



# LFFN Programme Guidance

August 2018





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## The Programme Explained

### Introduction

This guidance updates the previous LFFN prospectus.

As set out in the LFFN Wave 2 Prospectus, in addition to looking for opportunities to increase commercial deployment of fibre to the premise with the existing delivery methods, we continue to review and adapt the programme,<sup>1</sup> to explore new potential delivery methods and to increase the number of unique learning opportunities about methods that may lead to a further increase in the commercial deployment of fibre.

We will continue to update the selection criteria, in response to Government priorities, e.g. Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review, rural connectivity, and to increase the focus on the delivery of the LFFN programme and local project outcomes.

We have also responded to feedback from local bodies and have made changes to the operation of the programme and the way we identify and select projects for LFFN funding support.

We will also continue to look at ways to support projects not funded by the LFFN by offering advice, guidance and templates.

We have moved away from a competition selection process with fixed submission dates and have adopted a more iterative approach that will allow us and local bodies to identify and develop projects collaboratively in order to avoid unnecessary abortive work.

In the first instance, through a pre-dialogue and actual dialogue process, we will ask local bodies to outline their ideas and plans to us. We will then give an early indication as to whether this is the type of project we would support at this time, or whether it would require further modifications to receive funding support. During this initial phase DCMS will use a combination of our Commercial and Project teams to discuss and review project approaches.

Once projects have successfully passed this stage, local bodies will then develop a more detailed proposal for us to evaluate. If successful we will make a conditional funding offer and move into project implementation and our [assurance process](#).

The benefit of this approach is that local bodies will get early feedback on the viability of a project before going to the expense and effort of writing a full proposal. It also means that we can provide guidance and advice throughout the process and that we can create a rolling pipeline of projects.

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<sup>1</sup>Note in keeping with the learning principle we may continue to change or adapt the programme further in future.



## Section 1. The Purpose of the fund

The LFFN Funding will be provided for projects that create the conditions for successful achievement of the Programme's strategic objective i.e. to stimulate more commercial investment to deliver more gigabit capable connectivity and both of the Programme's delivery objectives:

- a) Directly maximising the availability and benefit of gigabit capable broadband services to public sector, business and residential users
- b) Improving commercial investment conditions, in local areas e.g. improve the business case for the market to provide more gigabit capable broadband

The projects should enable gigabit capable connections to key public buildings and/or businesses, with the expectation that this leads to operators creating additional points of connection and access networks available to additional local premises.

Projects should therefore be planned and delivered in ways that increase opportunities for commercial fibre deployments and increase learning opportunities about improving the viability for suppliers to make commercial investments in full fibre in your local area, this can be achieved by:

- Improving accessibility to, and use of existing infrastructure and public assets to bring homes and businesses, not currently within scope for commercial investment, within reach of fibre connection points
- Reducing the cost of connecting those homes and businesses to fibre, or other gigabit capable infrastructure
- Building additional fibre access points to extend backhaul and access networks, to provide capacity for connecting additional full fibre deployments in housing and business areas, and to support deployments of 5G masts and base stations
- Adopting best practices locally e.g. guidance emerging from the Barriers Busting Task Force and using available levers and better approaches such as with highways, planning, offering of wayleaves, and better demand aggregation
- Providing a demand-side stimulus e.g. through the use of gigabit vouchers



### Who can apply for funding

Applications may come from any public sector body, or group of public bodies in the UK. This includes all tiers of local government and other public sector bodies, for example NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

We particularly welcome collaborative proposals which cover wide geographical areas that cut across local authority boundaries, for example matching a LEP footprint, or Combined Authority area.

We would also like to see applications from Public Sector Partnerships, for example those which bring together the combined buying power of local government, e.g. health and education.

For multi-partner applications, one local public body should be identified as the lead for the delivery of the project, acting as the administrative body for the funding agreement on behalf of all the partner organisations. The nominated lead will be the recipient of the funding and manage the relationship with other partner organisations.

Projects should be consistent with the priorities, funding and timing set out below.

### What the funding is for

The funding available to local bodies through the LFFN Programme is exclusively capital funding, which can only be used in line with accepted government accounting practices.

The type of projects that can be funded can, in principle and subject to assessment by DCMS, use any delivery method, including the existing methods, e.g. PSAT / PSBU / PSAR, (see the Wave Two Prospectus Annexes for examples of the existing delivery methods at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-full-fibre-networks-challenge-fund>).

Projects should provide something new to LFFN or, alternatively, should be able to clearly show substantial scale, what added benefit or, unique activity to the programme is happening as a result of LFFN Funding. LFFN funding cannot be used to substitute other sources of funding which would otherwise have been used to fund projects and cannot be used in locations where the market is already building, or planning to build full fibre connections.

In summary, in order to consider applying for funding, local bodies must:

- Require funding to deliver gigabit capable infrastructure and that will stimulate greater and faster roll out of full fibre networks by commercial operators across the UK
- Provide strong evidence that funding will support a project which is 'additional' i.e. it will fund activity which cannot otherwise be funded through another route
- Support delivery of an up to date, viable strategic plan, e.g. Digital or Growth plans using delivery methods which clearly support the Programme's aims
- Actively consider implementation of Best Practice Guidance produced by Government to support the rollout of Digital Infrastructure
- Have support locally (including senior management and political leadership)
- Reflect the programme priorities
- Spend and claim funding by 31st March 2021

Local bodies are not required to match the LFFN capital funding. However, in our assessment we recognise that the strength and value of a LFFN project is likely to increase where local bodies are able to provide additional funding from other sources.

Local resources for the delivery of the project will need to be funded by the respective local bodies.



### How much funding is available

The Programme currently has access to £200m of the £738m National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF), with £95m remaining after Wave 1 and 2 projects.

The Programme may continue to draw down funding in waves up to 2021, or earlier if all available funding is allocated before that date. The current wave does not have a specific end date; DCMS will confirm the closure date, when the funding commitments indicate that the funding is likely to be exhausted. Further Waves of funding may follow.

DCMS has the option of requesting more funding from the NPIF, but currently all programme funding must be spent and claimed by 31st March 2021. A decision to request additional funding would be based on the relative success of earlier projects and the pipeline of future potential projects.

DCMS envisages providing funding for up to 20 more projects within the existing funding to a combined value of up to £95m at an average cost to the LFFN fund of **£4.75m** – but continues to allow for larger multi-authority applications.

We will therefore, initially, cap single authority proposals to **£4.75m** DCMS funding and a minimum threshold may also be imposed if the administrative overhead is considered too high compared to the value of the project. Local Bodies with projects requiring larger levels of funding from the LFFN budget are advised to notify DCMS at the earliest opportunity.

