



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

# Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding): Process Evaluation Report

January 2024

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# Contents

<b>HIF Process Evaluation Glossary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. About this evaluation</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1. Context	11
1.2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation	11
1.3. Evaluation approach	12
1.4. Limitations of the evaluation	16
<b>2. HIF context and process map</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1. HIF context	17
2.2. HIF objectives	17
2.3. Eligibility for the Forward Funding	17
2.4. Status of the FF bidding process	18
2.5. HIF-FF process map	18
2.6. Phase 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)	19
2.7. Phase 2: Co-Development	22
2.8. Phase 3: Award (Pre-Contract)	26
2.9. Changes to the original process map	27
<b>3. Expression of Interest phase</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1. Introduction	28
3.2. Overview of the delivery of the EOI phase	28
3.3. Understanding of HIF-FF	29
3.4. Developing and submitting an EOI	30
3.5. Support and guidance to submit an EOI	32
3.6. Identifying the strongest bids to move to Co-Development	33
3.7. Speed/timing of EOI decision	35

3.8.	Improving the EOI phase	36
3.9.	Summary	36
<b>4.</b>	<b>Co-Development phase</b>	<b>38</b>
4.1.	Introduction	38
4.2.	Overview	39
4.3.	Value of the Co-Development phase	40
4.4.	Completing the final business case	44
4.5.	Final business case assessment and bid selection	45
4.6.	Conclusion	46
<b>5.</b>	<b>Contract Award phase</b>	<b>48</b>
5.1.	Introduction	48
5.2.	Overview	48
5.3.	Pre-contract conditions	49
5.4.	Contract speed/timing	51
5.5.	Conclusion	52
<b>6.</b>	<b>Changes to the process map</b>	<b>53</b>
6.1.	EOI	53
6.2.	Co-Development	53
6.3.	Pre-Contract Award	54
<b>7.</b>	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Sample and Response</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Government and Local Authority Sample Breakdown</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Online Survey with Government Stakeholders: Questionnaire</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Online Survey with Local Authorities: Questionnaire</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>HIF-FF Theory of Change</b>	<b>100</b>

# HIF Process Evaluation Glossary

## **Acronyms:**

BCR - Benefit Cost Ratio

CME - Continuous Market Engagement

DEFRA – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DfT – Department for Transport

DLUHC – Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

EF – Evaluation framework

EOI – Expression of Interest

FF – Forward Funding

HE – Homes England

HIF – Housing Infrastructure Fund

HIF-FF – Housing Infrastructure Fund – Forward Funding

HMG – Her Majesty's Government

HMT – Her Majesty's Treasury

HoT – Heads of Terms

IPA – Infrastructure Projects Authority

MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

MVF – Marginal Viability Funding

OGDs – Other government departments

SME - Small and Medium Enterprises

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report outlines the findings of an evaluation of the bidding process for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) was announced in July 2017, and available funding later increased to a total of £5.5 billion, with spend to be complete by 31 March 2024. The fund is a capital grant programme which aims to unlock new housing in areas of high demand, through the provision of infrastructure which, due to some form of market failure, would not come forward without the funding. HIF is split into two strands, Marginal Viability Funding (MVF) and Forward Funding (FF). MVF is targeted at smaller projects, and the unlocking of housing in the shorter term, providing the final piece of infrastructure to unblock an existing project or allocate additional sites. Forward Funding (FF) is targeted at large, strategic and high-impact infrastructure projects that will unlock new homes in the medium and longer term. The funding awarded is likely to be a significant proportion of the upfront infrastructure costs and may be the first step towards securing private investment.

This process evaluation focuses on the Housing Infrastructure Fund – Forward Funding (HIF-FF), with the MVF out of scope. The evaluation covers the process, from the first expression of interest (EOI) through to the point of contract. It investigates the bidding, assessment and award process from both local authority (LA) and HM Government (HMG) perspectives to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the process and to inform future design learnings. The approach was guided by the evaluation framework developed during the scoping study (and included at the end of this report).

The evaluation included the following core elements:

- **Document review**, covering a range of policy documents and data sources to provide insight into how the bidding process was intended to function
- **Online surveys** with both government and local authority stakeholders, which explored views on and experiences of the programme bidding and contracting process from EOI to contract award (including views from local authorities who were unsuccessful at different points within that process)
- **Depth interviews with 43 stakeholders** who had been involved in the programme bidding and contracting process. The interviews covered similar topic areas to the online surveys, including strengths and weaknesses of the bid process, with an additional focus on collaborative working, lessons learned and implications for future programmes. The interviews also aimed to fill gaps in the evidence collected via the online surveys
- **Development of a process map**, which was initially created as part of the evaluation scoping phase and allows for comparison of the intended delivery model with what happened in practice

# Research Findings and Recommendations

## The Expression of Interest (EOI) phase

The EOI was the first phase of the HIF-FF process and aimed to identify a shortlist of infrastructure projects aimed at unlocking housing. Shortlisted bids would then be taken into co-development (Phase 2). 102 EOIs were submitted, with 71 progressing to the co-development phase.

Local authorities were generally clear on the requirements for the intervention and how their bid would be assessed. Those who approached Homes England for support were broadly pleased with the help they received. Experiences of submitting EOIs were also generally positive with local authorities reporting no major problems with the online form.

However, some local authorities reported a lack of clarity around the scope and objectives for the intervention, leading to some confusion as to what they should include in their EOI. Local authorities also reported delays in receiving clear responses to queries. Some government stakeholders felt that initial submissions could be overly optimistic and the weight placed on land uplift values was perceived to favour bids in certain areas. Some government stakeholders noted that some potentially strong schemes did not make it to the next phase because the land value uplift was not as strong as in other areas. This may have affected which schemes were funded, thereby affecting overall fund outcomes.

Specific recommendations for Future Fund design include:

1. Allow a pre-engagement phase for potential bidders to develop relationships with Homes England and DLUHC
2. Provide more/ better support to local authorities at EOI stage to help ensure that the quality of bids more closely mirrors the quality of the schemes
3. Ensure that local authorities are aware of the guidance and support available, including the resource support available, and encourage them to share it widely across teams
4. Establish a quicker and smoother process for responding to local authorities' questions and sharing the responses among all potential bidders
5. Provide a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to, or instead of, a Homes England contact, to enable quicker responses for the sections of the bid which DLUHC lead on and have responsibility for, for example the strategic case
6. Work closely with HM Treasury (HMT) to ensure that timescales for funding approval are better aligned (where scheme delivery is also dependent on parallel HMT funding for infrastructure)
7. Allow a longer overall timescale for bids, with additional interim deadlines both for local authorities and government stakeholders, or potentially adopting a continuous market engagement (CME) approach, to make the process more efficient and limit the time spent developing bids for schemes that are unlikely to be funded

8. Stress-test pressure points in the process (e.g., assessment windows) in advance, and ensure sufficient staff resource is available to make quicker decisions

## **The co-development phase**

The co-development phase was a collaborative six-month period where local authorities could use support and advice from Homes England, government departments, and external consultants, to develop the strongest possible proposals to deliver the HIF-FF objectives and value for money. Of the 71 bids that passed the EOI stage, 64 successfully completed and passed the co-development phase.

Local authorities found the co-development phase beneficial in multiple ways. They reported that Homes England and other government stakeholders were enthusiastic and encouraging in supporting them to develop their business cases. Local authorities could access additional co-development funding to pay for external expertise and consultancy, which was considered invaluable, given limited internal resource and expertise. The local authorities who used external consultancy felt that this support was necessary, but the additional costs were expensive to develop a bid that may not be contracted.

Local authorities saw the full business case assessment as a constructive and “joined up” process. In particular, the cross departmental investment panels were viewed by Government stakeholders and LAs (Local Authorities) as a good and useful way of identifying the strongest bids. Government stakeholders felt the DLUHC policy team had done a really good job of bringing the key players across departments together to review and approve the strongest bids. This is likely to have had a positive effect on Fund outcomes, with funded schemes ultimately more likely to be built out and therefore to deliver the number of housing units required. Local authorities and government stakeholders were generally positive about the common assessment framework, although they would have welcomed a lighter touch approach for smaller projects. Some local authorities also felt the assessment criteria could have been clearer.

Specific recommendations for future Fund design include:

1. DLUHC and Homes England could work more closely with external consultants to answer queries and circulate responses (or an FAQ document covering common themes) to all consultants and bidders to prevent duplication of resource/delays
2. More frequent (but shorter) interactions between local authorities and external consultants could help drive bid development forward
3. Additional promotion of the type and level of support available could encourage local authorities to make more use of support and result in stronger bids
4. Encourage genuine dialogue between local authorities and Homes England avoiding any assumption that discussion is solely focused on how local authorities can best meet Homes England’s requirements
5. The co-development phase should weed out bids which had little chance of being funded at an earlier stage



6. Be clear upfront if there is scope to extend delivery deadlines, as this provides clarity and certainty to bidders

## **The Contract Award stage**

Once awards were confirmed and announced, DLUHC and Homes England (HE) worked to agree detailed contracts for successful projects, to allow funding draw down. Of the 64 bids submitted at the end of the co-development phase, 34 were awarded funding, and 32 accepted the funding.

After local authorities received an award offer, they were required to fulfil a series of pre-contract conditions and pre-fund conditions before funding drawdown commenced. The amount of time it took for local authorities to complete these activities impacted on when funding drawdown took place, and therefore often impacted the overall timescales of the schemes. Delays of several months were experienced in most cases, with pre-contract negotiations and due diligence taking up to 18 months for some projects.

After meeting the pre-contract conditions, local authorities were then required to meet additional pre-funding conditions (e.g., to demonstrate planning permission, public consultation, procurement of contractors, and other activities showing project viability and progress).

The contract award process was seen as robust and rigorous, but very time-consuming, and in some cases, local authorities quoted long delays (in some cases over a year) before projects could draw down funding. In some cases, this may have affected fund outcomes, as the longer elapsed time meant the benefits of additional housing provision were delayed.

Specific recommendations for future Fund design include:

1. Providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of contracts could have allowed local authorities to progress schemes with fewer delays
2. Ensure that the conditions to be negotiated in the contract award phase are considered/ resolved in earlier phases of the bidding process
3. Ensure that contractual documents are ready to be issued at the start of contracting to prevent later delays

## **Research Conclusions**

Overall, government stakeholders and local authorities were positive about the HIF-FF process, and felt it was generally fit for purpose. However, there are a number of areas which could be improved, and recommendations to take into account when designing similar schemes in future.

## **Collaborative and cross-government working**

Government stakeholders were generally positive about the extent to which the intervention encouraged and allowed for cross-government working. Local authorities felt some parts of the process were collaborative, but that in some cases they were responding to HE requirements rather than having a true dialogue. This was particularly the case at contract negotiation stage.

Local authorities were positive about the co-development phase, reporting that Homes England and other government stakeholders were enthusiastic and encouraging in supporting them to develop their bids. Local authorities could access additional co-development funding to pay for external expertise and consultancy, which was considered invaluable, given limited internal resource and expertise.

In future, increased partnership working at senior levels across government departments could help resolve issues quickly. For example, allowing other departments earlier sight of bids (before Investment Panel stage) could allow conditions to be agreed with the bidder at an earlier stage, and reflected in bids. This could help reduce delays in contracting.

