

**Growth Deal Monitoring and Evaluation Plan**

**Date – January 2022**

1. **The Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP Growth Deal.**

1.1 Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEP’s Growth Deal with Government was first announced by Government in July 2014. With further funding announcements confirmed in Growth Deal 2 and Growth Deal 3. Further details of the Growth Deals and the projects originally included within them can be found from this [weblink](https://www.stokestaffslep.org.uk/delivering-growth/deals/growth-deal/).

1.2 The total value of Growth Deal funding allocated to the area is **£98.29 million** which is broken down as follows:

* Growth Deal 1 (July 2014) – £60.89 million
* Growth Deal 2 (January 2015) - £14.1 million
* Growth Deal 3 (November 2016) - £23.3 million

1.3 Between these Growth Deals the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP has committed to achieving the following targets:

***By 2021, interventions from the Deal are expected to lead to the creation 5,000 jobs and allow 1,000 new homes to be built.***

1.4 The Growth Deal can be broken down into a number of key features and groups of interventions which have come forward at different times within the programme and are:

* Major transport investments and wider road maintenance to improve connectivity and promote economic growth, including:
  + Major road infrastructure schemes such as Stafford Western Access Route, Etruria Valley Link Road and City East Link Road
  + More localised improvements through the Local Sustainable Transport Package and City Centre Access programme
* Unlocking key employment sites which have been stalled for a number of reasons including the need to deliver complicated and expensive off site infrastructure including:
  + Bridge widening and local road improvements in Lichfield to improve access to the Liberty Park Lichfield employment site.
  + A new roundabout junction on the A34 and improved local access to the Meaford employment site.
  + New traffic light controlled access and road widening for the Four Ashes Park employment site.
  + Localised improvements to unlock the Branston Locks employment and housing site near Burton-upon-Trent.
* A programme of Skills Project investments including:
  + Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hubs in South Staffordshire, Stafford and the JCB Academy in Rocester
  + A Skills Capital Equipment Fund providing flexible opportunities for investment in key skills equipment
* Projects to create new and improved premises for businesses at:
  + Tamworth Enterprise Quarter – Enterprise Centre
  + Keele University Science and Innovation Park Smart Innovation Hub and Innovation Centre No. 5
  + Cannock and Silverdale Enterprise Centre Improvements
* Projects to enable housing – such as
  + at the former Victoria Ground in Stoke-on-Trent
  + as a result of the infrastructure improvements at the Branston Locks site near Burton-upon-Trent and the Stafford Western Access Route.
* Projects to strengthen and enable infrastructure such as
  + flood defences such as in Rugeley Town Centre and the Stoke-on-Trent Flood Alleviation scheme
  + Power Upgrades to Stoke-on-Trent Railway Station
* Projects to regenerate town centres – such as the Spode Church Street Project in Stoke-on-Trent

1.5 The SSLEP Growth Deal Programme largely pre-dates the preparation of the UK Industrial Strategy and subsequent development of the SSLEP Local Industrial Strategy. However, as part of the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan we have been mindful of the direction of travel of both the Government and the SSLEP to be reflective of the Pillars of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and the Grand Challenges that we must face to improve productivity.

1.6 As well as the broad groupings of interventions highlighted above we have considered how they will primarily contribute to the pillars of the LIS to help us shape our future programmes and projects around their impact and contributions to the LIS.

1.7 Indeed, many of the projects that we have successfully delivered are likely to provide substantial contributions to the Higher Value Added sector priorities of the LIS including the Smart Innovation Hub and IC5 at Keele University and Science Park, the Tamworth Enterprise Quarter and our Advanced Manufacturing Skills Hub Programme.

1. **Our Approach to Monitoring and Evaluating the Growth Deal**

**Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation**

2.1 A requirement of the Growth Deal, and a component of any good funding programme, is the development of an agreed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan covering the capital projects allocated Local Growth Funding.

