



Governance and Assurance Framework

Section A: Governance Principles

June 2021

Purpose

1. The Midlands Engine Partnership (ME) was established in 2016 with the aim of stimulating growth in the economy across the Midlands Engine Partnership area. It is a voluntary partnership between Local and Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), Universities and businesses. The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the Ministerial Champion for Midlands Engine. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through the Cities and Local Growth Unit sponsor the Partnership through the provision of capacity funding.
2. In March 2017, HM Government published its Midlands Engine Strategy. This was followed later in the year by the Partnership's response – the Midlands Engine Vision for Growth. The Vision for Growth set out priority areas where collaboration can accelerate growth most rapidly. These involved a mixture of immediate and longer-term investments and initiatives, the cumulative impact of which aimed to deliver a step change in productivity and international competitiveness, playing a central role in developing Britain's post-Brexit economy.
3. The Partnership's work is focussed on driving sustainable economic growth and productivity within the region, adding £76billion Gross Value Added (GVA) to the Midlands and UK economy by 2030, and delivering increased prosperity and improved quality of life for all Midlanders.

Strategic Priorities

4. The Partnership's work is organised around core areas of focus as agreed through its governance structure and in concert with government. Key areas of focus are set out in the annual grant determination letter.

Performance

5. The Midlands Engine Partnership performance measures are regularly reviewed through reporting to the Midlands Engine Boards. The Midlands Engine Partnership delivers and monitors several Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained in the grant determination letter with City and Local Growth officials and submit monitoring reports to the Cities and Local Growth Unit against the KPIs every quarter. A six-monthly assurance meeting is attended by the Midlands Engine Executive Director and the Chair of the Midlands Engine Operating Board.

Governance principles

6. The Midlands Engine Partnership has adopted in principle the policies and principles contained within HM Government's Local Enterprise Partnership Governance and Transparency Guidance.
7. The Midlands Engine Partnership is governed to ensure that it:
 - Operates where appropriate for a pan regional body in accordance with its Governance and Assurance Framework

- Pursues activities which add value, and in particular activities which do not unnecessarily duplicate the work of the Members of the Partnership or the roles of other organisations with similar aims.
- Effectively identifies and appropriately represents the views and needs of business in the Midlands Engine area.
- Effectively identifies and appropriately takes into account the views of other stakeholders.
- Makes effective use of the resources available to it and accounts appropriately for that use as set out in the Midlands Engine Accountable Body Agreement.
- Is accountable for its performance, through:
 - Clear decision-making by the Board
 - Self-assessment by the Board of its own performance, including regular monitoring of progress, and the submission of quarterly monitoring reports to and a six-monthly assurance framework meeting with the Cities and Local Growth Unit (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government/ Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).
- Appropriate transparency through public reporting of:
 - Governance and assurance arrangements
 - Board meetings and decisions
 - Planned and completed activities
 - Engagement with business and stakeholders
 - Progress against the delivery of the Business Plan
 - Scrutiny of its operation by the Executive Board

Partnership principles

8. The Midlands Engine approach to its work is guided by five principles underpinned by operating at scale across the Midlands geography, identifying, prioritising and capitalising on major economic opportunities and growing the global footprint of the Midlands:
 - The Midlands Engine is about additionality, complementing the work of Local and Combined Authorities, LEAs, universities, businesses and others to generate added value at the globally sensible spatial scale of the Midlands.

- The core focus of the Partnership is on leveraging the capacity of the Midlands. The policy approach remains apolitical, focusing on increasing productive economic growth and improving quality of life.
 - The Midlands Engine will define a long-term strategic plan that will secure several high impact initiatives and investments for the UK.
 - The Midlands Engine will work on projects that benefit the whole region and develop a self-sustaining and resilient partnership model.
 - The Midlands Engine Partnership will work collaboratively and speak with one voice, implementing a distributed leadership model to drive delivery.
9. The Partnership recognises the benefits that can be achieved through decentralisation and devolution. Delivery should always be at the appropriate level and Local Authorities, Combined Authorities and LEPs will often be the delivery vehicles of the inclusive growth we seek.
10. The Midlands Engine will champion local priorities and ways of working, and forge a common identity based on economies of scale when, for example, promoting the region in world markets or planning regional infrastructure investment.