### **Guidance and support for local authorities**

Local authority representatives who contributed to the evaluation were generally positive about the guidance and support available, although some respondents reported that they were not aware it existed and so were more likely to feel they had unanswered questions about the process. Ensuring that local authorities were aware of the guidance and support available, including the resource support available, would have encouraged additional engagement.

The funding available for external consultants and expert input was welcomed by local authorities, several of whom said they would not have been able to develop their bids without it.

Some local authorities and government stakeholders felt that the guidance provided was not detailed enough. Others queried whether a competitive funding model was the right approach for the HIF, given the scale some of the projects.

Some local authorities reported significant delays in getting answers to queries about their bids. In some cases, this was thought to be because the details of the fund and eligible schemes had not been fully ironed-out. Having a longer Fund development phase may enable issues to be resolved before bidding starts. Providing a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to, or instead of, the Homes England contact, may also have enabled quicker responses, as well as ensuring there was sufficient resource available to handle queries. In addition, setting up a system to share answers to queries with all parties on a regular basis would reduce duplication of queries and might allow bids to be developed more quickly.

### **Assessment**

Local authorities saw the final business case assessment process as a constructive and “joined up” process. Local authorities and government stakeholders were generally positive about the common assessment framework, although they would have welcomed a lighter touch and more proportionate approach for smaller projects. Some local authorities also felt the assessment criteria could be clearer.

Some local authorities and government stakeholders felt that bids which had little chance of being funded should have been dropped at an earlier stage, avoiding significant time and financial resources being spent on projects that had little chance of being funded. Changing assessment timescales or having stricter thresholds for bids to move to the Co-development phase, should be considered.

## Contracting

The contract award phase was seen as a robust and rigorous process. It was also necessarily collaborative and extensive, which ensured that the conditions agreed upon were accurate and projects met the objectives of the intervention. However, local authorities and some government stakeholders reported long delays in agreeing contracts, which in some cases affected the viability and deliverability of schemes. A changing political landscape may have also impacted on the project requirements as the bidding process covered the period 2017 to 2020. The process could have been made more efficient by setting shorter deadlines for approvals and returning awarded contracts to local authorities more quickly. Incorporating efficiencies such as providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of the contract could have also allowed local authorities to progress with less delays. Equally, ensuring that the conditions to be negotiated on in the contract award phase were resolved in earlier phases could have made this phase shorter. This would require additional dedicated resources at Homes England.

# Introduction

## 1.1. Context

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) was announced in July 2017, and available funding later increased to a total of £5.5 billion. The HIF is a capital grant programme which aims to unlock new housing in areas of high demand, through the provision of infrastructure which, due to some form of market failure, would not come forward without the funding. HIF is split into two strands, Marginal Viability Funding (MVF) and Forward Funding (FF). MVF is targeted at smaller projects, and the unlocking of housing in the shorter term, providing the final piece of infrastructure to unblock an existing project or allocate additional sites. Forward Funding is targeted at large, strategic and high-impact infrastructure projects that will unlock new homes in the medium and longer term. The funding awarded is likely to be a significant proportion of the upfront infrastructure costs and may be the first step towards securing private investment.

This process evaluation focuses on the Housing Infrastructure Fund – Forward Funding (HIF-FF), with the MVF out of scope for the evaluation.

## 1.2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

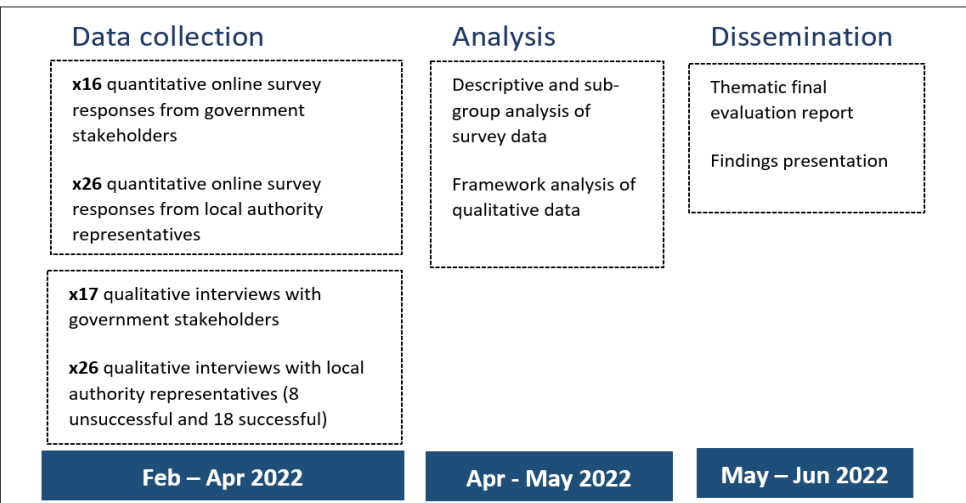
In December 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) commissioned IFF Research (IFF), in partnership with Belmana, to conduct a process evaluation of the programme. This followed IFF’s previous work on the process evaluation scoping report<sup>1</sup>, which was delivered in July 2020.

The purpose of this process evaluation is to provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the bidding process, as well as any effects these had on outcomes, and to provide recommendations for similar fund design in the future. A particular focus is on the degree to which the process itself was collaborative and cross-governmental, and the impact of this on the process and final awards.

### 1.3. Evaluation approach

The evaluation approach involved quantitative online surveys with government and local authority stakeholders (16 and 17 respectively) and depth interviews by telephone, 17 with government stakeholders and 26 with local authority representatives (18 with successful bidders and eight with unsuccessful bidders) held between February and April 2022. The data were analysed and the findings subsequently published as a thematic evaluation report and a presentation of quantitative findings from as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Evaluation approach**



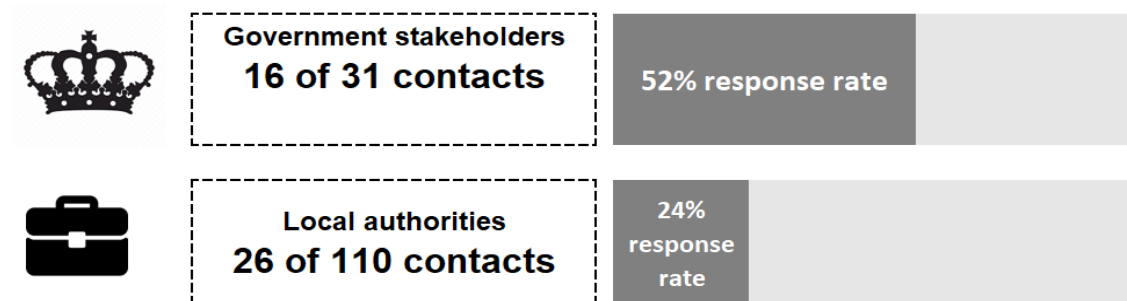
#### 1.3.1. Quantitative surveys

The quantitative fieldwork comprised two surveys – one of government stakeholders and one of local authority representatives – which ran between 18<sup>th</sup> February and 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022. IFF research distributed the online survey to all available contacts (provided by DLUHC) of government stakeholders (31) and local authorities (110) involved in the HIF-FF bidding and contracting process.

<sup>1</sup>  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/979263/HIF\\_Process\\_Evaluation\\_Scoping\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/979263/HIF_Process_Evaluation_Scoping_Report.pdf)

In total, 42 responses were received, 16 from government stakeholders and 26 from local authorities (13 of which had at least one successful bid, and 13 whose bids were unsuccessful). The response rates (52 per cent and 24 per cent for stakeholders and local authorities respectively) and base sizes are shown below in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2: Quantitative survey sample**



Responses were received from government stakeholders across the departments (DLUHC, Department for Transport, Homes England, IPA) involved in the intervention, consultants, and local authorities across England.

The survey questions were grounded in the evaluation framework developed during the scoping phase. The full questionnaires are provided at the end of this report.

The surveys explored views on and experiences of the HIF bidding and contracting process from EOI to contract award, including views from local authorities who were unsuccessful at different points within that process. Topics covered included the extent to which the HIF bidding and contracting process was collaborative, cross-governmental, and fit-for-purpose. The surveys also covered the availability and value of support, and the clarity and consistency of the assessment process. At each phase, the surveys asked for respondent views on potential improvements to the process.

### 1.3.2. Qualitative interviews

Between April and May 2022, 43 qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with government stakeholders (17) and local authority representatives (26) who had been involved in the HIF-FF bidding and contracting process. 18 interviews were with local authorities who were successful in at least one HIF bid, and eight with local authorities who were unsuccessful.

Government participants represented a range of departments involved with the intervention and the local authorities came from across a range of English regions. The semi-structured interviews followed agreed topic guides and lasted up to 60 minutes each.

The interviews with government stakeholders and local authority representatives covered similar topic areas to the quantitative surveys, including the strengths and weaknesses of the bid process, with an additional focus on collaborative working, lessons learned and implications for future programmes. The interviews also aimed to fill gaps in the evidence collected via the online surveys.

### 1.3.3. Participation in the evaluation

All contacts provided by DLUHC were invited to take part in the online surveys. The same approach was also used for the government stakeholder interviews, given the smaller than anticipated number of contacts. Interviews with successful local authorities (18) were sampled to provide an even geographical spread and mix of project types. For unsuccessful local authorities, 10 areas were selected, roughly split by stage at which they were unsuccessful (in progressing to the next stage or being awarded funding). This resulted in the following sample (Figure 1.3) which shows that of the 102 local authorities who submitted an EOI, 31 were unsuccessful or dropped out at the initial phase, a further seven dropped out prior to the co-development phase and 30 were unsuccessful in reaching the award phase. Two further local authorities did not accept the funding. More detail on the sample is provided in Appendix 9.

**Figure 1.3: Local Authority participation**

	Local Authority Population		Local Authority Evaluation Sample	
	Successful	Unsuccessful/ Drop Out	Successful	Unsuccessful/ Drop Out
EOI	71 successful	31 unsuccessful	36 successful	6 unsuccessful
Co- Development	64 submissions	7 drop-outs	34 submissions	2 drop-outs
Award	34 awarded funding	30 unsuccessful	26 awarded funding	8 unsuccessful
Accepted funding	32 accepted funding	2 drop-outs	25 accepted funding	1 drop-outs
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>

Please note that 11 local authorities and three government stakeholders participated in both the survey and the qualitative interviews.

#### 1.3.4. Analysis and reporting

The quantitative survey data was reviewed by team members and tables were produced for each survey question, which were reviewed by members of the project team, with a particular focus on statistically significant differences between successful and unsuccessful local authorities, regions, and government organisation. However, due to the small sub-group sizes, there were no statistically significant differences between sub-groups, and so findings are reported at the overall level.

Our approach to the analysis of the qualitative data was iterative and inductive – building upwards from the views of participants. All interviews were recorded (with participant consent) and written up in detail, including verbatim quotes, in a bespoke analytical framework. The framework was structured around the evaluation logic model and research questions, with a research question per column, and detail from each qualitative interview entered individually per row. The framework also included key sample data, to allow for comparison of findings by different characteristics.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data were analysed to search for themes and trends, both present and absent. We then held two internal director-led analysis sessions to bring the team's thinking together, challenge initial assumptions and identify areas for further, targeted analysis.

## 1.4. Limitations of the evaluation

There were a number of challenges in conducting the evaluation, including engaging government stakeholders and local authority representatives who were involved in the HIF process from 2017 onwards, as some had moved post during this time. Given the gap between the start of the process and the evaluation fieldwork, participants were also not always able to recollect the detail of particular stages or processes. We designed the evaluation tools with verbal/written prompts and reminders of process stages, to aid recollection.