2.2 As part of a suite of initiatives to refresh the Governance arrangements in place, the SSLEP has identified a set of metrics for use in monitoring project progress and outputs and these are regularly presented to SSLEP’s performance management groups, with the relevant information reported to Government as required. In addition, discussions have taken place around the development of an Evaluation Plan to measure the impact and outcomes of the programme.

2.3 In all cases it is important that evaluation maintains a balance of proportionality and is selective; taking into consideration the scale, value and scope of an intervention. However, as a minimum level the SSLEP has an expectation that all projects should capture and report relevant monitoring information, particularly in relation to outputs, and to ensure that the learning related to the success or otherwise of a project or programme is shared, to enable the LEP to reflect upon the greatest return on investment from its funding. These provisions should be built in as minimum level by project managers into the overall management of their projects.

**Routine Project and Programme Monitoring**

2.4 Until Quarter 4 in 2019, all projects and programmes benefitting from Growth Deal funding have been required to provide monitoring information in relation to their expected outputs to the LEP on a monthly basis in the form of a “highlight report”.

2.5 This reporting information has been reported regularly to the Programme Assurance Group (PAG) which reports performance highlights and potential issues through a Strategic Programme Management Board as necessary to the LEP Executive Board.

2.6 Following the recommendations of a review of SSLEP Governance arrangements undertaken by Hatch Regeneris in Autumn 2019 the monitoring of projects where delivery is ‘on track’ will now be on a quarterly basis to the SSLEP Strategic Programme Management Board. This acts as a subgroup of the LEP Executive Board with the remit to make proportionate decisions and challenge the performance of projects where necessary.

2.7 In accordance with the requirements of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) further in-depth monitoring information relating to project outputs and financial performance will also be provided.

**Our Proposed evaluation approaches**

2.8 The SSLEP has identified that the preferred approach to evaluation will be to identify those projects which offer the greatest value for others to learn from – in other words a focus on projects which may be innovative, have alternative approaches to delivery or represent a way of working which maximises success and benefits.

2.9 In most cases, ‘standard’ transport schemes will not be subject to an in-depth evaluation as part of this framework. There is a strong body of evidence to demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative impacts of such schemes and they have a strong element of evaluation built into their delivery process on a ‘business as usual’ basis. Projects at Etruria Valley, Stafford Western Access Route and City East Link Road will fall within this category.

**2.10 Annex 1** to this Monitoring and Evaluation Plan sets out the elements of the SSLEP Growth Deal programme to be evaluated and the proposed approach of the evaluation.

2.11 We recognise the importance of a structured and well-planned approach towards evaluation both to understand the performance and successes or otherwise of our interventions as well as in providing a good evidence base to inform the direction of our future interventions and investments.

2.12 Our evaluation framework will be a key element in shaping our future working and the development of strategies to ensure the maximum impact for the SSLEP area.

2.13 We anticipate that project and programme evaluation will generally follow four approaches:

* Output evaluation
* Process evaluation
* Impact evaluation
* Economic evaluation

These are outlined in more detail below and it should be noted that more than one of these approaches are likely to be applied to a given project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Approach | Description |
| Output | A quantitative measure of whether the project has achieved its targeted numerical outputs. This could include jobs created, floorspace developed, homes constructed. |
| Process | This is a qualitative evaluation and will consider how projects were delivered in terms of their processes. For instance in the case of a ‘programme’ approach, did the programme effectively and efficiently operate or were there issues that could be captured and used to improve future processes and arrangements? |
| Impact | This is likely to involve both quantitative and qualitative evaluation and will look at the overall difference a project has made to the local economy.  Impact evaluations will be more in depth and generally be reserved for those projects which are novel or offer the greatest opportunity for others to gain learning from. |
| Economic | This is a quantitative measurement to calculate how the economic costs associated with a project and an economic translation of the impact or benefits of a project can be represented as a return on investment.  Different types of economic evaluation will apply to different projects such as using a cost per unit of outcome, a wider cost benefit analysis exercise (as is often associated with large transport schemes) and as a net gain in terms of a quantifiable financial or other metric. |

2.14 Our Local Growth Fund projects are key elements in delivering the objectives of the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan including the ambition to grow our economy by 50% and increase the number of jobs in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire by 50,000 jobs in a 10-year period.