We reserve the right to request applicants to reconsider and submit revised funding proposals at any time during the process.

DCMS also reserves the right to request and prioritise proposals that are consistent with specific Government priorities, e.g. regional applications, specific geographic location applications, rural locations only, or restricted to specific delivery methods.

Projects that are not funded in a specific Wave could remain under consideration for future funding until all funding is exhausted, unless they have specifically been identified as projects that cannot be funded from the LFFN budget, e.g. because they are not compliant with the LFFN State aid regime.

DCMS will regularly review the progress and metrics from projects, to examine their effectiveness and that of the programme and the respective delivery methods. In advance of launching each new Wave of funding, we will consider whether it is necessary to change the level of financial support to projects, or for the individual delivery methods.

This may result in either increases or decreases in the planned funding allocation, or even ceasing financial support for further projects and / or delivery methods. All changes would be reflected in an updated guidance and accompanying selection rationale.



## Priorities, Funding and Timing

DCMS wants local bodies to demonstrate a high level of readiness to deliver their projects and those that are not able to demonstrate a high level of readiness will not be successful. Local Bodies that have funded projects will be expected to work with DCMS and other projects to develop the LFFN Programme and its associated projects and documentation. Later projects will benefit from the use of the documentation and methodologies which have been developed by, and lessons learned from, earlier projects.

In addition to funding projects that meet the LFFN objectives, LFFN funding will be provided to projects that are consistent with priorities for the Programme. The priorities may change over time and would be identified from a range of factors, including Government policy, lessons learned from previous projects, programme evaluation and analysis and new learning opportunities. The LFFN Programme will publish priorities and relating funding and timing of opportunities to apply for funds against a specific priority.

### Current Priorities

Current priority areas listed in the table below and Local bodies have until the **30 September 2018** to submit an email expressing interest in funding from the LFFN to the [LFFN@culture.gov.uk](mailto:LFFN@culture.gov.uk) mailbox for the first of these priorities; Rapid Mobilisation.

The email should include the Pre-Dialogue information Requirements listed below. For those local bodies that have already expressed interest via the LFFN Mail box since, you do not need to submit another one, or confirm, but for any local body that has not yet submitted a formal Expression of Interest you are advised to do so immediately, or before **30 September 2018**.

For the other listed priorities, local bodies may continue to express interest in funding under those priorities beyond the 30 September 2018 and DCMS will provide further notification of the funding allocations and deadlines for these priorities in due course.

Local bodies will need to reach agreement to the commitment of funding to all projects by **31 March 2019**, with projects to have passed **Gate A** of the Assurance Process by **30 May 2019**



Current Priorities Table

Theme	Summary	Funding available for priority up to maximum of:	EOI Timing
Rapid mobilisation	Projects with a pre-existing procurement route and able to begin mobilisation and implementation by March 2019.	£15m	30/09/18
Multi-authority/public body	Demonstrating the potential of coordinating multiple public sector authorities within an area or multiple LAs to form a greater contiguous area.	Tbc	Tbc
Rural focus	Demonstrating the effectiveness of LFFN delivery mechanisms in rural locations likely to be those considered as the 'final 10%'	Tbc	Tbc
Devolved / Regional Corridor / Growth Hub	Projects with a geographic focus targeting strategic economic or development objectives as part of a multi-strand digital and place strategy.	Tbc	Tbc
5G or Barrier Busting	Supporting Local Body exemplars creating the optimal investment environment for fibre and 5G.	Tbc	Tbc
Public Sector Productivity	Projects targeting improved public sector outcomes as a result of fibre, e.g. Ed Tech, Tele Health	Tbc	Tbc
Market Development	Projects deliberately targeting the development of the market in a particular area, e.g. incentivising aggregation, commissioning an asset mapping tool	Tbc	Tbc
Innovation or Learning	Projects that propose new approaches to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre	Tbc	Tbc



## The Role of Local Bodies

To deliver a successful project, local bodies will be responsible for:

- The development of local Digital Infrastructure Plans (see the Information Requirements and Evaluation Rationale sections below)
- Reviewing how the local body deals with local issues including considering national Best Practice Guidance and their ability to optimise their approach to wayleaves, planning rules, highways, traffic management and policy on narrow trenches
- The development of individual projects and applications into the Challenge Fund
- Securing any financial contributions to the projects which were identified as part of a local body's proposal e.g. capitalisation of spend in existing budgets, sourcing EU and local funding
- Securing local political commitment to participation in the LFFN project assurance gateways and developing projects to pass through each gateway
- Project management and delivery
- Mapping of current infrastructure and market provision
- Stimulating demand at a local level and involving local community and business groups
- Ensuring compliance with any applicable State aid requirements placed on the project
- Collecting data on outputs and outcomes such that the central programme is able to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms (this could include adding contractual text into supplier agreements to ensure that data is available over the life of the procured asset)
- Support DCMS in delivering the wider LFFN Programme and developing best practice, including attending networking events with other applicants and industry with the intention of sharing ideas and solving problems.
- Safe and secure retention of data including meeting requirements of the General Directive on Data Protection and the Data Protection Act



## Role of the Central Programme

To deliver a successful programme, DCMS will:

- Develop and manage a national programme approach (including legal, State aid, procurement and commercial advice), enabling local bodies to develop local approaches and take responsibility for ensuring the delivery of full fibre networks
- Work with local bodies and devolved administrations to ensure that projects are locally designed and led, with a focus on interoperability and identifying and disseminating lessons learned
- Coordinate Government activities which cut across delivery programmes and projects in multiple sectors
- Facilitate activity across local body project teams to ensure appropriate dialogue and sharing of best practice
- Provide assistance to locally funded projects including expertise in setting up successful projects, coordinating relevant engagement with suppliers on a national basis, ensuring common standards, capturing benefits to help prove the case and making sure lessons learnt are shared with and applied on future projects
- Act as the conduit for, and assurance of the use of, central programme funds
- Act as the primary liaison and coordination with industry stakeholders at National level



### Section 2. The Selection Process

The information requirements tables below set out the information that DCMS will ask local bodies to provide during Pre-Dialogue, Dialogue, Formal Proposals for the Investment Panel phases.

DCMS will use the evaluation rationale set out next to the information requirements to evaluate project proposals.

DCMS will not ask local bodies to provide completed financial and economic data sheets, but will ask for a strategic narrative and information and data to complete its own analysis.

During the Pre-dialogue and Dialogue phases, DCMS will review the strategic narrative and compare the information provided by local bodies against DCMS benchmark data<sup>2</sup>. The data comparison will generate a RAG rating for each information requirement section. The individual information requirement RAG rating sections will then be combined to provide an overall RAG rating for each project proposal.

