

TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT BOARD

08/01/2021

Transforming Cities Fund - Benefits Realisation and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Purpose of Report

To endorse the Transforming Cities Fund - Benefits Realisation and Monitoring and Evaluation Plans.

Thematic Priority

Secure investment in infrastructure where it will do most to support growth.

Recommendations

That members of the Transport Board:

- Approve the current TCF Monitoring and Evaluation and Benefits Realisation Plans as the frameworks for assessing the performance and learning from the TCF programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 27th November 2019. The subsequent acceptance of the £166m grant from DfT was reported at the MCA meeting on 1st June 2020.
- 1.2** The following objectives were defined for the TCF programme:
- To better connect the areas of transport poverty with areas of opportunity in a safe and sustainable way
 - To affect a mode shift away from the private car on those corridors where new opportunities are likely to see an increase in demand or where growth could be stifled
 - To create a cultural shift towards making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys
 - To achieve the above in ways that address current health issues and improve air quality across the SCR
- 1.3.** As part of the TCF guidance from the DfT, there was an expectation that bidders would monitor and evaluate programme interventions as both the Department and city regions have a shared interest in evaluating the effectiveness of the fund over time. This requirement is in line with the MCA's current agreed Assurance Framework.

1.4 The shape for the national TCF programme evaluation is still being developed by the DfT, but guidance was provided for the bid submission and suggested a general outline for monitoring and evaluation based around five elements:

- Establish a 'theory of change' for interventions
- Develop a counterfactual (usually a before and after study)
- Collect baseline data
- Plan what monitoring is needed
- Plan for data

1.5 The basis of the TCF Benefits Realisation and associated Monitoring and Evaluation plans were included in the November 2019 submission to DfT and have since been developed in partnership with Local Authority and PTE scheme promoters.

2. Proposal and justification

2.1 Monitoring and evaluation of the TCF programme helps to ensure the benefits of the investment are fully realised and the programme is value for money in terms of delivering economic growth and quality of life outcomes that can be demonstrated.

2.2 The TCF Benefits Realisation and Monitoring and Evaluation Plans are 'live' documents that will change over time to respond to programme or policy changes. For example, there will be a need to reaffirm links into the wider Active Travel Implementation Plan monitoring and evaluation plan currently under development. Therefore, the MCA Exec will review and, where required, update the monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure it remains in accordance with other relevant plans and objectives.

2.3 The programme of monitoring and evaluation needs to demonstrate the extent to which the TCF objectives were met, monitor performance of the individual elements of the programme and ensure that any potential issues post implementation are identified and addressed. The plans also seek to enable an assessment of the entire TCF programme whilst providing flexibility to define more bespoke monitoring and evaluation plans for the individual packages that will be delivered. The process will also enable the MCA to:

- Provide transferable evidence that may be used to inform future decision making on similar investment programmes
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of future investment programmes based on the lessons learnt from the programme

2.4 The following sections consider the two documents in more detail.

Benefits Realisation Plan

2.5 A Benefits Realisation Plan (BRP) has been developed to identify, track and compare the various benefits expected to be delivered. This document follows the 'DfT's Theory of Change' approach which sets out long term goals and then seeks to identify all the interventions, outputs, outcomes and impacts that support achieving those goals. A "benefit" is an outcome of change that is measurably positive and "benefits realisation" is the process for the identification, definition, measurement and realisation of benefits from a project.

2.6 The TCF objectives shown in section 1.2 have been used to develop the 'desired outputs, outcomes and impacts' for the programme and the individual projects within it. These

desired outputs, outcomes and impacts are the actual benefits that are expected to be derived from the programme:

- Desired outputs – tangible effects that are funded and result from the programme
- Desired outcomes – what happens as a result of the outputs
- Desired impacts – the final impacts brought about by the scheme in the short, medium and long term as a result of the outputs and outcomes.