2.15 As such it is essential that all projects are evaluated and monitored at least against their stated business plan delivery targets to understand the contribution they have made and the extent to which LGF investment has helped accelerate delivery of 1,000 additional homes and 5,000 additional jobs by 2021.

2.16 The greatest value is likely to be gained from a flexible approach to evaluation, targeting where the greatest learning benefits can be gained.

1. **Key evaluation principles**

3.1 A flexible approach to evaluation is likely to offer the greatest benefit for the learning and direction of future project and programme development. SSLEP will work with BEIS and beneficiary projects to determine the best approach.

3.2 The key principles of our proposed evaluation framework are set out in the table below. As with all similar frameworks it will be important to ensure that this is periodically reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. This will be especially relevant mindful of future schemes which could emerge in accordance with the LIS.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Approach | Rationale | Method of Evaluation | Dissemination of Information |
| Output | Appropriate for projects where standard methodologies are in place for appraising projects or where standard metrics apply. | Normal project monitoring reports submitted to the LEP. No funding generally required | Management information through SSLEP website and reports to relevant groups and boards |
| Process | Appropriate for projects which were more reliant on a ‘process’ to drive delivery. Evaluation is likely to consider the operation and efficiency of the process and the best ways of sharing best practice and lessons learnt. | **Independent detailed evaluation**.  This should ideally be commissioned and funded by the project sponsor, however the historic requirements within funding agreements may mean that it is difficult to secure funding. | SSLEP website,  Case studies, presentations at LEP events, stakeholder events etc. |
| Impact | Appropriate for projects which are more innovative or unique in their objectives; or approach. Evaluation should focus on the key learning points such as how could the project be delivered differently and what learning opportunities could be shared to shape similar projects in the future to reduce costs, deliver more quickly or achieve better outcomes, reduce risks and or/improve quality. | **Independent detailed evaluation.**  This should ideally be commissioned and funded by the project sponsor, however the historic requirements within funding agreements may mean that it is difficult to secure funding. | SSLEP website,  Case studies, presentations at LEP events, stakeholder events etc. |
| Economic | To establish the cost per unit outcome or cost/benefit analysis of a project. | A recognition of the need to define quantifiable project costs and benefits at the outset of a project will be required. | Management information through SSLEP website and reports to relevant groups and boards. Case studies etc. |
| Anticipated Level of Evaluation Detail  Scale of Intervention | | | |
| The Scope and scale of evaluation information provided by relevant projects and programmes is likely to be in accordance with the scale of the intervention (in respect of planned benefits, length of project and investment required)  As discussed above, the Major Scheme Business Cases for large transport projects are likely to include a level of detail and complexity which may sit beyond the scope of this framework | | | |

1. **Lessons Learned Logs and Project Closure information**

4.1 As a key part of the ongoing programme management of the Growth Deal as well as other relevant programmes under its jurisdiction, the SSLEP has introduced a Lessons Learned process to capture, learn from and share relevant findings from active and completed projects and programmes.

4.2 The Lessons Learned information has informed recent improvements to the SSLEPs programme management arrangement such as how outputs are captured and reported, the structure of and mechanisms contained within funding agreements, and the criteria against which candidate projects are assessed for potential funding.

4.3 At the closure of relevant projects, the SSLEP will request a project closure report from the project sponsors. Such project closure reports will invariably include a substantial body of evidence which will be valuable to the overall monitoring and evaluation framework.

1. **Conclusion**

5.1 The above proposals are considered to provide an appropriate and proportionate approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the SSLEP Growth Deal programme. It will be important to periodically review the contents of this framework to ensure that it remains relevant and adds the greatest level of value to the SSLEP, its partners and projects for now and the future.

5.2 Using all of the above principles and with consideration of value for money, lessons learned and understanding the delivery of benefits the SSLEP will be in the best placed position to consider the most relevant and impactful projects and programmes in which to resource and invest in the future.