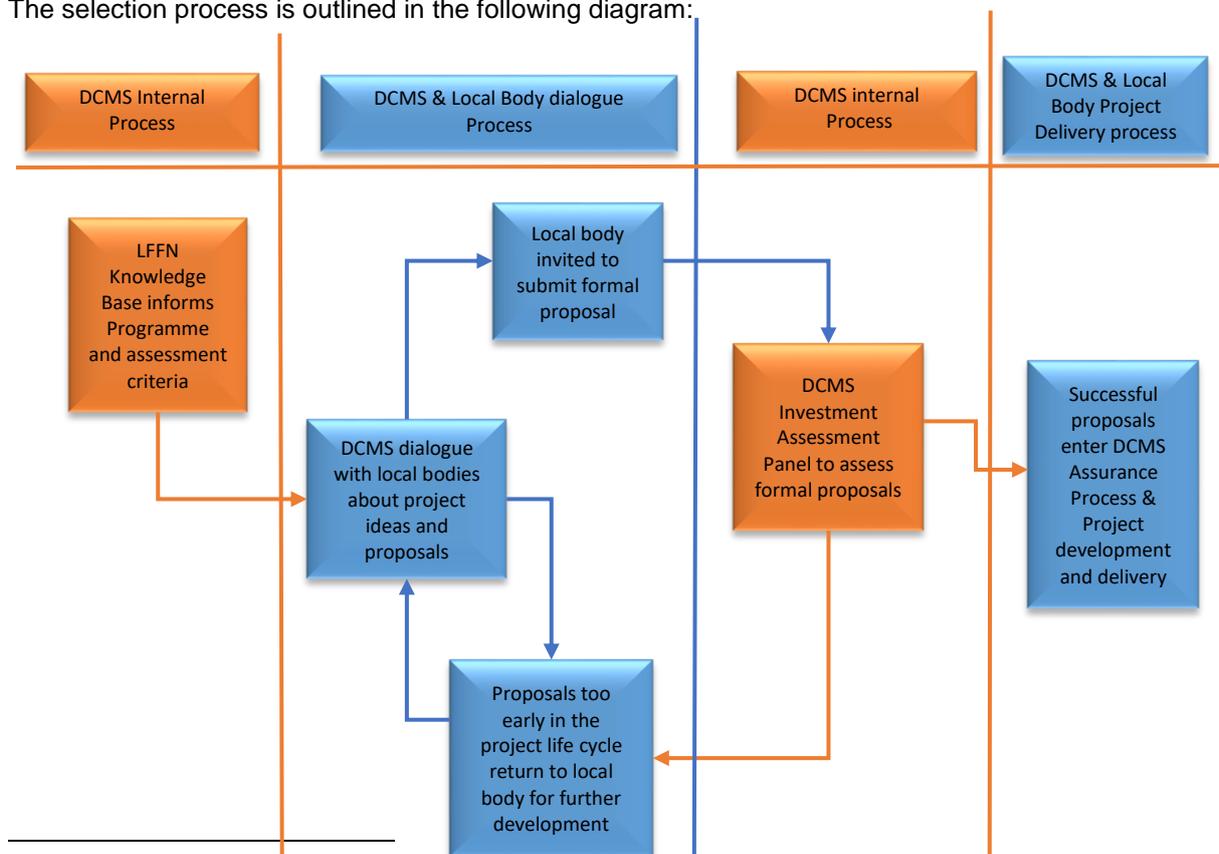
DCMS will use to RAG ratings as an indication of the compatibility and deliverability of local body projects readiness to proceed to formal proposals to the LFFN Investment Panel.

DCMS will discuss the RAG ratings with respective local bodies during the dialogue phase and provide advice to local bodies on the consistency of local body proposals with the programme objectives and priorities to and to confirm whether the local body proposal would be eligible for LFFN funding.

The pre-dialogue and dialogue phases will be undertaken by the LFFN Commercial and analysts teams who will use the RAG rating system to formalise evaluations of projects.

Formal Proposals are evaluated by the LFFN Investment Panel, and will use the RAG rating system with the information in the formal proposal combined with their own respective knowledge and experience to evaluate and test the project proposals readiness to proceed to the project assurance phase.

The selection process is outlined in the following diagram:



<sup>2</sup> Note DCMS benchmark data is drawn from a range of sources including public data sources and DCMS internal analysis of existing projects and is subject to change over time.



It should be **noted** that DCMS will only ask for a formal proposal from local bodies once they have been through dialogue with DCMS and would only expect a full business case after the formal proposal has been reviewed by a DCMS Investment Panel. The business case development is part of the DCMS assurance process and project development and delivery which will be supported by DCMS colleagues.

We would advise local bodies therefore that they should not invest significant new resources in developing detailed business cases specific to a LFFN project until DCMS has given formal indication that LFFN funding would be made available for the respective local project.

LFFN will enter into the pre-dialogue, via conference call or face to face meeting, with any local body interested in developing a LFFN project. DCMS would, however, request that local bodies provide a strategic narrative about the project and complete the minimum information requirement set out in the pre dialogue section below before a meeting takes place.

This will enable us to evaluate the range, quality and quantity of projects and assist you to focus your proposals and local resources on the development of outcome focussed projects. It will also afford the opportunity to indicate any areas that are out of scope for LFFN funding at the earliest opportunity.

Local bodies should, however, include relevant information from existing regional and local strategic plans, e.g. Industrial Development plans, Digital Plans and Growth plans to support their case for funding, both in dialogue and when submitting a formal proposal.

The pre-dialogue meetings are formally open and we will schedule conference calls and meetings, subject to demand, at the earliest opportunity.

#### Programme Governance

The commercial and analyst teams operations and processes are monitored by the LFFN Programme Management team and BDUK Senior Leadership teams, the Programme Management office and the LFFN Design Authority Panel and LFFN Programme Board.

Investment Panel operates within the LFFN structure and includes independent members from outside of LFFN, BDUK and DCMS. The Investment Panel's operations and processes are monitored by the BDUK Senior Leadership teams, the Programme Management office and the LFFN Design Authority Panel and LFFN Programme Board.

All DCMS Programme delivery, including the LFFN and its operations are monitored by the DCMS Major Programmes Board.



### Pre-Dialogue

In addition to a Strategic narrative about the project, the below information will be requested to allow DCMS to make an initial comparative analysis of the project before to help with the initiation dialogue.