The 'desired outputs, outcomes and impacts' for the TCF programme are summarised in Appendix One and will provide the basis for the project specific BRPs that will be developed further as the TCF programme progresses through delivery. The full BRP is included as Appendix Two.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

- 2.6** There is overlap between the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&EP) and BRP. The BRP logs and tracks the benefits (e.g. outcomes and impacts), whilst the M&EP details the mechanisms to determine if the effects of the project have occurred and an appreciation of the attribution between the projects and effects.
- 2.7** Based on the desired outputs, outcomes and impacts of the programme a M&EP has been developed. The document covers all schemes within the TCF programme and was commissioned from consultants AECOM. The M&EP will be used during the implementation period to manage delivery, and (post-implementation of the programme), to evaluate its impact. The key outcome and impact metrics used in the M&EP (and who has the responsibility for monitoring them) are included in Appendix Three, with the full document being included as Appendix Four.

Evaluation

- 2.8** The package, project and programme evaluation will be undertaken by the MCA Executive team and will be funded through the allocation from the programme for programme management and assurance. It will cover:
- **Process:** The **process evaluation** will seek to understand whether the programme was delivered effectively and efficiently. Understanding what has been delivered, how efficiently delivery has been achieved and the outturn standard / design of the scheme, will all feed into the assessment of outcomes and impacts.
 - **Impact:** The **impact evaluation** considers what difference the project and programme has made by gaining an understanding of the changes in measurable outcomes (intended and unintended) and the extent to which outcomes can be attributed to the delivered project. This also explores whether, and why, particular groups have been impacted in different ways, as well as how contextual changes may have influenced the observed changes. This includes the use of control areas to understand what may have happened without the TCF investment
- 2.9** Once a particular intervention is completed and open, the expected benefits should be realised, however, as with many large-scale transport schemes, the full realisation of the benefits (particularly the intended impacts) will take place over an extended period of time.

Monitoring

- 2.10** Monitoring of outputs will be undertaken at a project level and will focus on evidencing that outputs are successfully delivered and cost targets and programme milestones met.

The monitoring of outcomes will be undertaken quarterly at both a project and programme level, as appropriate, as part of the reporting process, in accordance with MCAs standard governance process. Quarterly returns are required to continue until delivery of the outcomes are complete, this will require funding by the scheme promoter beyond March 2023.

- 2.11 The proposed outcome and impact metrics in Appendix Three primarily utilise data that is already collected but will be supplemented by new surveys – especially qualitative - where necessary. In addition, the MCA Executive will also be using data collected to monitor the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for contextual background for the TCF programme. This will include skills attained, proportion on low earnings and other sets from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data.
- 2.12 The MCA Exec team will report to Transport and Environment Board on progress towards the ambitions set out in the plans.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 The Board may not support the proposed approach that seeks to get a better understanding of the qualitative effects (such as people perceptions and attitudes) to the investment within the programme as these elements are more costly to undertake. However, this work will increase the quality of the approach as well as provide transferable evidence that may be used to inform future decision making on similar investment programmes

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

There is a indicative cost of around £700k of adopting a more robust monitoring plan/ evidence base through the MCA leading on perceptions and attitudes surveys referred to in this report. This would be over and above the indicative £200k-£300k that evaluation is anticipated to cost. Spending on the additional monitoring tasks – and the programme evaluation – will be incurred beyond the current programme end date of March 2023, but it is still expected that the costs could be funded through the MCAs TCF management and assurance allocation.

4.2 Legal

The MCA enter into legal agreements to facilitate release of grant, these include monitoring and evaluation provisions as standard

4.3 Risk Management

The development of the BRP and M&EP reduces the risk of a lack of co-ordination or monitoring and evaluation processes across SCR, as well as reducing the risk of investment in future programmes through 'lessons learned' through evaluation.

It is intended that the documents will remain 'live' in order to reflect changes in the programme or broader policy. The MCA Executive will seek to review and, where required, update the M&E and BRP plans annually to ensure they remain in accordance with the investment objectives

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

No specific equality, diversity and social inclusion issues are considered at this stage, but one of the aims of the TCF programme included in section 1.2 is to better connect the areas of transport poverty with areas of opportunity in a safe and sustainable way.

5. Communications

5.1 None as a consequence of this report.

6. Appendices/Annexes

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Benefits Realisation Plan: Objectives, Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts
Appendix 2 – Benefits Realisation Plan: Full document
Appendix 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation plan: Key outcome and impact metrics
Appendix 4 – Monitoring and Evaluation plan: Full document

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: n/a