## 2. HIF context and process map

### 2.1. HIF context

There is a pressing need to increase housing supply in England. The supply of new housing has failed to match household growth as well as pent-up demand for housing that has built up over the years. In response to this problem, the Government has introduced a range of measures to reform the housing market and support the deliverability of new and additional housing supply. These include: the provision of loan finance via the Home Building Fund to target new lending to SMEs; funding through the Affordable Housing Programme; and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out the Government's planning policies for England. More recently, the government has a range of measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which reform the planning system to become more efficient, effective, and equitable as part of a wide package of measures to increase the rate of housebuilding, one of the priorities is to support the development of infrastructure that enables new homes in areas of greatest housing demand.

### 2.2. HIF Objectives

The HIF-FF aims to deliver new physical infrastructure which will unlock housing sites in the areas of greatest housing demand. The key objectives of the intervention were to:

- Deliver infrastructure with the potential to unlock up to **450,000 homes**: supporting Local Authorities to set up their plans for growth, releasing more land for housing and getting homes built at pace and scale
- Enable new development where there was demand by offering a co-ordinated approach to funding infrastructure to:
  - **unlock new housing in the short term**, and
  - support new **strategic projects** which deliver additional houses in the long term.
- Ensure the best large scale and ambitious ideas were successful through an innovative **co-development approach**, bringing local authorities, central Government, and delivery partners together to improve ideas.

The theory of change developed for the impact evaluation scoping report can be found at the end of this report.

### 2.3. Eligibility for the Forward Funding

The funding was made available to local authorities on a competitive basis, to help fund housing infrastructure and development in areas of greatest housing demand. To be eligible for FF, bids were expected to be from the uppermost tier of local authorities in England, to ensure they are well placed to be responsible for planning infrastructure requirements and delivery at a strategic scale. FF bids had a soft cap at £250 million under

the assumption that this funding contribution would provide the confidence needed to attract other sources of investment. Equally, bidders had to demonstrate that the schemes could not happen without the financial support of this fund.

## 2.4. Status of the FF bidding process

The FF represents the vast majority of the total HIF funding. In total, 34 bids were selected to receive funding and five bids were subsequently either withdrawn (2) or are no longer expected to be supported by HIF (3). The majority of FF projects are expected to deliver on infrastructure spend by 2025; however, the housing outcomes and impacts from this are expected to be delivered up to and beyond 2040.

At the time of publication of this report, across the 29 FF projects supported by HIF:

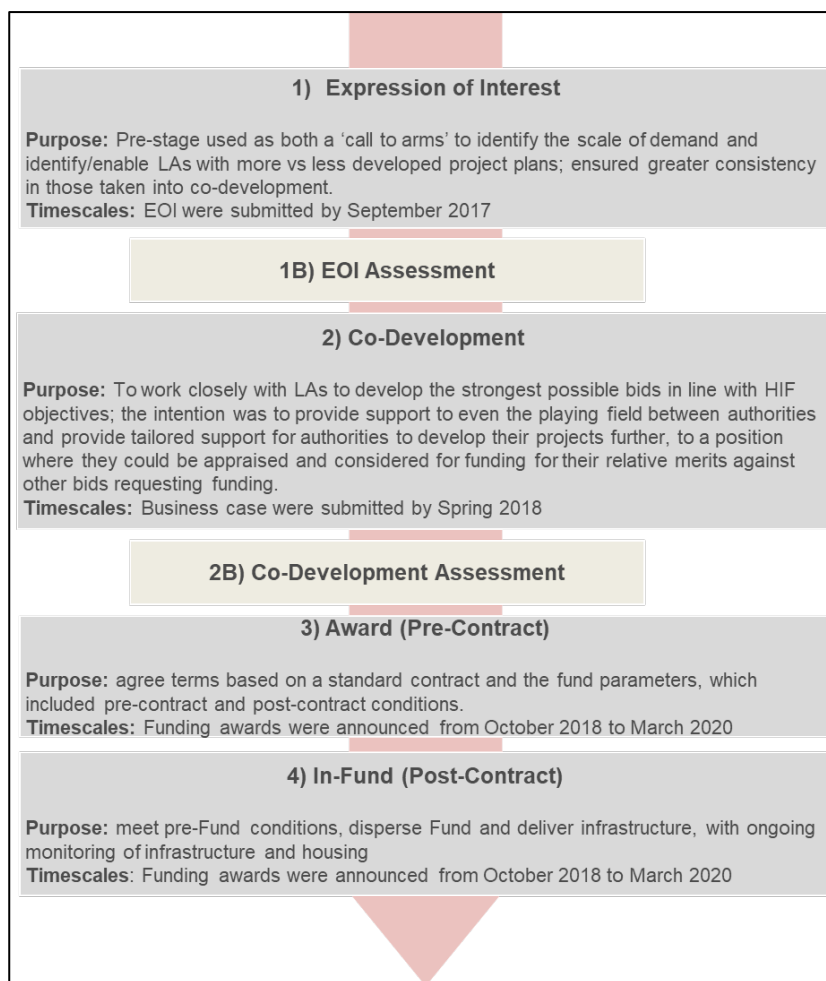
- funding value (outturn prices) ranges from £18.2 million to £280.7 million, with an (mean) average of £109.2m
- the total number of homes anticipated to be unlocked is 203,000 (much lower than the 450,000 outlined in the HIF objectives), ranging from 1,500 to 14,10 per project. The (mean) average was 6,149
- over half (18) of the projects are either in London (3), the South East (9) or South West (6) of England. Five projects are located in the East of England. Five schemes are in the North East (1) or North West (4)

## 2.5. HIF-FF process map

The section below provides detail on the process map designed for the programme during the scoping study. A process map is designed to show the detail of a programme's process end-to-end, including the phases, activities within each phase, key actors and their responsibilities, and specific milestones along this process. For the purposes of this evaluation, the process map covers the initial expression of interest (EOI), the co-development phase and the pre-contract award phase. The in-fund post contract phase is not within the scope of this evaluation and so is not included.

The HIF-FF process map is shown in Figure 2.1, followed by an explanation of the HIF process in more detail. A more comprehensive process map (in Excel) was provided as a separate file to DLUHC for internal use.

**Figure 2.1: HIF-FF Process Map**



## 2.6. Phase 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

The EOI was the first phase of the process and aimed to identify a short-list of potential Local Authorities with housing market failures and strong ideas for infrastructure solutions to overcome them. This shortlist could then be taken into co-development (Phase 2).

### 2.6.1. Phase 1A: EOI

For Phase 1A local authorities were required to submit mini business cases, covering Value for Money, Strategic Value, and Deliverability. As mini business cases, these submissions explained the schemes local authorities were proposing, what market failure would be overcome (i.e., why the funding was needed), how many homes might be supported, how many might be additional, how much funding was required, and how this funding would be used to deliver their plans.

## Phase 1: Expression of Interest

### 1) Expression of interest

**Purpose:** Pre-phase used as both a 'call to arms' to identify the scale of demand and identify/enable local authorities with more vs less developed project plans; ensured greater consistency in those take into co-development.

**Activities:** EOIs were mini business cases outlining their early phase plans, covering value for money, deliverability and strategic cases.

The aim was to understand what they were proposing, why needed/what market failure it will overcome, funding required and how used and plans to deliver.

**Parties involved:** Local authorities, Homes England, DLUHC, IPA and Homes England specialist panel.

The requirements of these mini business cases were co-designed by DLUHC and Homes England (Central HIF team), with other government departments (e.g., DfT) providing guidance on what elements should be included to support the assessment process. Local authorities completed their EOIs in isolation, with no formal support or review by Homes England (HE) or other departments before submission via the HE portal. However, some bidders had informal contact with HE staff, based on pre-existing relationships. The mini business cases were then assessed by a cross-government panel (Phase 1B).

The online bidding form was made available during July 2017, and local authorities were asked to submit their expressions of interest online by the end of September 2017. A guidance document<sup>2</sup> was provided to assist local authorities and give further information about each phase of the online bidding form. The online form included sections on key details of the project, such as financial information, detailed information on the sites and housing, evidence of the strategic approach and deliverability, and information on the plan status of the area where the housing will be built.

### 2.6.2. Phase 1B: EOI Assessment

Once local authorities had submitted their EOIs, they were assessed to determine which proposals were the strongest and best aligned to HIF goals. The strongest bids were then taken into co-development.

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633934/FF\\_Online\\_Form\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633934/FF_Online_Form_Guidance.pdf)

## Phase 1B: EOI Assessment

### 1B) EOI Assessment

EOIs were first reviewed to check they met the minimum criteria then, if passed, went into full assessment using the assessment framework agreed with HMT. The EOI was made up of three cases, with one organisation who led the assessment for each:

-Value for Money - DLUHC

-Strategic - DLUHC

-Deliverability - Homes England with input from IPA and other specialists

Any receiving the minimum required score were taken into co-development, those borderline were interrogated further and too those low rejected.

The assessment process, including the assessment frameworks used, was designed by DLUHC, with support from HE, and agreed with HMT. Bids were first reviewed to ensure they met the minimum criteria, namely by satisfying one of the following requirements:

- The proposed project was for *multiple* infrastructure projects to unlock a *single* housing location
- Or the proposed project was for a *single* infrastructure project to unlock one or more housing locations.

Projects proposing multiple infrastructure locations *and* multiple housing sites were disqualified. Those which passed this initial review were then assessed in full using pre-agreed assessment frameworks for each business case.

The EOI mini business cases included three cases which each had their own weighting, assessment framework and 'owner' leading that section of the assessment:

**Table 2.1: Assessment Criteria and Assessment Leads**

The table below shows the assessment leads and support for each of the assessment criteria for the mini business cases.

Cases	Assessment lead	Support from
Value for money	DLUHC	-
Strategic	DLUHC	-
Deliverability	HE (central HIF team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• IPA</li><li>• Other specialists</li></ul>

In addition to individual cases being marked and scored, HE Area leads assessed a selection of bids and performed due diligence.

The final EOI selection was co-led by the HE Central HIF team and DLUHC. Any bid receiving the minimum required score was taken into co-development, with those with borderline scores being interrogated further.

## 2.7. Phase 2:

Local authorities who were successful at the EOI assessment then took part in the co-development phase. Co-development ultimately aimed to help local authorities develop the strongest possible bids (in line with HIF-FF objectives) for funding consideration. It provided tailored, cross-government support for local authorities to develop their schemes further, including provision of funding for any specialists, assessments or other requirements needed to create the full, detailed business base. This was with the aim of evening the playing field between authorities and creating a level of quality and consistency between bids.

As with EOI, the process map splits co-development into two parts: 2A) Co-development, followed by 2B) Final Bid Assessment.

Overall, 64 full business cases were submitted, with seven local authorities dropping out between the EOI and co-development phases.

### 2.7.1. Phase 2A: Co-development

The ultimate aim of the co-development phase was the submission of a full business case using the five-business case model, which could be used to assess and compare different funding requests.

#### **Phase 2A: Co-development, Final Bid Assessment and Award**

## **2) Co-development**

**Purpose:** To work closely with local authorities to develop the strongest possible bids in line with HIF objectives; the intention was to provide support to even the playing field between authorities and provide tailored support for authorities to develop their projects further, to a position where they could be appraised and considered for funding for their relative merits against other requesting funding.