Information requirement for Pre-dialogue	
Information Requirement	Evaluation Rationale
<p>What delivery method or combination of methods will you be using?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PSAT:</b></li> <li>• <b>PSBU:</b></li> <li>• <b>PSAR:</b></li> <li>• <b>Other:</b></li> </ul>	<p>Allows DCMS to improve LFFN Programme project and spend coverage by delivery method</p>
<p>How much will the project cost and how much LFFN funding will be needed? Where this cost is available by delivery method please provide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSAT:</li> <li>• PSBU:</li> <li>• PSAR:</li> <li>• Other:</li> <li>• <b>Full cost of project = £</b></li>   <li>• PSAT:</li> <li>• PSBU:</li> <li>• PSAR:</li> <li>• Other:</li> <li>• <b>LFFN funding required (as part of full cost) =</b></li> </ul>	<p>Size and scale of public sector connectivity required and the value for money of this compared to previous projects (successful and unsuccessful) in the LFFN Programme</p>
<p>How many public buildings are expected to provide FTTP (please provide in total and by delivery method):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSAT: where these are the Anchor Tenants for a fibre ring</li> <li>• PSBU: where these are to be upgraded to FTTP</li> <li>• PSAR: how many fibre Breaking in Points, Points of Presence, or Fibre Access Points</li> <li>• Other: Premises that will have a Gigabit capable connection directly paid for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSAT:</li> <li>• PSBU:</li> <li>• PSAR:</li> <li>• Other:</li> <li>• <b>TOTAL:</b></li> </ul>



<p>Name the Cities, Districts, Towns, Villages and Hamlets that will benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities:</li> <li>• Districts:</li> <li>• Towns:</li> <li>• Villages:</li> <li>• Hamlets:</li> </ul>	<p>Location of the project in the UK, to allow DCMS to improve LFFN Programme project and spend coverage by devolved administrations as well as regional presence</p> <p>Size and scale, and potential / opportunity to improve overspill reach (full fibre build out) compared to previous projects (successful and unsuccessful) in the LFFN Programme</p>
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For more advanced / developed projects – if this data is available DCMS would appreciate receiving it at the earliest opportunity:

<b>Additional Information</b>	
<b>Information Requirements</b>	<b>Evaluation Rationale</b>
<p>Full address, postcode and UPRN of public sector premises to be connected using LFFN funding (PSAT/PSBU only)</p>	<p>DCMS wants this information to locate and map the fibre requirement, to provide DCMS with a better understanding of the potential for the project to meet the overall objective of the Programme, e.g. to Stimulate a full fibre build for the across the whole area.</p>
<p>Location of any Breaking in Points, Points of Presence, or Fibre Access Points (co-ordinates) – clearly stating which are those where infrastructure will join backhaul (fibre starting points)</p>	
<p>Location of any exchanges or datacentres to be included or linked to the proposed LFFN funded network</p>	

### Dialogue

During dialogue, DCMS will ask local bodies to meet the following information requirements, which will be evaluated against the accompanying rationale, whilst also, where appropriate, providing guidance on how the project can be further aligned with LFFN objectives and stand the best chance of receiving LFFN funding.

DCMS will ask local bodies to outline their ideas and plans in preparation for submitting a formal proposal. Dialogue will enable DCMS to give an early indication to local bodies whether the project can receive LFFN funding support, or whether it would require modification. Those that successfully pass this initial stage will then be asked to develop a more detailed proposal for a DCMS Investment Panel to evaluate.

It is not necessary to have all of the below information in detail to commence dialogue, but it would be necessary for projects to have all of this information in detail before proceeding to proposal stage, however there is no specific timeframe for dialogue to be completed.



Information that will be requested during dialogue meetings			
Information Requirement	Evaluation Rationale		
<p>Collaborations and aggregation: With Local Public Sector Agencies for a whole area or sector-wide for a whole area:</p> <p>Specifically interested in but not restricted to:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Blue light</li> <li>• Criminal justice</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Local authority office &amp; admin</li> <li>• Museums &amp; heritage</li> <li>• Theatre &amp; culture</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Children's homes</li> <li>• Care homes</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery, School, HE, FE</li> <li>• GP, Acute, PCG</li> <li>• Police, Fire, Ambulance, Marine Coastguard</li> <li>• Courts, prisons, youth offender institutions, probation service</li> <li>• Jobcentres, Training</li> <li>• Youth centres, Community premises, Sports facilities, Swimming pool</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Blue light</li> <li>• Criminal justice</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Local authority office &amp; admin</li> <li>• Museums &amp; heritage</li> <li>• Theatre &amp; culture</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Children's homes</li> <li>• Care homes</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul>	<p>Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery, School, HE, FE</li> <li>• GP, Acute, PCG</li> <li>• Police, Fire, Ambulance, Marine Coastguard</li> <li>• Courts, prisons, youth offender institutions, probation service</li> <li>• Jobcentres, Training</li> <li>• Youth centres, Community premises, Sports facilities, Swimming pool</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants to know the extent of public sector collaborations or aggregations proposed</p> <p>Note – this is not individual sites, this is collaboration to ensure connectivity needs across a number of sites and public bodies in an area can be achieved through collaborations at agency or sector level</p>
<p>Sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Blue light</li> <li>• Criminal justice</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Local authority office &amp; admin</li> <li>• Museums &amp; heritage</li> <li>• Theatre &amp; culture</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Children's homes</li> <li>• Care homes</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul>	<p>Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery, School, HE, FE</li> <li>• GP, Acute, PCG</li> <li>• Police, Fire, Ambulance, Marine Coastguard</li> <li>• Courts, prisons, youth offender institutions, probation service</li> <li>• Jobcentres, Training</li> <li>• Youth centres, Community premises, Sports facilities, Swimming pool</li> </ul>		
Locally specific strategy/ies	<p>DCMS wants to understand if there is local strategic alignment and the extent of that alignment with local plans</p> <p>Specifically, DCMS wants to know if there is a clear link with existing agreed strategy/ies and desired digital and growth outcomes for the local area and the role of the LFFN project in achieving those outcomes</p>		
Socio-economic benefit opportunities of Public Sector Connections in LFFN project	DCMS wants to know if the socio-economic benefit opportunities of gigabit capable connectivity to the public buildings themselves have been identified, and if so the intended scale or size of the effect and the importance to the local area of this benefit		
Pro-investment approach to planning, wayleaves and streetworks i.e. compliance with Government Best Practice.	DCMS wants to know if the project / area is actively pursuing these approaches and that the local body has clearly set out how they will benefit and improve the delivery of LFFN funded project		
Public Asset	DCMS wants to know if local assets have been identified (especially national corridors such as roads, rail or canals) Have these been identified with a view to using them for fibre network build; i.e. created, publicised and made available for others to use.		
Political / Official Support	DCMS wants evidence that the LFFN project has full local support secured at the appropriate level		
Match funding / local funding outside of LFFN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bidding Body</li> </ul>	DCMS wants to know for each of these areas if the project has, or needs funding from other sources and if it has been identified, and secured		



