

## Local Assurance Framework

To: Business Board

Meeting Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Public report:

Lead Member: Chair of the Business Board, Austen Adams

From: Lawyer, Reena Roojam

Key decision: No

### Recommendations:

The Business Board is recommended to:

- a) Approve the revised Local Assurance Framework; and
- b) Note that the Local Assurance Framework will go before the Audit and Governance Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022 for recommendation to the Combined Authority Board to approve the revisions to the Local Assurance Framework.

# 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Business Board on the current changes to the Local Assurance Framework (LAF) which were needed to align with the updates to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (NLGAF). The updated (clean copy) draft LAF is attached at Appendix 1 and a tracked version is attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 To note the outcome of the Audit and Governance Committee Review of the draft LAF at their meeting on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

# 2. Background

- 2.1 In September 2021, the Combined Authority approved the draft LAF which was updated to reflect the changes to the NLGAF including amendments to correct inaccuracies and cosmetic changes.
- 2.2 BEIS notified the Combined Authority that the Institutional Assurance Team had republished the NLGAF (September 2021). There were no significant changes to the obligations imposed on the LEP's and a small number of areas have been amended to provide further clarity.
- 2.3 These areas included:
  - i) *Drafting updates to update text that was out of date or required amendment.*
  - ii) *Updates to incorporate changes from the republished Green Book. See particularly the Value for Money section, which adjusts the emphasis of appraisals.*
  - iii) *Inclusion of the Getting Building Fund, Mid-Year Reviews, and of Pan Regional Partnerships.*
  - iv) *Updates to both the Department for Transport and Department for Education annexes.*
  - v) *Updates to areas that have caused query from stakeholders – notably: clarity that MCAs should engage the department with reviewing their Local Assurance Framework; clarity on the expenses register; clarity on codes of conduct; clarity on co-opted board members and overall board numbers; clarity on delivery plans and annual reports.*
- 2.4 A new set of Exemptions were also issued which offer temporary adjustments to the compliance requirements of the NLGAF which are attached at Appendix 3.

The new Exemptions provide flexibility in four areas:

- i) *Chair and Member recruitment,*
- ii) *Chair/Deputy Chair tenures,*
- iii) *private sector board composition, and*
- iv) *gender composition of boards.*

Any use of the flexibilities must be reported to the LEP's local area lead via email.

- 2.5 The LAF has also been updated to reflect Combined Authority led decisions as well as minor corrections to references which include the following:

- a) *Reference to the Mayor's Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement (this is due to reviewed again at the upcoming Combined Authority Board in March and has been left in at the request of the Executive Team).*
- b) *Reference to MHCLG replaced with DLUHC.*
- c) *Reference to the Local Enterprise Partnership replaced with Business Board.*
- d) *3.3.39 – sets out the broadened membership of the Business Board and the inclusion of Trade Union and Business Representative Organisations.*
- e) *3.3.46 – sets out the option to extend the term of the office for the Chair and Vice-Chair for a further 3 years in exceptional circumstances approved by the Board.*
- f) *3.3.55 – the annual Delivery plan to be published at the beginning of each financial year on the website.*
- g) *3.4.9 – the initial climate assessment is to be included in the PID.*
- h) *3.5.2 – Decision of the Adult Education Budget – paragraph amended and the wording relating to Department for Education and Skills Strategy have been removed.*
- i) *3.5.3 – slight amendment to the latter part of the paragraph confirming that Provider Networks meetings have met regularly since 2018. There is also the inclusion of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.*
- j) *3.5.5 – this relates to commissioned contracts that were awarded in 2019 and are now coming to an end of their 3 year term. The paragraph states that officers are launching a second round of commissioning where contracts will be awarded to new providers ready to deliver from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022.*
- k) *3.5.6 – this section deals with the devolution of the Adult Education Budget and reporting requirements on the Authority in regards to delivery, wider monitoring and evaluation submissions as required by all Mayoral Combined Authorities.*
- l) *4.1.7 – Business Board meetings to be held in public unless determined otherwise by the Chairperson.*
- m) *4.6.1 – register of gifts and hospitality - figure updated to £50*
- n) *5.3 – deals with the open calls for funds managed by the Business Board as its recycled Local Growth Funds – sets out funding strategy which will be approved by the BB before launching an expression of interest.*
- o) *5.4.10 – Project Managers to maintain a robust climate change assessment as part of the business case development.*
- p) *5.4.11 – refers to the Combined Authority procurement policy to ensure climate change implications are included as part of the procurement criteria.*
- q) *Corporate Management replaced with Executive Team.*

2.6 A further review of the LAF will be undertaken in light of the current review of the Constitution and any changes made under the Governance Review will be updated in the LAF accordingly.

## Significant Implications

### 3. Financial Implications

3.1 No financial implications.

## 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The LAF will be reviewed at least annually to ensure to ensure that it is kept up to date reflecting changes in the Combined Authority's operating environment and changes to government policy.

## 5. Other Significant Implications

- 5.1 See Appendix 2 for guidance on other significant implications, such as Equalities and Risk, Engagement and Consultation which have not been dealt with under the legal or financial implications.

## 6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Local Assurance Framework (Clean Copy)
- 6.2 Appendix 2 - Draft Local Assurance Framework (Tracked Changes)
- 6.3 Appendix 3 - Updates to the NLGAF

## 7. Background Papers

- 7.1 Combined Authority Board Local Assurance Framework Annual Review 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- 7.2 Business Board Local Assurance Framework 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 [Agenda Item No \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)
- 7.3 Business Board Local Assurance Framework 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)