### **Activities:**

- Inception meetings and ongoing catch ups with HE PMs to monitor progress
- Bid writing and review, with ongoing input from HE PMs, IPA, consultants and DfT area leads
- Funding was available (via application) to pay for economic and technical consultants needed to deliver bid requirements (but not write the bids)
- DLUHC provided Strategic Case Training to local authorities and ongoing troubleshooting support with other departments

**Parties involved:** Local authorities, Homes England (central team and area managers/PMs), DLUHC, IPA, DfT, specialist consultants, other departments as needed.

To this end, DLUHC and Homes England (HE) worked with local authorities in this phase to provide oversight, guidance, troubleshooting, training and other support (including financial) depending upon local authority needs. This included involvement of other government departments (OGDs) who could provide guidance or troubleshooting support on a case-by-case basis.

There were many activities involved in the co-development phase, which was designed to enable local authorities to work on their bids over a period of one or two years. Various government stakeholders were involved in the co-development phase, including DLUHC, DfT, Homes England, IPA and Steer Group (external consultant). However, it primarily involved individual local authorities working directly with their HE area lead and receiving specific strategic input from DLUHC and OGDs.

An **inception meeting** was the first activity to take place for each bid. This was co-led by a DLUHC manager and the relevant HE area lead and attended by the local authority and other relevant parties. The inception meeting clarified aims and expectations of the scheme and developed a plan for how the local authority would develop their bid and the intended timeline. In some areas a combined inception meeting was held with all bids in the same area (e.g., bids across combined authorities) attending at once. After their inception meeting, local authorities focused on writing their bids and continued to have regular catch ups with their area lead who would assess their progress and provide guidance as required. The format and frequency of these catchups varied across the bids, but usually they took place roughly every four to six weeks.

The DLUHC account managers kept abreast of progress but were only involved if **troubleshooting** was needed. For example, they might facilitate a conversation between the local authority and other government departments ((OGDs), e.g., DfT, DfE, DEFRA) in order to resolve an issue arising in relation to a specific bid before submission. OGDs were

therefore involved by supporting the resolution of issues relating to their department's remit e.g., DfT provided advice on specific transport elements within a bid.

IPA were involved throughout the co-development process in an advisory capacity, lending their suggestions and experience to bids relevant to their experience. Other parties involved HE appointing expert consultants who were utilised to provide specific advice to bidders on the development of their economic case, as well as the Homes England Central HIF team who provided a central coordination function for local authority area managers, HE Area leads and the programme overall.

During co-development, local authorities could also apply for distinct funding to procure consultant advice to further support their bid development e.g., commission economic consultants. Local authorities submitted an application for this funding through their HE area lead, and the decision to support (at the requested or a reduced amount) or reject the request was made by the HE Central HIF team.

At the end of co-development, bids were submitted via the HE portal and assessed within one of three 'bidding windows', leading to award decisions being made. Bidding windows were September 2018, December 2018 and March 2019. The majority of bids were submitted and assessed in the final bidding window (five bids were submitted in September, 11 were submitted in December, and over 50 bids were submitted in March).

## 2.7.2. Phase 2B: Final Bid Assessment

Once bids windows closed, DLUHC, HE and OGDs convened to assess the final business cases and determine who would receive HIF funding.

### Phase 2B: Final Bid Assessment and Award

#### **2B) Final Bid Assessment:**

Bids assessed in three 'bidding windows' using an agreed framework (scoring criteria and system). The assessment of each case was led by a specific department:

- Value for Money - DLUHC-led with input from DfT and resource support via Homes Englands Economics Panel

- Deliverability - assessment led by HE and external advisors seconded to the team, with input from IPA

- Strategic - assessment by DLUHC

Assessment proceeded in clear steps: 1) scoring according to framework; 2) creation of assessment report; 3) moderation sessions to review each bid in full; 4) investment panel to agree recommendations; 5) recommendations made to ministers for approval; and 6) HMT approval. Clarifications could be asked at any point in this process.

DLUHC led the design and co-ordination of this assessment, with significant contribution from HE and OGDs and final sign off of the assessment criteria by HMT. The assessment process (repeated for each bidding window) was comprised of six steps:



1. Bids were assessed and scored using a pre-agreed framework covering Value for Money (Economic Case), Strategic Approach (Strategic Case), and Deliverability (Financial, Commercial and Management Cases). This was similar to the EOI but the detail of assessment at this phase was much more significant. Each of the five cases assessed were led by a specific department;

**Table 2.2: Assessment Framework**

Table 2.2 shows the assessment leads and support for each of the assessment criteria within the assessment framework.

Cases	Assessment lead	Support from	
Value for money (Economic case)	DLUHC	-DfT economists -Economic consultants tendered to support assessments	Other departments provided specialist review/challenge function on specific bids as needed
Strategic Approach (Strategic case)	DLUHC	N/A	Other departments provided specialist review/challenge function on specific bids as needed
Deliverability: Financial	HE (central HIF team) with consultancy support	-IPA (second review/challenge function) -DfT (specialist review/challenge function)	Other departments provided specialist review/challenge function on specific bids as needed
Deliverability: Management			
Deliverability: Commercial			

2. On deliverability, these scores were submitted to HE area leads who were responsible for pulling together an 'assessment report' for each bid, which was then re-circulated to the assessment team for review. Deliverability was split into three distinct cases for the final bid assessment phase and given an increased weighting. On the overall outcome of the three assessments, DLUHC pulled together an investment paper for each bid providing a summary of the advice
3. Lead assessors from HE, DLUHC, IPA, DfT, etc. met in a series of 'moderation sessions' or 'panels' to discuss each bid, challenge evidence and analysis, in order to ensure that all available information had been considered in forming the assessment scores. Lead assessors then advised the cross-government 'Investment Panel' for each bid
4. An 'Investment Panel' was held, chaired by an DLUHC Director General or Director, and attended by assessment leads, DLUHC's Investment Sub Committee, the IPA, DfT, HMT, and OGDs where necessary, to determine the funding recommendation to

ministers. HMT was involved in this phase to understand the recommendation ahead of ministerial approval

5. Recommendations for each bid were submitted to DLUHC ministers for approval
6. Once approved by DLUHC, HMT approval (from the Chancellor) was then sought, and awards announced.

During the assessment phase, clarifications were asked of local authorities. This could happen at any point of this process, including via the Homes England online portal, direct email or by the department asking. Local authorities could therefore receive clarification requests from multiple sources in parallel or at different times, with allocated windows to respond to each based on departmental deadlines.

## 2.8. Phase 3: Award (Pre-Contract)

Once awards were confirmed and announced, DLUHC and HE then proceeded to get all successful bids into contract in order for funding to be able to be drawn down at Phase 4. The HE Central HIF Team led the overall process, with HE transaction managers working with local authorities to agree the relevant requirements. Thirty-four bids were awarded funding, with 32 accepting the funding.

### Phase 3: Award (Pre-Contract)

#### **3) Award (Pre-contract)**

Purpose: agree terms based on a standard contract and the fund parameters, which included pre-contract and post-contract conditions.

#### **Activities:**

- LAs receive offer with conditions - both pre-contract and pre-funding conditions (agreed by the Investment Panel as part of the funding approval)
- Develop conditions and bespoke contract based on standard Heads of Terms
- Finalise contract via negotiation with conditions as proposed or amended
- LAs work to meet pre-contract conditions
- Once met, contract signed

**Parties involved:** Local authorities and Home England (central team and dedicated transactional manager) and their legal teams, potential support IPA, DfT and other departments as needed to help troubleshoot with conditions.

Local authorities initially received an offer with both pre-contract conditions (those to be met before contract is signed) and pre-fund conditions (those to be met before drawdown commences). Conditions were typically agreed by the Moderation and Investment Panels as part of the bid assessment. Local authorities were able to negotiate the conditions and detail within the contract with HE as part of this phase, with the support of their respective legal teams. Once conditions were agreed, the respective lawyers created and agreed the Heads of Terms (HoT) and then moved to creating the final contract.

Local authorities were required to meet all pre-contract conditions before the contract could be signed. Conditions were wide-ranging and dependent on the type of infrastructure proposed, any concerns about the proposed project identified during the assessments, and with an overall aim of ensuring project deliverability before getting under contract. This was to help ensure schemes could progress with funding commitments from HIF whilst mitigating for risks identified by funding that project. For example, some local authorities were asked to demonstrate evidence of local commitment to their scheme, whilst others had to provide further evidence and information of the safety impacts of their proposed infrastructure. During this process, OGDs such as DfT and IPA continued to provide support to help local authorities understand how to meet these conditions and overcome any barriers in doing so. Once the conditions were met and approved, the contract is finalised and signed by all parties to officially commit funding.

## 2.9. Changes to the original process map

The following chapters cover the phases of the HIF-FF process in turn. They explore how the process operated in practice and highlight any changes from the intended process. The conclusions and recommendations chapter includes a summary of required updates to the process map.

### 3. Expression of Interest phase

**Strengths: Understanding of the EOI requirement and assessment criteria; support provided by Homes England; experience of submitting an EOI**

- Local authorities said they were clear on the EOI requirements for the HIF-FF and how their EOI would be assessed
- Those who approached Homes England for support were generally positive about the help they received
- Experiences of submitting an EOI were generally positive with local authorities reporting no major problems with the online form

**Weaknesses: Understanding of the aims and objectives of the HIF-FF; communication with DLUHC; EOI deadline and assessment criteria**

- Lack of clarity about the scope and objectives for the HIF-FF led some local authorities to be confused about what they should include in their EOI
- There were also frustrations about delays in receiving clear responses to queries raised (attributed by some respondents to a lack of communication between DLUHC, HE and local authorities)
- Several interviewees noted that cost assumptions were optimistic and land uplift values favoured bids in certain areas
- Government stakeholders questioned whether the structured, time bound approach taken led to the best possible projects being taken forward.

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the HIF-FF EOI phase, including understanding of the Fund aims and objectives, experiences of submitting an EOI, views on the assessment and of the speed and timing of the decision.

#### 3.2. Overview of the delivery of the EOI phase

The EOI was the first phase of the process and aimed to identify a short-list of potential local authorities with housing market failures and strong ideas for infrastructure solutions to overcome them. This shortlist could then be taken into co-development (Phase 2).

This phase of the funding process was broadly delivered as intended in the original process map and described above in Chapter 2. There were two key exceptions:

The original process map stated that *“LAs completed their EOIs in isolation – no support or review from HE or others”*. In practice, local authorities welcomed and valued support and input from HE during this phase. This focused on clarifying the EOI requirements

- After the EOI phase, the overall funding level for the HIF-FF and the timescales changed, allowing a longer period for delivery.

### 3.3. Understanding of HIF-FF

Overall, bidders felt that the requirements were clear, and the focus on infrastructure provision to unlock sites and deliver housing was well-understood. The majority of local authorities were aware of the minimum requirements to be eligible for consideration for the intervention (23 survey respondents said they were aware of these, as did the majority of qualitative interviewees).

*“The requirements were clear, and we understood what we needed to do.”*

#### **Interview with local authority**

However, there were some respondents who were not aware of the minimum requirements, as well as a small number who had not interpreted them correctly.