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency / Sector</li> <li>• Supplier</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	
Return on Investment (ROI)	DCMS wants to know if the proposal has identified a ROI, how likely it is to be achieved and the timeframe over which it would be achieved
Track Record of Delivery	DCMS will take into account working relationships on Previous Projects including BDUK projects, whether these were successful executed and how issues were resolved
Deliverability / readiness to go	In light of the spending period, e.g. by March 2021, DCMS wants to identify and support projects that are ready to deliver. DCMS wants to understand where the project is in the project life cycle, e.g. planning / ready to mobilise, this would include detail of plans and resourcing, risk analysis etc.
Progression to full fibre for local area	DCMS wants to support proposals that will lead to local full fibre so needs to know if the proposal details progress to local full fibre and if the proposal includes estimated % fibre now and % full fibre on completion, and the extent of knowledge on the location including accessibility and usability
Local demand for fibre	DCMS wants to know if local demand for fibre is known and has the proposal identified the type and scale of demand for gigabit capable fibre in the local project area and possibly beyond
Additionally, and deadweight-minimisation confidence	DCMS wants to know what would have happened without the LFFN funding Specifically, does the proposal include how the market would not build without LFFN funding If it would build, does LFFN bring this forward or make it clear what is additional or extended because of LFFN funding In addition, DCMS want to ensure value for money is maximised and overbuild is minimised
Innovation & Learning Opportunities	<p>DCMS wants to provide learning on stimulating full fibre delivery in new ways so the proposal needs to provide clarity if it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes new approaches or opportunities that align to LFFN Programme Objectives</li> <li>• Proposes new ways of delivering the existing LFFN methods (either product / services or method / processes)</li> <li>• Proposes new challenges and barriers to overcome that the Programme can learn from</li> </ul>
	Proposes ground-breaking approach / asset or difference making for UK fibre infrastructure in another way?
	Will deliver / test something different / new within PSAT/PSBU/PSAR approaches: product / service
	Will deliver / test something different / new within PSAT/PSBU/PSAR approaches: method / process
	Will deliver / test something different / new within PSAT/PSBU/PSAR approaches: new contexts (barriers / challenges)



<p>Future telecoms infrastructure</p>	<p>DCMS wants to support future infrastructure so needs to know if the project and proposal explicitly includes plans for build to support 5G network</p>
<p>Fit with market behaviours LFFN is trying to change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal seeks to / likely to attract new or smaller market supplier</li> <li>• Opportunity for a market supplier to do 'something' on fibre they have not done before</li> <li>• Delivers a / some “major fibre spine(s)” (as defined by the Programme)</li> <li>• Community Partnership / Contribution Projects used to aggregate demand towards meeting uncommercial connection needs</li> <li>• Demand Aggregation - Joint Government or Local Authorities collaborating cross-borders (extra marks if contiguous)</li> <li>• Proposal uses major suppliers (Openreach / Virgin) opening up access network to other suppliers (PIA, Dark Fibre)</li> <li>• Cross network collaboration / asset sharing, or joint ventures and consortium responding to competitive tenders</li> <li>• Build is an open access network - managed for multi-supplier use / customer choice of provider</li> <li>• Includes ducting / assets with improved capacity, quality and access to be ready to use by any supplier</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants to encourage more commercial investment so wants to know if the proposal provides confidence that one or more of these potential market changes will be the focus or impact of the project</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic coverage</li> <li>• Type of LA</li> <li>• Type of towns &amp; cities covered (size and residential / industrial typology)</li> <li>• Connectivity issues: (below 10Mbps, below Superfast, Ultrafast coverage, FTTP coverage, known market operator activity and plans in area)</li> <li>• Premises density of locations (size and rural / urban)</li> <li>• Business / Industry makeup including productivity</li> <li>• Socio-economic benefit opportunities (Productivity, Economic Activity Rate,</li> <li>• Business activity and growth indicators, wealth and value indicators)</li> <li>• Transport links</li> </ul> <p>Improve LFFN Programme method coverage: PSAT, PSBU, PSAR or combination</p>	<p>DCMS wants to use this information to inform its assessment of project proposals during dialogue, where outputs will be discussed with the relevant local body.</p> <p>DCMS wants to know which locations the will be covered by the projects and is using the information to help ensure that the Programme is well informed and testing different delivery methods across a range of local areas. DCMS therefore wants to see all relevant information to the local body project and proposal</p> <p>Local areas covered by the proposal and the delivery methods will be used to enhance LFFN Programme evidence analysis, which will allow DCMS to LFFN to test and assess the opportunity to transfer or scale the delivery methods in more locations.</p>



## Investment Panel

Following dialogue, DCMS may request local bodies to submit a formal proposal for consideration by a DCMS investment panel.

The investment panel, chaired by the LFFN Programme Director, will review proposals on a regular basis. Local Bodies may also be invited to present their proposals to the panel for consideration.

The investment panel will be expecting proposals to be complete, comprehensive, consistent and clear. In addition, the proposal must meet the selection criteria and supporting project proposal template annexed to this guidance. Proposals must meet the criteria in all respects and provide robust evidence and / or supporting analysis in support of claims made and / or figures provided in order to be approved.

### Formal Proposal for Investment Panel

*(Some of this information may have already been provided and local bodies may wish to commence the completion of the proposal as they progress through dialogue)*

