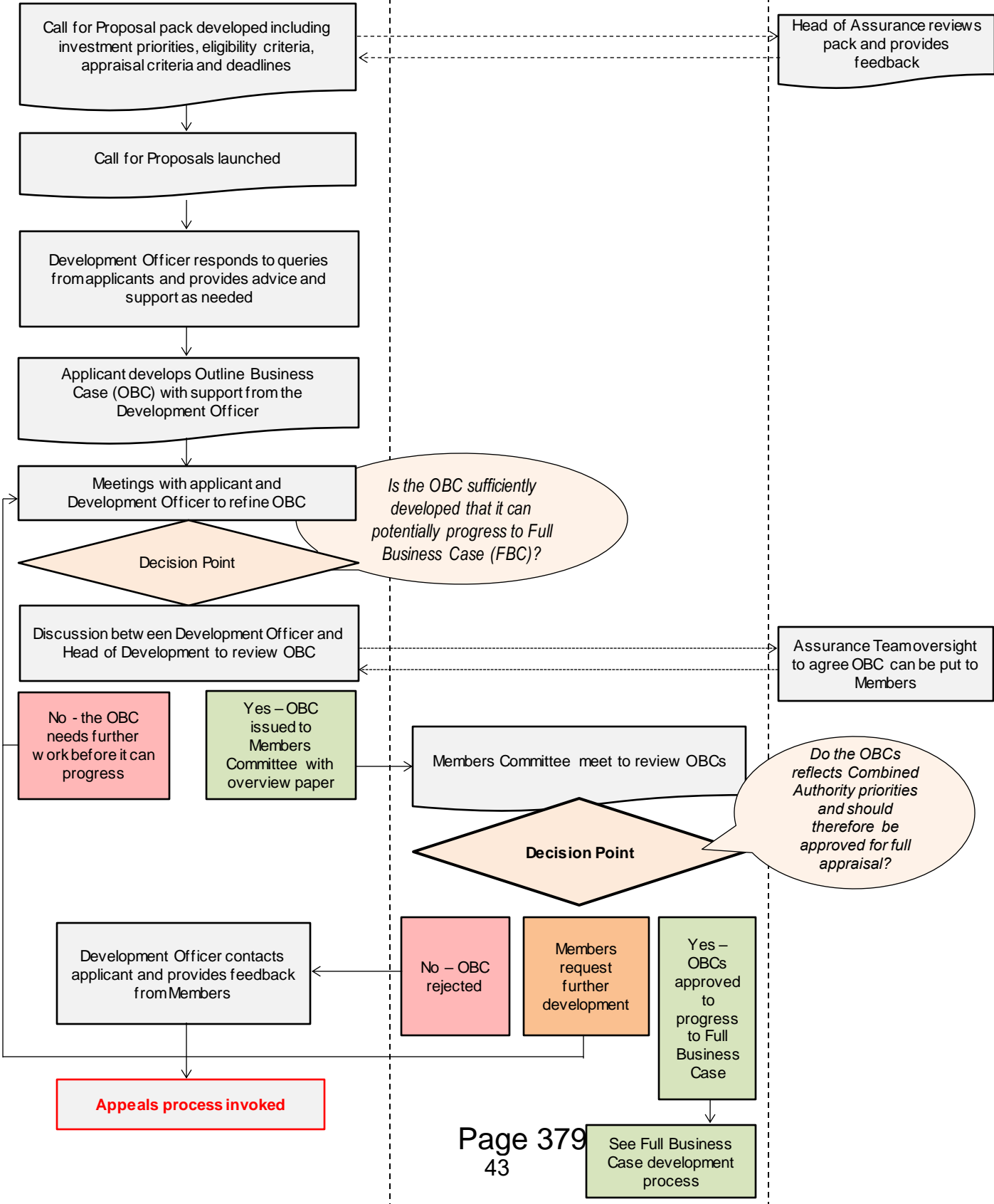
# **York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority**

## **Accelerated Assurance Process**

**Development**

**Members**

**Assurance**



Development

Members

Assurance

Applicant develops FBC with support from the Development Officer

Meetings with applicant and Development Officer to refine FBC

Is the FBC sufficiently developed that it can be submitted for appraisal?

Decision Point

Development Officer completes Gateway Review

Discussion between Development Officer and Head of Development to review FBC

Decision Point

Yes; commission appraisal

No; further information needed

No - there are significant financial or legal deliverability concerns

Members informed of FBCs that changed in scope or where significant financial or legal concerns were identified