Overall, the HIF-FF fund was welcomed, as large-scale funding to unlock sites was ‘not often available’. Bids varied in size and scope, as well as in the type of interventions they were seeking to fund. Examples included:

- Delivery of over 4,800 homes through three highway interventions, with segregated pedestrian and cycleways
- Major infrastructure to support town growth, including ring roads, schools, waste sites, cycling provision, and an upgrade to the electrical grid – with over 10,000 new housing units to be delivered (direct and indirect)
- A distributor road to facilitate housing provision at three development sites, to unlock over 2000 new homes and alleviate congestion in the town centre
- A motorway junction and additional works to unlock sites with over 9,000 new units
- Strategic highway works, new spine routes, rail tunnel, canal bridge, strategic utilities, new schools and additional General Practitioner provision.

For a number of local authority areas, the funding came at a fortuitous time. Respondents commented that there was a *“good alignment with what we wanted to do”*, and that the funding was a *“good fit for unlocking [long-standing] development issues”*.

The small number of respondents who said that, in retrospect, they were unclear about the requirements reported that this lack of clarity did not become apparent to them until further on in the process, including after EOI submission. These respondents said that they had misunderstood the objectives of the intervention and that this impacted how they approached their submissions. Specifically, some local authorities assumed that the scope of the intervention was much broader than its stated intention of providing infrastructure to unlock housing development; and so their submissions covered wider objectives such as improving communities, creating sustainable communities, and improving quality of life and green spaces. However, other respondents commented that the key aim of unlocking sites to provide additional housing units was clear. In other cases, bids were led by transport teams who were not always familiar with housing issues, or the approaches taken by housing funders.

Several respondents commented on timescales, with the majority feeling that the HIF-FF deadlines for delivery (and spend) were unrealistic from the start. Local authorities adopted different approaches to developing EOIs/bids: some aimed to use the intervention

to deliver existing infrastructure plans and suggested that existing plans could have been used in place of the EOI stage as evidence of planned activity. Some respondents commented on the difficulty in identifying appropriate projects, i.e., those with housing provision in the pipeline, but not yet approved; or infrastructure projects which were viable but not confirmed.

*"It is a paradox... it had to be developed enough to be deemed viable, but not developed too much that it was seen as not needed."*

#### **Interview with local authority**

Some stakeholders felt that this allowed some ambiguity around the types of proposals which were put forward:

*"It left the door open for bids for infrastructure where the money hadn't been secured yet and it was uncertain and ambiguous where the money was going to come... from."*

#### **Interview with local authority**

Some local authorities and government representatives felt there would have been benefit in providing additional information before local authorities started to develop their EOI submissions, including more, or clearer, information on the aims and objectives of the HIFF in the guidance document<sup>3</sup>.

*"Everyone would have been clearer and on the right foot from the start. The [guidance document] needed to be a lot clearer."*

#### **Interview with local authority**

There were also suggestions for a more defined engagement phase to be put in place before local authorities start to prepare their EOIs, to ensure they were clear on what was needed. This could include structured workshops to explain the objectives of the fund and process in more detail, or opening channels of communication with Homes England and DLUHC earlier.

*"A pre-engagement phase... It would've meant we would have narrowed down what we did and focused it a bit more".*

#### **Interview with local authority**

### **3.4. Developing and submitting an EOI**

Both local authorities and government stakeholders were generally positive about the approach taken at the EOI phase, which was seen as being fit-for-purpose, proportionate and an appropriate format for the first phase of the process.

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<sup>3</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633934/FF\\_Online\\_Form\\_Guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633934/FF_Online_Form_Guidance.pdf)

*"They [local authorities] didn't have to commit vast resources which they probably haven't got to prepare a bid that they didn't know if it was going to be successful."*

### **Interview with government stakeholder**

Most local authorities felt that the EOI requirements aligned well with the intended objectives of the HIF-FF and allowed them to test the strength of their proposed plans before having to develop a full business case, which would be costly in terms of time and money.

Some participants reported some confusion about what content should be covered in the EOI, and how it would be assessed. However, most respondents felt the criteria were clear. Most local authorities were also familiar with the five-business case model, with only one respondent saying they had never heard of it and only two saying they were unfamiliar with it.

Some local authorities also said that working to a deadline gave them the motivation and focus needed to bring together the range of parties involved to develop a submission (for example, both transport and housing teams). Most local authorities described their project plan as "somewhat developed" when they began this phase, with only four local authorities saying it was "fairly well developed" and five saying it was "not developed at all."

Most local authorities reported that bringing the information required for the EOI together was reasonably straightforward: respondents said that it felt very similar to other EOI submission processes they had taken part in, including for transport schemes submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). Those that reported negative experiences of compiling information attributed this to not being clear on the specific information they would need to include in the EOI/bid, such as the range of regulations and policy areas covered. These local authorities said they would have benefited from more information and guidance on the detail of bids to ensure they covered the correct areas.

EOI development typically involved a range of teams within the local authority. Most commonly this included local authority transport planning teams, with economic development and planning, finance, construction management, education, housing growth and regeneration also involved in some cases. Most local authorities also reported accessing support from outside their local authority during the EOI phase, with the most common support being around engineering and project management, delivery costs and cost analysis, and transport and connectivity strategy.

While the deadline created the impetus needed in some local authorities to bring parties together, some commented on the challenges and costs involved in doing so. The fees paid to external consultants was noted as a particular issue, especially by local authorities who felt unclear about what they needed to do.

*"This became a very expensive area for external consultancy to support, and even they weren't sure what was expected from DLUHC."*

### **Interview with local authority**

Local authorities also had mixed views on the process for submitting the EOI, with just under half of those surveyed agreeing that the process was simple. In the qualitative

interviews, those who said they had experienced issues with submitting the EOI struggled with the formatting of the form, describing this as not being user friendly.

Overall, respondents felt that the EOI stage helped to weed out speculative bids, although there was less agreement on whether or not it identified the strongest prospective projects. Local authorities who submitted multiple bids described challenges ranking their bids in terms of strength, as they differed greatly by location, scale and range of potential impacts.

Respondents also noted challenges around applying for funding before the planning status or conditions for individual sites were known. Some local authorities also submitted bids which they knew would take longer than the planned period to deliver, on the assumption that timescales would have to be extended to allow for delays in planning and construction.

### 3.5. Support and guidance to submit an EOI

Although a small number were unaware that the programme guidance existed, the majority of local authority survey respondents agreed that there was sufficient support and guidance available for developing and submitting an EOI. Several local authorities praised the level of support provided by Homes England (HE) at this phase, describing them as being eager, willing, and helpful. Those who had contacted HE said they were given a dedicated contact who met with them regularly and provided updated FAQs throughout.

*“Awesome moral support...they were very keen to work with us.”*

#### **Interview with local authority**

However, some local authorities reported that HE were not always able to provide clarity or to answer specific questions put forward by local authorities, in part because the guidance and processes for the HIF-FF were not fully developed by the time work on the EOI bids had begun.

There were also some local authorities who expressed frustration at the delays caused when HE needed to contact DLUHC for answers to specific questions. This approach, they felt, was unnecessarily complicated and introduced the scope for mistakes and misinterpretations. These local authorities said they would have liked to have had a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to, or instead of, their contact at HE. In addition, there was no formal mechanism for sharing queries raised, and the answers, across areas and potential bidders.

Local authorities who did not access support or guidance from HE said they either did not need help at this phase, or that they were unaware that support was available until they reached the co-development phase. A small number of respondents were not aware that guidance existed; this may be because it was not widely shared within Local Authorities.

Some government stakeholders felt that the guidance for intervention was not detailed enough given the complexities of some of the infrastructure projects. One felt that government bodies were not well-prepared enough before EOIs and bids were received, and that the details of what would be appraised were unclear. Another felt that the focus on land uplift values was inappropriate for some sites (e.g., urban sites, or those in certain regions).



*“[HIF needed] far more comprehensive guidance and it needed to have a weighting to the value for money for urban space, to understand urban space; you don’t get as good value for money because it costs a lot more to put the infrastructure in”.*

**Interview with local authority**

### 3.6. Identifying the strongest bids to move to co-development

Government stakeholders were positive about the assessment of EOI bids, reporting that it was a collaborative and cross-governmental process.

Most government stakeholders felt that the EOI phase fulfilled its purpose of weeding out less developed or speculative schemes before the co-development phase. Some though did raise questions about whether the approach taken led to the schemes with the best potential being taken forward. In particular, the impact of the short deadline for EOIs potentially led to rushed bids being submitted because the local authorities did not have enough time to fully think through their plans. This, stakeholders felt, potentially impacted on the viability of the schemes put forward, particularly in how they were costed.

*“What you gain from competitiveness and speed, you can lose in quality, because you have a deadline. And that deadline, if there’s no likelihood of the programme being repeated, then it encourages immature bids to be put forward.”*

**Interview with government stakeholder**

It may therefore also have had an effect on Fund outcomes, as the schemes which did progress further may not have been the schemes which would have made the greatest contribution to meeting scheme objectives. Some stakeholders felt the approach taken in the EOI phase had effectively made this phase a test, and that local authorities’ ability to meet the deadline and their understanding of the question wording on the form determined which schemes progressed to the next phase. The potential consequence of this was that weak EOIs were submitted for schemes with strong potential and strong EOIs were submitted for weaker schemes.

*“Some schemes with good potential didn’t make the cut, because they essentially didn’t read the exam question right and fill the form in appropriately and yet might have might have ended up as really good schemes.”*

**Interview with government stakeholder**

When local authorities submitted multiple bids, some were surprised by which bids had been successful, as they felt that other bids were stronger submissions.

Respondents also mentioned a number of specific issues with the EOI phase assessment criteria:

1. The assessment criteria potentially favoured bids in some regions over others. Some government stakeholders noted that the land value uplift assessment meant that some

potentially strong schemes did not make it to the next phase because the land value uplift was not as strong as in other areas. This was discussed as a 'North' and 'South' problem which put some schemes in the North at a disadvantage.

*"The way Green Book was interpreted for HIF was not helpful for places in need of levelling up and regeneration because it is all based on land values and places in the North... [the] land value uplift you are going to get is not as strong."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

2. Linked to this, some government stakeholders felt that the weighting of different elements at the EOI phase placed too much emphasis on value for money (VfM) calculations for projects and bids that were not yet fully developed, and where anticipated costs and returns were not necessarily clear enough for an accurate VfM assessment. This was felt to be particularly problematic at the EOI phase as financial calculations were often made at a relatively early stage, with significant uncertainty, which may have unfairly disadvantaged some bids.

*"...the work on which they're based is also potentially immature, and therefore, things like the costs involved can be underestimated substantially."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

3. While the EOI assessment criteria were seen as consistently applied, some government stakeholders felt that 'ranking' schemes (assessing whether one scheme was more deliverable than another) was difficult to do in practice. They felt it would have been easier and more helpful to have used a pass or fail approach, rather than measuring schemes against each other. This view was also expressed by some local authorities, who felt they would have had more clarity about the strength of their bid and what they needed to submit with a pass or fail approach.

*"It is either deliverable in the timescale or isn't so to weight things on how deliverable they are is not helpful."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

4. Some respondents felt that the assessment criteria encouraged schemes that emphasised road building rather than sustainable transport solutions. One government stakeholder commented that encouraging housing schemes that will lead to car-dependent households was, or should be, at odds with the wider government policy to move to towards sustainable transport.