Additional Information that will be requested in the Proposal	
Information Requirements	Evaluation Rationale
<p><u>Strategic alignment:</u> DCMS Wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local body's digital infrastructure planning and wider local plans / strategies e.g. plans for transformation of public services and economic development, and extent of political support</li> <li>Alignment with LFFN objectives</li> <li>Cooperation and alignment with other local public sector bodies relevant to the project</li> <li>How local plans take into account the existing and planned commercial supply of digital infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants see how local bodies have linked their LFFN project to overarching local strategies, including setting out what role the project plays in the delivery of the digital and growth outcomes from those strategies, e.g. service improvement and/or savings, socio-economic benefits.</p> <p>DCMS wants to know about local digital delivery plans, e.g. pro-investment approach to planning, wayleaves and street works.</p> <p>DCMS wants to know that local bodies can demonstrate political and official support from an early stage. DCMS would also want to see links to complementary projects and programmes, e.g. mobile and 5G initiatives, and other local public sector programmes, like education and health delivery.</p>
<p><u>Specifically Digital Planning</u> DCMS wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The name of the resource with responsibility for working with, or across the local authority and partners and colleagues and network operators</li> <li>A commitment and plans from the planning and highways team working proactively with network operators</li> <li>A commitment and plans that Local bodies will avoid classifying network deployments as 'major' works</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants local bodies to explain their Digital Infrastructure Planning and how existing and new infrastructure will be used to encourage more commercial investment in gigabit capable infrastructure for the benefit of businesses, communities and local services. This activity should ideally already exist in a wider local Digital Strategy or may be a stand-alone plan (or set of plans). These plans should follow any best practice and guidance published by the Barrier Busting Task Force</p> <p>DCMS wants to encourage local bodies to be innovative in supporting the rollout of gigabit capable infrastructure. We understand that local bodies will be at different levels of maturity in addressing these</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commitment and plans to support the use of narrow trenching in pavements and highways</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to providing access wayleaves on sites at no more than cost – and ideally adopting a standard wayleave template</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to encourage proactive local planning policies to support digital connectivity</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to early engagement with developers in the planning process to ensure fibre connectivity for new builds where achievable</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to engage with key landlords to help secure private landlord wayleaves</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to providing links with business community, chambers of commerce and a plan for how to engage and use these relationships</li> <li>• A commitment and plans to Identify areas of low / no connectivity and quantifiable business demand</li> </ul>	<p>issues but they must demonstrate that credible, deliverable plans are in place to ensure that potential barriers to deployment will be addressed.</p>
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<p><b>Project scope and benefits:</b> DCMS Wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear and deliverable project scope</li> <li>• An illustration of how the project relates to the existing or planned commercial deployments and any other relevant digital infrastructure</li> <li>• A statement of the project outputs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The number of public buildings to be connected</li> <li>▪ The increase the number of premises likely to be connected to the gigabit capable infrastructure as a result of the LFFN build (either premises passed or premises closer to fibre by type; business / public sector / home)</li> <li>▪ Increase the number of premises directly connected with gigabit capable infrastructure by business (SMEs) / public sector / home</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants to see a demonstration that the local bodies to have a clear scope for the project, including their local body partners, the delivery models and budgets to be used, and the target location of the investment. We also want to see local bodies identify the incremental learning generated for the LFFN funding, (e.g. helping to develop a template, aggregating among different sectors, trialling the models in hard-to-reach areas).</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically identified locally specific economic and other benefits of the project e.g. regeneration</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Value for money:</b> DCMS Wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value for money and additionality of LFFN funding i.e. it will fund activity which cannot otherwise be funded through another route</li> <li>What delivery method or combination will you use: PSAT/PSBU/PSAR or new approach</li> <li>Overall project cost and how much LFFN will be asked to fund</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants local bodies to have considered how the design of their project generates and maximises outcomes, and in particular how the LFFN funding provides additional outcomes that could not be achieved without it</p> <p>DCMS wants local bodies to demonstrate how value for money is achieved, e.g. that the potential outputs and outcomes justify the original level of public investment</p>
<p><b>Funding requirement:</b> DCMS Wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of funding required from the LFFN</li> <li>The full cost of the project</li> <li>Funding from other sources</li> <li>Any additional funding that can be leveraged from partners</li> <li>The cost of resourcing the project</li> <li>A commitment to providing the budget from the necessary local finance officer, and partner fiancé officers where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants to assess the full financial cost and resource requirements of local body projects and proposals and for local bodies to have secured resource and any other relevant local funding commitments.</p> <p>In particular, DCMS want to see that local bodies have considered other funding sources and commercial appetite to invest beyond the public sector connectivity.</p>
<p><b>Deliverability:</b> DCMS Wants from the local body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To demonstrate and understanding of the diversity of existing operators and evidence of demand for new services and of commercial interest to invest in the area from network operators</li> <li>Demonstrate the level of engagement with operators, SMEs, landlords and communities</li> <li>Provide a Clear articulation and appropriateness of local body procurement strategy for this project</li> </ul>	<p>DCMS wants local bodies to demonstrate their capability and capacity to deliver an end to end project that will deliver the outputs and outcomes identified in local strategies and linked to the LFFN project in the proposal.</p> <p>DCMS wants local bodies to identify the commercial and project delivery approach, to be able to demonstrate that they have engaged with relevant stakeholders - including operators to understand existing plans and potential appetite to invest in the area and users to understand the potential demand for services.</p>



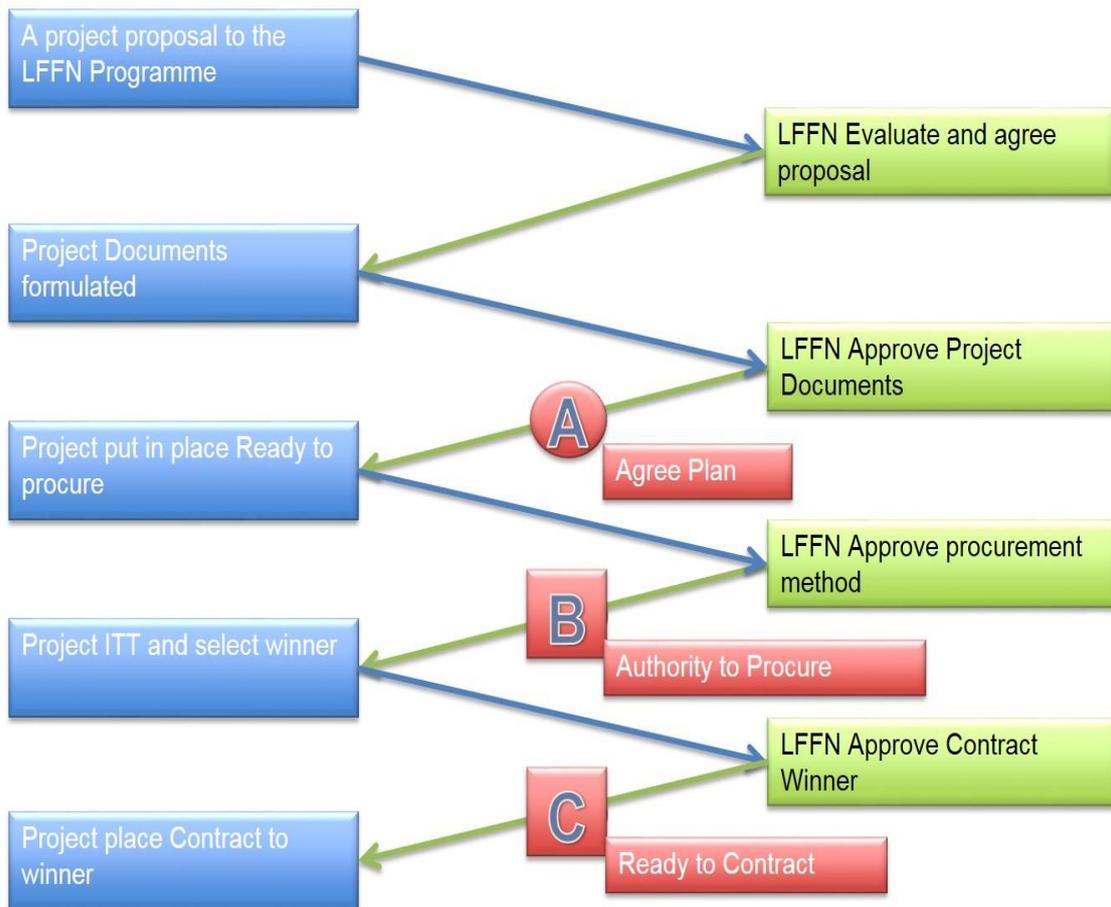
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set out the speed to initiate project and timeframe for completion, including phases where appropriate</li><li>• Detailed illustration Level of preparedness i.e. budget, resourcing, project management, governance</li><li>• Provide detail of relevant experience of delivering a similar programme or project and demonstration of track record of delivery</li><li>• Demonstrate Local body confidence in delivery e.g. by providing quality and credible implementation plan, understanding and treatment of risks, approach to benefits management, appropriate resourcing, track record</li><li>• Providing full Evidence of local support (senior management and political leadership of local bodies and working agreements with partner organisations) and wider stakeholder management</li></ul>	<p>DCMS wants local bodies to be able to demonstrate a full understanding of programme and project delivery and provide the full suite of necessary project management documentation and confirmation of their ability to deliver programmes and projects</p>
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### Section 3. Assurance, Project Implementation and Reporting