See FBC appraisal process

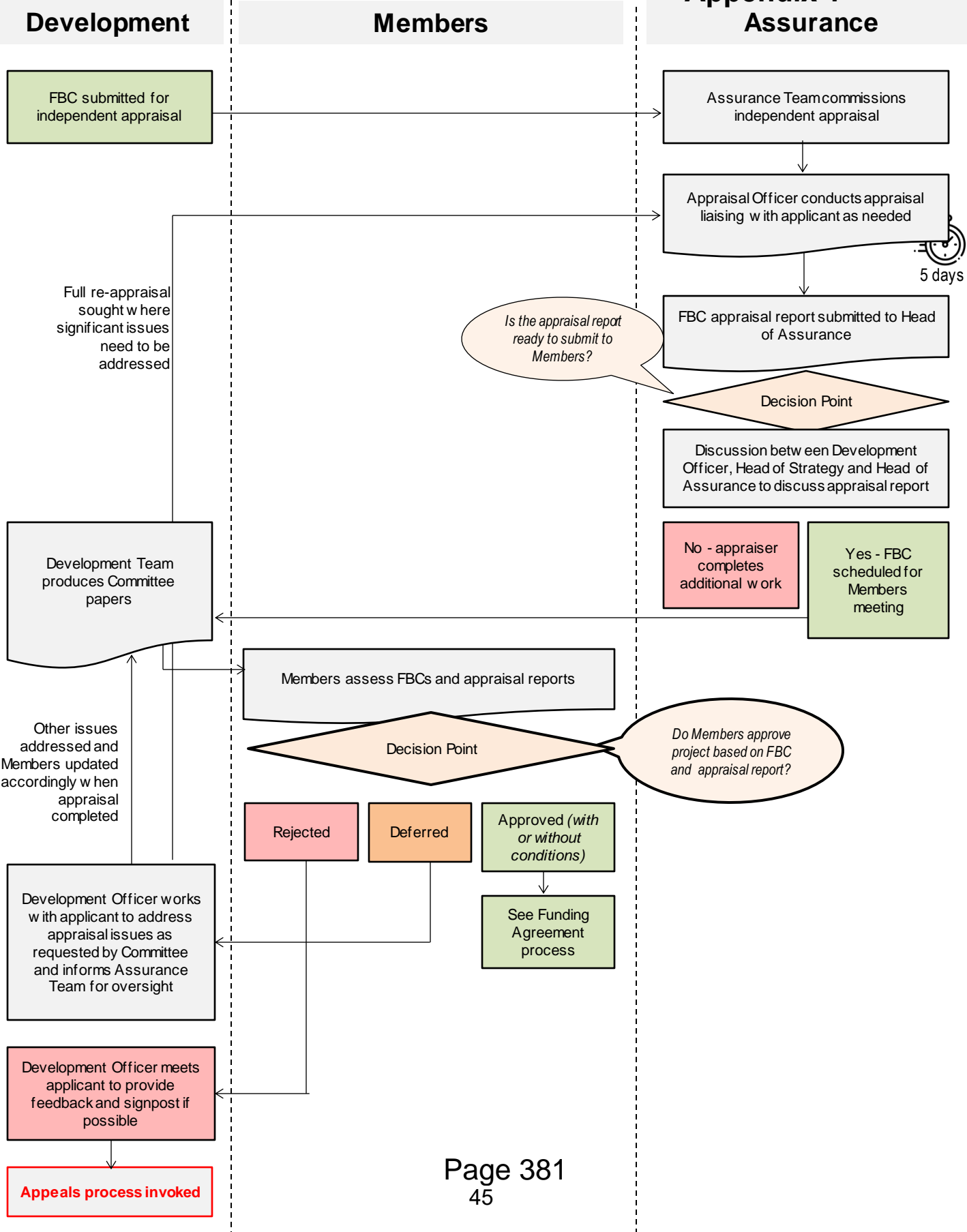
Development Officer asks applicant for required information

Applicant submits additional information



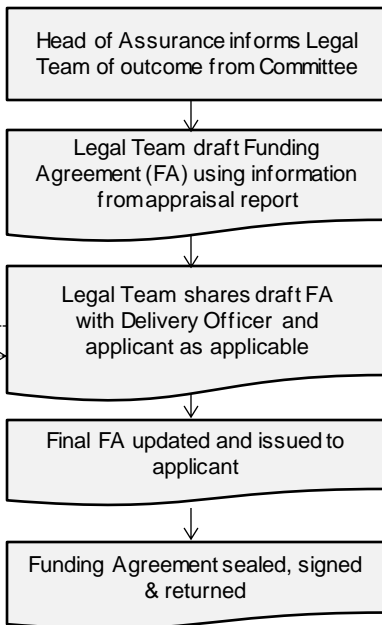
# Full Business Case appraisal (40 days)

## Appendix 1 Assurance

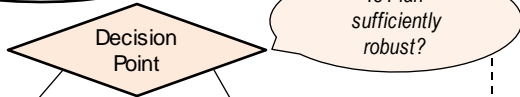


### Delivery

Delivery Officer reviews draft FA and returns with any comments for Legal Team



Applicant submits Monitoring & Evaluation Plan within 3 months of signing Funding Agreement



No; Delivery Officer arranges meeting with applicant to review the Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Yes; proceed to monitoring stage

Applicant updates Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Delivery Officer signs them off when all feedback has been addressed

Delivery

Delivery Officer contacts project lead in first 5 days of each month to discuss RAG rating

Delivery Officer receives monitoring report

Decision Point

*Is the project on track to achieve financial, output and milestone targets?*

No – Delivery Officer contacts applicant to seek to resolve concerns

Yes - no further action is required

Head of Delivery produces regular monitoring progress report to relevant Scrutiny Committee

Relevant Scrutiny Committee review monitoring progress report and focus on amber and red rated projects. Committee will review green rated projects as appropriate.

*Is the Committee willing to authorise any requested variations?*

Decision Point

Delivery Officer liaises with applicant to gather additional information needed to inform monitoring progress report

Yes

More information required

No; decision made to stop project

Delivery Officer reviews information and provides feedback to Legal Team

Legal Team drafts variation to Funding Agreement (FA)

Legal Team Solicitor issues project closure letter

Legal Team issues variation to FA

Delivery Officer meets sponsor to discuss closure letter

Applicant signs and returns variation to FA

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