*"It seems odd that a fund to encourage housing didn't think about through what modes of transport that housing would be served and completely encouraged car dependent housing."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

Overall, the majority of local authority survey respondents agreed that the assessment criteria for the EOI phase were clear. In the qualitative interviews, most local authorities echoed this, and many felt that the approach taken did select the best projects to take through to the next phase. One stakeholder commented that the shortlist of projects following the EOI stage was too long, and meant that the following stages required significant resource, including for projects that were unlikely to be funded. Overall, local authorities were more positive about the assessment criteria than government stakeholders. Issues raised included the tight bidding window, meaning some local authorities submitted 'immature bids'; and some local authorities felt that demonstrating the need for funding should have been enough to meet the EOI criteria.

*"The focus should have been on the need and viability, so showing the market failure should have been enough."*

#### **Interview with local authority**

### **3.7. Speed/timing of EOI decision**

The majority of survey respondents said that the speed and timing of the feedback of the EOI outcome was as they expected. In the qualitative interviews, most local authorities reported that while it took up to a few months to receive an outcome decision, this was in line with their experiences on other funding projects.

Similarly, government stakeholders felt that the speed and timing for the EOI assessments and outcomes was about right. Some suggested that this wait was beneficial for local authorities as they could reflect on their EOI submission and start thinking about the next phase.

*"It gave enough time for consideration and enough time for LAs, once they put the EOI in, to have a reflection back on what they had done. Some of the better authorities said we put this in the EOI but have thought about it and maybe we want to tweak this and that was helpful."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

Government stakeholders reflected that it took longer than intended to make the decision about EOI success and inform local authorities. Some government stakeholders were also aware that it could affect the interest of local authorities in the HIF-FF, and the viability and feasibility of their projects. No local authority responded that the EOI outcome was received quicker than they had expected, but almost a third said that it took longer or much longer than expected. Although the wait did not affect the level of interest in the intervention for the majority of local authorities, some did report that the speed or timing of

the EOI outcome affected the viability or feasibility of the proposed project. In the qualitative interviews, some local authorities said that the length of the process had a serious impact on the projects they had put forward due to issues such as increases in costs.

EOI outcome did not seem to affect views on feedback received, with half of both successful and unsuccessful local authorities saying that the feedback they received was helpful. However, in the qualitative interviews, some local authorities who were unsuccessful said that they do not recall receiving any feedback beyond the EOI outcome.

*“Very basic letter...stating you didn’t perform well against other bids and so hadn’t been successful.”*

#### **Interview with local authority**

Local authorities who were successful at EOI phase also reported receiving limited feedback at this phase, with outcome letters focused on the next steps for the co-development phase rather than outlining why their EOI had been successful. However, they did not generally express a need or wish for additional information at this point.

*“Feedback was short and sweet but positive and gave us encouragement to move onto the next phase.”*

#### **Interview with local authority**

### **3.8. Improving the EOI phase**

Both government stakeholders and local authorities suggested potential alternative approaches, including a continuous market engagement (CME) approach, which provided more time and support to bidders, and which may have resulted in stronger projects. A CME approach would have enabled local authorities to access funding on a continuous basis for as long as funding remained available, and discouraged applicants from submitting a weak bid because they did not have the time needed to develop it properly.

*“An alternative way, which would have worked in slower time, would be continuous market engagement, where if an authority expresses an interest, you work with them until the bid is sufficiently well developed, that it passes a set criteria for value for money, and then they get awarded.”*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

Some local authorities suggested they would have benefitted from being able to choose a funding window to work towards, and from having a closer relationship with DLUHC from the start.

### **3.9. Summary**

To conclude, the participants were positive about the EOI phase and felt it worked well overall. However, local authority and government stakeholders did suggest improvements for future HIF-FF bidding processes. Firstly, allowing a pre-engagement phase for potential bidders to develop relationships with HE and DLUHC would have provided more support

to local authorities to help ensure that the quality of EOI bids more closely mirrored the quality of the schemes. Second, ensuring that local authorities were aware of the guidance and support available, including the resource support available, would have encouraged additional engagement. Third, a quicker and smoother process for responding to local authorities' questions and sharing the responses among all potential bidders would have prevented duplication of queries. Equally, providing a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to the Homes England contact, may have enabled quicker responses. Lastly, allowing a longer timescale for bid submission that involved more staged deadlines, both for local authorities and government stakeholders, or potentially incorporating a CME approach, could have made the process more efficient.

## 4. Co-development phase

### **Strengths: Variety of support available**

- Local authorities found the inception meeting, co-development funding and support from external consultants all useful forms of support during the co-development phase
- Government stakeholders were generally positive about joint working between agencies
- Local authorities reported that Homes England and other government stakeholders were enthusiastic and encouraging in supporting them to develop their bids
- Local authorities could access additional co-development funding to pay for external expertise and consultancy, which was considered invaluable, given limited internal resource and expertise
- Local authorities saw the final business case assessment process as a constructive and "joined up" process

### **Weaknesses: Additional costs; Not communicating ad-hoc queries to all parties**

- External consultants were in demand from multiple bidders and had limited time to support them
- Local authorities were concerned about incurring costs for bids that were not then funded. Engagement with support was patchy
- Homes England clarified queries about schemes and the HIF-FF for the consultants, but responses were not automatically shared with all bidders, which could have reduced delays/duplication
- Local authorities would have welcomed a lighter touch approach for smaller projects
- Some local authorities also felt the assessment criteria could be clearer

### 4.1. Introduction

The co-development phase was a collaborative six-month period where local authorities could use support and advice from Homes England, government departments, and external consultants, to develop the strongest possible bids, aligned to the HIF-FF objectives. This chapter outlines the stages in this phase and provides local authority and stakeholder views on the process.

## 4.2. Overview

After the initial Expression of Interest (EOI) phase, viable bids went on to the co-development phase. This phase was a crucial element of the intervention, providing support and funding to help local authorities develop their bids more fully.

The co-development phase aimed to help all local authorities develop the strongest possible proposals, aligned to the HIF-FF objectives, to ensure the strongest projects went on to be funded. This pre-award activity involved local authorities working directly with Homes England, as well as receiving strategic input from DLUHC and other government departments (depending on the specifics of their bid). Local authorities could also apply for distinct funding during this phase to procure consultant advice to further support their bid development.

At the end of co-development, bids were submitted and assessed, leading to award decisions being made. Two-thirds of local authority survey respondents were successful at the Expression of Interest phase and continued to the co-development phase.

The activities during the co-development phase included:

- Inception meetings and ongoing catch ups with Homes England Area Managers to monitor progress
- Bid writing and review, with ongoing input from Homes England Area Managers, IPA consultants and DfT area leads
- Funding was available (via application) to pay for economic and technical consultants needed to deliver to bid requirements (but not write the bids)
- DLUHC provided Strategic Case Training to local authorities and ongoing troubleshooting support with other Departments.

The parties involved in this phase included: local authorities, Homes England (central team and area managers/PMs), DLUHC, IPA, DfT, specialist consultants, and other departments as needed.

The criteria used to assess the final bids were as follows:

**Value for money (Weighting: 50%):** The aim of this criterion was to find the best value for money schemes, and ensure schemes provided a greater total net benefit than cost. Bids had to provide a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), which quantified the benefits from homes being built, and compared these to the costs to the Government. Calculating the benefits was carried out in two steps:

- Using land value uplift to quantify the benefits of a proposal. This measures the difference of value from the land's current use to when it is used for housing
- Working out what proportion of the housing was likely to be additional, and what proportion of the housing would have been built regardless of the proposal

Calculating the costs was done by taking into account the total amount of funding being provided by central Government. To assist local authorities with this part of the process, DLUHC provided a 'Ready Reckoner' online tool to help in calculating value for money.

Value for money assessment was led by DLUHC, with support from DfT economists and external economic consultants.

**Strategic (Weighting: 20%):** The aim of this criterion was to ensure HIF-FF funded schemes which took a strategic approach. Bids needed to:

- Demonstrate strong local leadership, by making more land available for housing, effectively joint working between authorities, and delivering new homes
- Provide a clear evidence-base that the infrastructure would unlock new homes, taking into account local housing markets and potential opportunities and constraints
- Diversify the housebuilding market, for example by encouraging new market entrants and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) builders to deliver housing.

Local authorities were also encouraged to set out their approach to joint working and submit joint bids, with one local authority identified as the lead bidder.

The assessment for this criterion was led by DLUHC.

**Deliverability (Weighting: 30%):** These criteria asked local authorities to provide evidence of their delivery plans for the project. The evidence required was:

- A clear plan to deliver the infrastructure
- A clear link between the provision of the infrastructure and the delivery of the homes
- Key delivery partners working together effectively.

Specific measures of deliverability included: key milestones, progress made to date, planning status, land ownership, the nature of the local housing market and an understanding of potential key risks and their mitigations.

The deliverability assessment was led by the HE central HIF team with consultancy support, and additional support from IPA and DfT.

### 4.3. Value of the co-development phase

There was a variety of support available for local authorities during the co-development phase. This included:

- Inception meetings with the Homes England Area Lead and DLUHC
- Regular progress meetings with Homes England



- Access to troubleshooting / support
- Access to external consultants (in some cases, funded by the HIF-FF)
- Access to support from government officials
- Co-development funding.

This chapter considers each element in turn, and then considers wider issues raised by respondents.

#### 4.3.1. **Inception meeting with the Homes England Area Lead and DLUHC**

Almost all local authority survey participants had engaged in an inception meeting with the Homes England Area Lead and DLUHC at the beginning of the co-development phase.

*“It was good to get an initial overview of what a scheme was and for us to set out, this is what co-development is going to look like and what we will be looking for from proposals ... It was hard work and a lot to do but definitely worth it”.*

##### **Interview with government stakeholder**

All local authority survey participants who attended stated that they had found this meeting useful. In the interviews, local authorities mentioned that the inception meeting offered benefits such as face to face contact at the beginning of the process, which created a joint sense of responsibility with Homes England, allowed them to each set expectations, and provided opportunities to discuss areas that local authorities did not have expertise in. Local authorities also found the participants to be enthusiastic and encouraging about the work ahead.

*“I think they did well in setting the groundwork to give us encouragement and enthusiasm around the work we needed to do, but that they would be alongside us to do that work”.*

##### **Interview with local authority**

#### 4.3.2. **Regular progress meetings with Homes England**

Three-quarters of local authority respondents attended regular progress meetings with Homes England, and generally found these meetings useful. Nearly all government stakeholders felt that the regular progress meetings were also a useful form of support for local authorities.

One local authority stated that Homes England was very *“eager, willing and helpful”* in that they took away their questions and provided answers, regularly attended meetings and were *“awesome moral support... They were very keen to work with us”*. Another felt that it was useful for all parties involved to have specialists in the room, such as a Transport lead, to provide clarification on specific issues.

However, some local authorities felt that Homes England was not always able to answer specific queries, and there were then delays when liaising with DLUHC to provide responses; so while Homes England provided support, they were not always able to provide detailed information quickly. Government stakeholders suggested that this was initially due to limited staffing resource within Homes England for the HIF-FF. Local authorities also reported that it was sometimes difficult to identify who the right person was to talk to about their queries. In addition, local authorities noted that there was no mechanism for sharing responses to queries with all potential bidders, and it would have been beneficial to include answers in continually updated information packs which all bidders could access, thereby reducing potential duplication of effort and delays in receiving an answer to queries.

Overall, just over half of local authorities were satisfied with the frequency of contact and the quality of support provided by the Homes England Area Manager.

#### **4.3.3. Access to troubleshooting / support**

One-quarter of local authority respondents used the access to troubleshooting / support, and almost all of these found it useful. However, the best point of contact was sometimes unclear (depending on the query). Government stakeholders commented that engagement with support was patchy, and that there was a qualitative difference in bids from different local authorities, with some being led by much more experienced staff, who were more familiar with bidding processes and had a good understanding of what was required from funds such as the HIF-FF, and others with relatively inexperienced teams.