Projects that are approved by the panel will move into an assurance phase where DCMS would confirm the conditional grant allocation and support the local body in the development and delivery of their project. The assurance process will effectively see the completion of a full business case for the project.

#### Assurance Framework





## Reporting

### What information you will need to report during the project

DCMS will issue Grant Agreements to local bodies during the assurance phase. We require local bodies to partner with the LFFN Programme e.g. share data, help develop templates and disseminate lessons learned to other local bodies, to improve outcomes for subsequent waves.

We will monitor the progress of projects against agreed milestones by undertaking the assurance reviews to assess progress against the overall business case for the programme.

Projects are obliged to provide reports and relevant evidence to demonstrate progress against the agreed milestones and funding for the project will be contingent on continuing to meet the conditions in the Grant Agreement.

The assurance process aims to ensure that the £200m investment in the LFFN Programme is spent to maximise impact and fully achieve the objectives of the Programme, whilst providing value for money.

DCMS will test the extent to which projects achieve key outcomes such as:

- Increases in the number of 'premises connected' to gigabit capable broadband services
- Increases in the number of 'premises passed' by gigabit capable broadband services
- Improvements in backhaul availability (decreased distance to existing gigabit capable broadband services)
- Local bodies' own internal assurance procedures

DCMS would welcome local bodies evaluating the local impact of the LFFN project. This will help evaluate the contribution of the LFFN project's and programme's overall impact.

Local evaluations will also help DCMS to understand the full impact of digital policy and programmes, and as such we would welcome the opportunity to work with local bodies to develop any local evaluation plans, including helping to ensure that activity and outputs align and feed into the DCMS LFFN Programme-wide evaluation.

To facilitate this DCMS would also require early sight of the outputs and conclusions of these evaluations, any recommendations made and implemented, and sharing of the final report.

Regardless of intended local evaluation activity, where a local body intends to undertake a Public Sector Anchor Tenancy, Public Sector Asset Reuse or Public Sector Buildings Upgrade, they will be required to provide local area baseline measures before the LFFN deployment starts.

The reporting requirement may evolve across the life of the project and we recognise that early stage reporting may be based only on the best available information. Where known this would include information about the plans of large infrastructure suppliers in your region e.g. lightning build, BDUK, Openreach G-fast etc. By the point of LFFN deployment / go live it is expected that these should have been firmly established as the project baseline.

Structured advice, incorporating lessons learned, will also be provided to local bodies throughout to ensure that projects are progressing and that you are prepared for checkpoint reviews.



### Where you can find more information about the fund and the support available from DCMS

Further information relating to the LFFN funding process, guidance and the proposal form templates will be made available by DCMS. Where a local body has been successful in its proposal for funding, the LFFN Programme will:

- Provide advice to prepare the project to enter into the LFFN Programme governance and project assurance approach
- Facilitate the sharing of materials, experiences and best practice between local bodies e.g. 'barrier busting' good practice
- Provide expert support e.g. commercial advice, as required to individual projects
- Act as a liaison point with industry, and provide co-ordination at a national level from a programme perspective to ensure that the LFFN objectives are achieved

If you have any questions about this guidance, including clarification on the information and requirements for proposals, you can submit queries to the LFFN mailbox at [LFFN@culture.gov.uk](mailto:LFFN@culture.gov.uk) with your contact details (telephone and email address). We will respond by email or telephone.



## Section 4 - State aid and Legal notices

### State aid considerations

#### State aid status applicable to the project

- The State aid approach differs from that we have used with the Superfast Programme. For LFFN, we have not made a Notification to the Commission and so BDUK does not have any delegated approval authority. This means that it is a matter for the Local Body to confirm that they are working within the State aid regulations. We are looking to deliver LFFN through "no aid" routes, which means that local bodies will need to ensure that they are meeting the requirements.

As potential models, BDUK have assessed each of the delivery mechanisms, but a detailed assessment will need to be taken on the specific circumstances of each project. A summary of the general DCMS assessment of each mechanism is given below.

#### Public Sector Anchor Tenancy and Public Sector Building Upgrade

- The DCMS assessment is that the purchase of gigabit capable internet connections by public bodies, either as an aggregated, regional approach or for individual sites is 'no aid' on the basis that it is not market distorting, as long as the public bodies only buy what they need. This will need to be considered for each individual proposal, but is reliant on the public bodies acting in the same way as a commercial body would.

#### Public Sector Asset Reuse

- Subject to discussions with local bodies, the most likely approach is to demonstrate 'no aid' through the Market Economy Operating Principle (MEOP).
- The State aid regulations treat the delivery of goods or services by the public, or private sector organisations in the same way. The MEOP provides a mechanism to demonstrate whether there is a market distorting effect from a public sector organisation delivering goods or services. If there is not a distorting effect, there is no State aid.
- For Public Sector Asset Reuse, therefore, we must be able to demonstrate through the MEOP principle that there is no aid and that the project is a genuinely commercial investment, including clearly demonstrating risks and profits and market-based pricing. If challenged in court, or by the Commission, there must be clear evidence that the funding is genuinely on commercial terms.
- The BEIS State aid Manual (Chapter 3, paras 3.4-3.14) contains a description of how to document the terms of the project, and we require that a detailed assessment is produced for each project looking to use the MEOP principle, providing: – Details of the co-investors and the relative sharing of investment, risk and return, or – Where there are no co-investors, the assessment must be supported by at least one external recognised organisation's independent report confirming that the terms and conditions would be acceptable to a market investor and that the pricing model is not market distorting.



