

The aim of holding open calls for organisations, including the two unitary authorities, to come forward with projects they wish to develop is to diversify the range and nature of the projects funded by the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP. The priorities of the strategic economic plan will form an essential element of the assessment criteria for projects. The two unitary authorities play an important role in constructing the strategic economic plan as their key priorities are included within it. In addition, the Assurance Framework ensures that in response to the initial open call, each project should include "an outline of how the scheme relates to...the other relevant key plans and strategies such as Local Plans and Transport Plans" (paragraph 87, SWLEP Assurance Framework).

The Assurance Framework requires projects to include "an outline of what consultation has taken place and what degree of consensus has been achieved" (para 87).

The assessment procedures used by the SWLEP follow The Green Book Guidance issued by HM Treasury.

There is an independent assessment of all submitted projects at this stage and one element of the assessment is "Is the scheme likely to be publically acceptable and supported by key partners/stakeholders (and any evidence)?" (para 88). The proposed projects move from an initial expression of interest, through strategic outline business case and assessment to outline business case and assessment and then final business case and assessment. At all stages, consultation is built into the process and any statutory consultation processes and timescales are followed. The detail is included in paras 94 to 134 of the Assurance Framework.

As the proposed projects develop, the assessment criteria include social, environmental and economic issues as these are included in The Green Book Guidance.

The use of open calls is not a major change which denies the democratic process. The key transport and economic priorities of both Councils are included in the SWLEP's strategic economic plan; the assessment criteria for projects uses the accepted wide base included in The Green Book; likely acceptability to the public and evidence of consensus are included in the criteria for assessment and all statutory consultation requirements are built into the project selection process.

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Response to CPRE Statement