The financial support for external support and advice was particularly beneficial for local authorities, as developing detailed bids required significant staff time and expert input, some of which was not available in-house. One government stakeholder highlighted that local authorities had different levels of understanding of what was required to complete the bid, and it was important for them to use the support available, and the advice provided, to write the best bids possible.

*“Engagement in the co-development period was patchy... It was up to the authorities how much support and assistance they chose to receive. And so, the engagement very much was responsive to that or reactive to that - if they wanted help they got it”.*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

One government stakeholder commented that some local authorities were unfamiliar with the Green Book<sup>4</sup>, which provides appraisal and evaluation guidance, and so struggled to apply the principles to their bids. Another noted that Homes England staff received training on the Green Book, so that they were able to offer guidance and advice to local authorities if needed.

#### **4.3.4. Access to external consultants**

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<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1063330/Green\\_Book\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063330/Green_Book_2022.pdf)

Just over half of local authority survey participants accessed support from external consultants, and three-quarters of these found it useful. There was a strong view from local authorities that their bid submissions would not have happened without the support of external consultants, as internal resource or expertise was limited.

Some local authorities relied heavily on external consultants to support them throughout the co-development phase. They used a variety of consultancy support, from developing the economic case for the bid to support in writing the bid itself (the latter was not covered by the HIF-FF funding). Local authorities most often used engineering and project management consultancy support from agencies such as Arcadis, Atkins Consultancy, Mott MacDonald, and SYSTRA. Transport and connectivity strategy, economic development, and regeneration consultancy support were also often used to develop bids.

Local authorities quoted costs of around £400,000 - £500,000 for external consultancy, some of which was covered by Homes England (as explained in section 4.3.6 below). The local authorities who used external consultancy felt that this support was necessary, but the additional costs were expensive to develop a bid that might not be contracted. The same consultants were also often in demand from multiple local authorities. In addition, external consultants also needed to query and liaise with Homes England for specific technical questions, suggesting that the original guidance could have been more comprehensive; or that the details of the fund had not been established at an early enough stage.

One government stakeholder commented in an interview that consultants “*were pushed to deliver quite a lot in a short amount of time*” but added a lot of value to the assessments due to their technical expertise and ability to work on the bid when local authorities did not have the capacity.

*“[They] did a really good job. They did what they said they were going to do, good quality and on time. They liaised very closely with DfT [economists].”*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

One local authority emphasised this value in an interview, stating that external consultants acted as a “*critical friend*”, who could stress test the bid. However, some local authorities commented that more regular, shorter meetings with consultants would have been more beneficial than infrequent, longer meetings. This structure for using consultants could be advised in future funding processes.

#### **4.3.5. Access to support from government officials**

Government stakeholders were available to support local authorities with their bids. Only two local authority survey respondents used this support. Some local authorities felt that it was collaborative and encouraging, but not direct support in practice. Conversely, some government stakeholders felt that local authorities did not fully use the support available and did not always follow the advice given. This suggests a potential communication issue between the two parties that could be improved upon.

Having a stricter EOI stage to reduce the number of bids at co-development stage might have enabled government stakeholders to work more closely with local authorities, offering

more support and encouraging them to submit bids earlier and make use of the multiple bidding windows.

#### 4.3.6. Co-development funding

Local authorities were able to apply for up to £500k in funding to pay for expert advice/ consultancy to support bid development. Half of local authority survey respondents accessed additional co-development funding and they generally found it easy to apply for. Interviews suggest that the funding received did not cover the total cost and local authorities had to find internal funding for part of this, despite the uncertainty of securing the HIF-FF funding. However, the availability of co-development funding was undoubtedly useful and contributed to comprehensive and higher-quality bids.

#### 4.3.7. Overall experiences of the co-development phase

Overall, local authorities found the co-development phase to be very useful in identifying opportunities to develop the project bid further. Half respondents felt that the co-development phase was rigorous and robust, identified additional risks to be considered, and also identified the strongest bids to take forward. Almost half of the local authority survey respondents felt that the co-development phase provided the support required to submit the best bid possible and enabled all local authorities to feel supported. Just over one third felt that the support was tailored to each local authority.

*“I think that side of it worked well... Everyone was working for the one cause. It did feel like it was one the project team”.*

#### Interview with local authority

However, some respondents felt that, although there was joint working on bids, this did not go as far as true co-development. Rather, consultants and government bodies were used as sounding boards or for the provision of information, and local authorities responded to government requirements rather than necessarily co-developing their bids. One local authority, which already had multi-disciplinary teams in place, commented that without existing relationship co-development would have been daunting and very challenging.

### 4.4. Completing the final business case

Most local authorities involved in the co-development phase agreed that the requirements for the final business case were clear to them and that there was sufficient support and guidance available for completing the final business case. However, some local authorities mentioned gaps in their understanding of the difference between a full business case and a ‘*strategic business case*’; one respondent commented that they initially thought the latter would be less detailed but in reality, it was a very detailed, full business case.

Only one third of local authority survey respondents found it easy to bring together all the information needed for the final business case. Again, one third found the process simple when submitting the final business case. Interview feedback suggested that removing duplication of information in the application would have helped to make the process more efficient.

*"I can't remember how many pages of stuff we did but it was a phenomenal amount of pages. We did it all because that was what was expected of us but if you're looking at ways to improve then it would be to look at all the information required, and you could probably cut out huge amounts of duplication."*

### Interview with local authority

Just over half of local authorities felt that their bid was completely ready for submission after the co-development phase, and one-quarter that it was mostly ready. Only one local authority did not feel that the bid was ready, but they needed to submit it. Three-quarters of local authority survey respondents were satisfied with the multiple bidding windows provided, but some were concerned that they needed to submit the bid *"before the money ran out"* (**interview with local authority**). Despite this, most bids were submitted in the final bidding window.

Once submitted, over half of the local authority survey respondents received five or more clarification questions from the assessors (and some reported receiving many more). Almost half of local authorities were satisfied with the clarification questions process, but some commented that it was more resource intensive than expected.

## 4.5. Final business case assessment and bid selection

### 4.5.1. Assessment criteria

Most local authorities agreed that the assessment criteria for the final business case were clear. The common assessment framework was found to be valuable and technically challenging, by both government stakeholders and bidders, but in some cases, it could have been *"more proportionate"*. Some respondents would have welcomed a lighter-touch approach for smaller bids. For example, a bid for £50m had an extensive transport assessment *"in a similar level of detail to a much bigger bid"*.

### 4.5.2. Assessment process

Most government stakeholders felt that the cross departmental investment panels were a *"pretty constructive and joined up process"* and that everyone joined these meetings well prepared. Most also felt that the meetings were well chaired and different views were heard. Most government stakeholders also felt that it was a very useful way of identifying the strongest bids, with most local authorities also agreeing.

Government stakeholders generally felt that the joint investment panel set up for the HIF, comprised of HMT, IPA, Number 10, DfT, Homes England and DLUHC worked well. The policy team in DLUHC were seen as doing a really good job of bringing the key players in various government departments together *"to approve the bids in one single go"*.

Both government stakeholders and local authorities felt that the appraisal process was a real strength in revealing bid shortcomings across all areas. It was seen as fit for purpose and delivered on its intended objectives, *"to identify the strengths and weaknesses of bids in respect to their strategic fit, deliverability, and value for money"*. One government stakeholder stated specifically that the scoring requirements for the business case were very clear:

*“They had a defined measure, which was transparent”.*

### **Interview with government stakeholder**

However, over one-third of local authorities disagreed that bringing together the information for the final business case was easy and felt that the process for submitting the final business case wasn't all that simple.

*“There was lots of information needed and in too short a time – there wasn't enough time to put together a good bid unless you had all of the information already together”.*

### **Interview with local authority**

When probed further in qualitative interviews, respondents provided a range of reasons. One government stakeholder mentioned a 'divide' between DLUHC and Homes England, suggesting the process was not entirely seamless, and that there were differences between how different government agencies were working. A minority view, shared by a few local authorities, was that some of the assessment questions were repeated, which undermined the review of the final bid.

Some government stakeholders felt that there was too much focus on the benefit/cost ratio as part of the value for money assessment. Some local authorities felt that the Investment Panel was an *“all or nothing decision”*, so if part of a bid wasn't up to scratch, then the whole bid was rejected. It was suggested that a more nuanced view here would have been beneficial.

There were also suggestions that it would have been better to assess bids at the outline business case phase, rather than at the final business case phase. That would mean a strong indication of likely success is made at that phase to the bidder, allowing them to gather more information for the final phase and work through any issues with the bid.

#### **4.5.3. Speed/timing of final business case decision**

The survey and qualitative interviews showed that local authorities were concerned about the length of time taken to receive feedback on their final bid. Three-quarters of those surveyed felt that it took longer or much longer than expected. Whilst, for most, this did not have an impact on their interest in securing the funding, half of those surveyed felt that it did have an impact on the viability or feasibility of the proposed project.

Once local authorities received confirmation of the outcome of their bid, only one third of the unsuccessful local authorities felt that the feedback was helpful in terms of understanding why they were not successful.

## **4.6. Conclusion**

The co-development phase was a collaborative six-month period where local authorities could use support and advice from Homes England, government departments, and external consultants, to develop the strongest possible bids aligned to the HIF-FF objectives.

Local authorities found the co-development phase beneficial in multiple ways. They reported that Homes England and other government stakeholders were enthusiastic and encouraging in supporting them to develop their bids. Local authorities could access additional co-development funding to pay for external expertise and consultancy, which was considered invaluable, given limited internal resource and expertise.

Local authorities saw the final business case assessment process as a constructive and “joined up” process. Local authorities and government stakeholders were generally positive about the common assessment framework, although they would have welcomed a lighter touch approach for smaller projects. Some local authorities also felt the assessment criteria could be clearer.



## 5. Contract Award phase

### **Strengths: Comprehensive and robust process**

- The contract award phase was considered a robust and rigorous process
- It was also necessarily collaborative and comprehensive, which ensured that the conditions agreed upon were accurate and met the objectives of the HIF-FF.

### **Weaknesses: A more efficient process could have reduced delay times**

- The process could have been made more straightforward and efficient by setting shorter deadlines for approvals and returning awarded contracts to local authorities more quickly
- but this would require additional dedicated resource within Homes England
- Incorporating efficiencies such as providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of the contract could have also allowed local authorities to progress schemes, with fewer delays
- Ensuring that the conditions to be negotiated on in the contract award phase were resolved in earlier phases could have shortened this phase.

### 5.1. Introduction

The contract award phase was a relatively lengthy and collaborative period where multiple parties reviewed the winning bids and negotiated pre-contract and pre-fund conditions, before awarding the HIF-FF funding. This chapter outlines the stages in this phase and provides local authority and stakeholder views on the process.

### 5.2. Overview

After local authorities received an award offer, they were required to fulfil a series of pre-contract conditions and pre-fund conditions before funding drawdown commenced. This led to local authorities dedicating a significant amount of pre-fund activity to fulfilling these required grant conditions, with Homes England (HE) assessing and confirming they were fulfilled. After this, local authorities secured any additional partners required for their schemes to go ahead. The amount of time it took for local authorities to complete these pre-funding activities impacted on when funding drawdown took place, and therefore often impacted the overall timescales of the schemes. In practice, delays were experienced in most cases.