## Legal notices

### Confidentiality

Subject to the provisions below DCMS will not disclose any information which has been provided to it by any applicant in connection with the LFFN Programme and designated by that applicant as confidential. DCMS may disclose any information relating to any proposal or other information provided in response to this document or in connection with the LFFN Programme to

- (i) any member, director, officer, employee or agent of DCMS or BDUK or any person acting as an adviser or consultant to DCMS or BDUK; and
- (ii) any other part of the UK government.

DCMS also reserves the right to disseminate information that is materially relevant to all applicants, even if the information has only been requested by one applicant. Should applicants wish to avoid such disclosure (for example, on the basis that the request contains, or the likely response will contain, commercially confidential information or may give another applicant a commercial advantage) the request must be clearly marked 'In confidence – not to be circulated to other applicants' and the applicant must set out the reason or reasons for the request for non-disclosure to other applicants.

DCMS will act reasonably regarding the protection of commercially sensitive information relating to the applicant subject to its duties under all relevant legislation including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('FOIA') and the Environmental Information Act 2004 ('EIR').

Applicants must not disclose any information which has been provided to them by DCMS or BDUK in connection with the LFFN Programme and designated by DCMS or BDUK as confidential or which ought reasonably to be treated as being confidential, save that applicants may disclose such information to any third party for the purpose of developing their applications (after having obtained a similar obligation from that third party to treat such information disclosed as strictly confidential).

### Freedom of information

DCMS may be required to disclose information submitted by applicants to DCMS or BDUK under the FOIA or the EIR. In respect of any information submitted by an applicant that the applicant considers to be commercially sensitive the applicant should identify such information as commercially sensitive and explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information.

Where an applicant identifies material as commercially sensitive, DCMS will endeavour to maintain confidentiality. Applicants should note that even where information is identified as commercially sensitive DCMS may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FOIA or the EIR and the final decision to disclose shall sit with DCMS.

If an applicant receives a request for information under the FOIA or the EIR in connection with the LFFN Programme, this should be immediately passed on to DCMS and the applicant should not attempt to answer the request without first consulting with DCMS.

### Intellectual property

All intellectual property rights in any information contained or referred to in this document, any application form, any associated guidance and any other document made available by DCMS to any applicant in connection with the LFFN Programme or the Challenge Fund ('Challenge Fund Documentation') shall remain the property of DCMS and/or relevant third parties, and the applicants shall not obtain any right, title or interest therein.

All Challenge Fund Documentation supplied by DCMS must be returned on demand, without any copies being retained.

### Personal data



For the purpose of this document:

"Contact Data" means the contact details of DCMS' and each applicant's directors, employees and professional advisers (including consultants);

"Controller" has the meaning given in the Data Protection Laws;

"Data Protection Laws" means (a) any law, statute, declaration, decree, directive, legislative enactment, order, ordinance, regulation, rule or other binding restriction (as amended, consolidated or re-enacted from time to time) which relates to the protection of individuals with regards to the processing of Personal Data to which DCMS or any applicant is subject, including the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018; and (b) any code of practice or guidance published by the UK Information Commissioner's Office and/or the European Data Protection Board from time to time;

"GDPR" means regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) OJ L 119/1, 4.5.2016;

"Personal Data" has the meaning given in the Data Protection Laws and includes Sensitive Personal Data;

"Process" has the meaning given in the Data Protection Laws;

"Representatives" means DCMS' and each applicant's directors, employees and professional advisers (including consultants); and

"Sensitive Personal Data" has the meaning given in the Data Protection Laws.

DCMS and the applicants shall comply with all of their respective obligations under the Data Protection Laws to the extent applicable.

DCMS and the applicants each acknowledge and agree that (in their respective capacities as Controllers) they may need to Process the Contact Data provided to them by DCMS or the relevant applicants (as applicable) in order to (in the case of DCMS) administer and manage the Challenge Fund (including the selection process set out in this document) and (in the case of applicants) to apply for funding under the Challenge Fund and participate in the relevant Challenge Fund arrangements.

DCMS and the applicants shall Process the Contact Data in accordance with their respective privacy policies. DCMS and the applicants acknowledge that they may be required to share Contact Data with their affiliates, group companies and other relevant parties, within or outside of the country of origin, in order to carry out the activities identified above, and in doing so DCMS and the applicants shall ensure that the sharing and use of the Contact Data complies with applicable Data Protection Laws.

Where acting as a Controller for the purposes of the Contact Data, DCMS and the applicants shall make available to each other a copy of their applicable privacy policy and the entity receiving the privacy policy shall ensure that it is provided to their Representatives whose Contact Data has been shared with the other entity for the purposes set out above.

DCMS and each applicant warrants, represents and undertakes that it is not subject to any prohibition or restriction which would prevent or restrict it from disclosing or transferring their Contact Data to each other in accordance with the terms set out above.

### Publicity

No applicant will undertake (or permit to be undertaken) at any time, any publicity activities with any section of the media in relation to the Challenge Fund Documents, the application process or the LFFN Programme without the prior written agreement of DCMS (including as to the content of any such publicity).

In this paragraph 'media' includes (without limit) radio, television, print, newspapers, trade and specialist press, the internet and email or mobile content accessible by the public.



## Costs

Applicants must obtain at their own responsibility and expense, all information necessary for the preparation of applications and all future stages of the application process.

Applicants are solely responsible for the costs and expenses incurred in connection with the preparation and submission of their applications and all other stages of the selection and evaluation process. Under no circumstances will DCMS or any of their advisors be liable for any costs or expenses borne by the applicants or their contractors or advisors in this process.

## Disclaimer

Whilst the material in the Challenge Fund Documentation has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive nor has it been independently verified. Neither DCMS nor its advisors, their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the information provided in the Challenge Fund Documentation or accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the information or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information and nor will any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any persons considering making an application and subsequent decision to enter into relevant Challenge Fund arrangements with DCMS following receipt of the Challenge Fund Documentation should make their own investigations and their own independent assessment of DCMS and its requirements and should seek their own professional financial and legal advice.

## Canvassing

Any applicant who directly or indirectly canvasses any officer, member, employee, agent or consultant of DCMS concerning the operation of the Challenge Fund will be disqualified.

## Right to cancel or vary the process

DCMS reserves the right to amend the terms of the application process, cancel the application process at any stage, and/or require any applicant to clarify its application in writing and/or provide additional information.

Failure to respond adequately may result in the relevant application not being selected for funding.