Pre-contract conditions were wide ranging and dependent on the type of infrastructure proposed. Examples included being asked to provide further information on programme and cashflow, planning or land acquisition strategy, and recovery strategy. Some projects had pre-contract conditions set by other government departments, e.g., evidence of an agreement with Highways England regarding a road project. Once these pre-contract



conditions were met, local authorities could then commence activity on their infrastructure projects.

After meeting the pre-contract conditions, local authorities were then required to meet additional pre-funding conditions. These are typically intended to demonstrate planning permission, public consultation, procurement of contractors, and other activities showing project viability and progress; in select cases (pre-approved), some local authorities can access limited funds in order to meet their conditions, i.e., to pay for economic assessments, land surveys, etc. Once these pre-funding conditions were met, local authorities could then drawdown funds to pay for their project activity.

### 5.3. Pre-contract conditions

Most local authorities and some government stakeholders surveyed did not think that the process to negotiate conditions and contracts was easy or flexible. One local authority observed there was no flexibility in pushing back delivery dates, and another felt that such lack of flexibility was due to the involvement of HMT, which delayed the approval process. Only one local authority explicitly said the process was flexible, with conditions being changed if possible.

Local authorities found the conditions too onerous, and the due diligence too heavy and disproportionate to what was actually needed. One local authority commented that the consultants checking the details of their business case *“didn’t seem to have all of the information we had originally given Homes England, so it was duplicating everything, and they were asking the same questions again.”* There was a sense from some local authorities that the process lacked pragmatism and that it did not consider the size and scale of specific projects, and that the legal process was too complex and rigid, and required too much detail.

*“We had over 30 funding conditions - some of which were disconnected to what was put into the bid... Some of these feedback areas were quite generic and we couldn’t engage with anyone from HE to talk it through. I thought we were never going to get there.”*

#### Interview with local authority

However, some of the local authorities, while admitting that this phase was difficult and time consuming, also understood the need for it, with one stating the process *“was rightfully demanding”*.

Views from government stakeholders were mixed. One felt that the process of agreeing conditions was flexible and reflected good cross-department working, and that the contracting process ran smoothly given the scale of the fund.

*“The way the contract award was done, because it was all going to LAs, and therefore you were able to develop a fairly standardised form of contract, that worked fine”.*

#### Interview with government stakeholder

Another noted that, at Investment Panel stage, almost all schemes required some additional conditions (e.g., around transport) to ensure that local authorities provided the infrastructure required for new housing sites, rather than potentially storing up future problems. While some government stakeholders felt that the conditions were straightforward and necessary, several agreed that much of the work that was done on project bids at this phase could have been done earlier in the process. However, as some bids were not fully ready for delivery, a disproportionately large number of conditions were placed on them and so risked projects not happening.

*"It makes me think, doesn't it just show maybe we should've made the investment decisions later so there would be less conditions in the contract at that point."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

One key point raised by a government stakeholder was that earlier projects had fewer conditions, but as the process became more sophisticated, the number of conditions attached to projects increased. They also stated that they thought some of the conditions were poorly written initially, therefore later on they needed to be re-negotiated. To alleviate the issue, a government stakeholder suggested introducing standardised terms and conditions, for example around transport, as many schemes had similar needs and raised similar concerns:

*"In a lot of instances, we were applying similar conditions to schemes which were worded slightly differently and could be perceived in a slightly different way, so have a standardized framework we can work from: Rail scheme X is coming forward and we have a standard rail scheme we can shunt across... make things more streamlined as schemes move into delivery."*

#### **Interview with government stakeholder**

While most local authorities and government stakeholders agreed that the process was collaborative, one local authority felt that not all parties treated it as a partnership project, with another highlighting issues around working together to deliver the bid due to both parties trying to minimise risks to their own organisations.

*"It felt like it should've been possible for two public sector organisations to be more collaborative... It was very resource intensive and took a long time."*

#### **Interview with local authority**

Government stakeholders, however, generally felt that this phase of the process was very collaborative and cross-governmental and benefitted from the involvement of stakeholders across government departments, although one government stakeholder observed that it was not as collaborative as the co-development phase. They felt that although there were challenges around ensuing conditions, these were easy to understand.

*"There is a risk particularly with technical colleagues, that you get jargonistic points ... to anyone else with less of a transport focus it is just gibberish, so we were challenged on wording in some instances and severity in a couple of instances, but for the most part DLUHC and wider colleagues did respect that we knew what we were talking about."*

### 5.4. Contract speed/timing

Many of the local authorities were frustrated by the time taken for this phase, with government stakeholders acknowledging this but citing the need for due diligence. External factors also had an impact: for example, increases in the cost of construction materials, which impacted on budgets. Covid-19 also had a big impact, as funds and local authority staff were reallocated to Covid-19 related activities, resulting in teams and budgets being depleted. Furthermore, more Covid-related conditions had to be added during the pandemic.

All government stakeholders surveyed agreed that the process to get local authorities into contract took longer than expected. After panel approval, the bids still needed to be signed off by the Secretary of State and HMT. Some government stakeholders said that the process of getting HMT approval was unnecessarily slow. For example, Homes England received the commissioning document six months after September bids had been approved but didn't have an official form of contract to use until then. Government stakeholders also noted that the grant award determination template was not finalised at the time Head of Terms (HoT) letters were issued. One local authority felt that the Heads of Terms required to them to provide significantly more information than expected, which then caused further delays. However, another local authority reported that this process was *"well-organised; we had a clear set of pre-contract conditions... and the information we were asked to produce was relatively straightforward."* These varying experiences may reflect different levels of resource or expertise within local authorities.

Local authorities and government stakeholders reported challenges around decision making and timing: pre-contract negotiations and due diligence took up to 18 months for some projects. Consequently, a majority of local authorities reported that the pre-contact conditions took longer or much longer to agree than they had expected originally. Some local authorities and most government stakeholders felt this impacted on the viability and feasibility of the projects, as the due diligence delayed the delivery of projects, and that this had a knock-on effect which prevented local authorities from bidding for other projects.

One local authority commented that the extended delay in agreeing contracts placed their project in jeopardy. They felt that there was limited flexibility in pushing back delivery dates, despite the delays not being within their control: *"It put us on the back foot immediately... We got the feeling that there wasn't going to be flexibility until we signed on the dotted line"*.

The delays (in some cases over a year) of agreeing contracts also meant that some were out of date by the time they were signed. However, some of the delays were not entirely due to the onus of due diligence and pre-contract conditions: one government stakeholder said they expected local authorities to have project delivery plans in place, but that this was not the case, meaning that Homes England had to write some of them, causing delays. Some government stakeholders suggested that in the future it would be better to engage with local authorities at the bid phase, as projects were not fully ready. Others suggested that a competitive funding model may not have been the most appropriate approach, given the scale of some of the infrastructure projects, the lack of certainty about

what housing sites would deliver over a long period of time, and the demands of the co-development and assessment processes on staff time.

## 5.5. Conclusion

To conclude, the contract award phase was considered a robust and rigorous process. It was also necessarily collaborative and comprehensive, which ensured that the conditions agreed upon were accurate and met the objectives of the HIF-FF.

However, the process could have been made more streamlined and efficient by setting shorter deadlines for approvals and returning awarded contracts to local authorities more quickly. This would require additional dedicated resource within Homes England. Incorporating efficiencies such as providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of the contract could have also allowed local authorities to progress schemes, with fewer delays. Equally, ensuring that the conditions to be negotiated on in the contract award phase were resolved in earlier phases could have shortened this phase.

## 6. Changes to the process map

During the scoping study, IFF and Belmana developed a process map that provided detail on the fund's process end-to-end. The value of a process map for any process evaluation is to enable a comparison of the intended delivery model, with what actually happened in practice.

Reflecting on the findings from this evaluation, the process map broadly remains fit for purpose. However, there are some refinements recommended to better reflect how the HIF-FF operated in practice.

### 6.1. EOI

The original process map stated that *“local authorities completed their EOIs in isolation – no support or review from HE or others”*. In practice, local authorities welcomed and valued the support and input from HE during the EOI phase. We therefore recommend changing this to *“HE provided support to local authorities with completing the EOI, where requested.”*

After the EOI phase, the amount of funding and timescales changed. We have added text between the EOI and co-development phases to reflect this: *“Update: following the EOI phase, the amount of funding available and the timescales for spending it changed.”*

### 6.2. Co-development

The original process map outlined that *“expert consultants would be utilised for specific tasks associated with the business case”*. Whilst some local authorities engaged with this support, this was not always the case, with some local authorities choosing not to engage with the expert consultants. The process map has been updated to say: *“External consultants (NAME): utilised for specific tasks, where local authorities engaged, with the business case, with light touch support from economists at DfT and DLUHC.”*

Although there were originally plans for a *“detailed stocktake exercise...in the final months of co-development, led by HE and attended by DLUHC, IPA, Steer and DfT”*, this did not take place as it was felt to be unnecessary alongside the regular catch ups. This has been removed from the process map.

The original process map identified that *“DLUHC account managers kept abreast of progress but were only involved if troubleshooting was needed. For example, they might facilitate a conversation between the local authority and an OGD [other government department] (e.g., DfT, DfE, DEFRA) in order to resolve an issue”*. This role ended up being split between HE and DLUHC staff and some local authorities felt there was a delay in communication because DLUHC account managers were not kept abreast enough with progress. This has been updated to *“HE and DLUHC staff were involved in troubleshooting and often needed to facilitate a conversation between the local authority and an OGD (e.g., DfT, DfE, DEFRA) in order to resolve an issue.”*

As well as DLUHC, the IPE, DfT, HMT and other government departments, the expert consultants also attended and played an important role in the investment panels, where

they were responsible for presenting elements of the economic business case and answering technical questions. This has been added to the progress map.

### 6.3. Pre-Contract Award

The main change in the pre-contract award phase was the time taken for local authorities' projects to enter into contract. Although a timescale for this is not explicitly stated in the original process map, this phase took substantially longer than both government stakeholders and local authorities were anticipating.

The original process map also stated that there was a *“fairly clear and standard process for this phase”*. Whilst this evaluation has not found any evidence to suggest that the process was not followed, both local authority and government stakeholders felt the process could have been clearer and much simpler.

No direct updates have been made to the progress map to reflect either of the above points but will be important for DLUHC to keep in mind when designing future funding bids.

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, government stakeholders and local authorities were positive about the process, and felt it was generally fit for purpose. However, there are a number of areas which could be improved, and recommendations to take into account when designing similar schemes in future.

### Collaborative and cross-government working

Government stakeholders were generally positive about the extent to which the HIF-FF encouraged and allowed for cross-government working. Local authorities felt some parts of the process were collaborative, but that in some cases they were responding to HE requirements rather than having a true dialogue. This was particularly the case at contract negotiation stage.

Local authorities were positive about the co-development phase, reporting that Homes England and other government stakeholders were enthusiastic and encouraging in supporting them to develop their bids. Local authorities could access additional co-development funding to pay for external expertise and consultancy, which was considered invaluable, given limited internal resource and expertise.

In future, increased partnership working at senior levels across government departments could help resolve issues quickly. For example, allowing other departments earlier sight of bids (before Investment Panel stage) could allow conditions to be agreed with the bidder at an earlier stage, and reflected in bids. This could help reduce delays in contracting.

### Guidance and support available for local authority bidders

Local authorities were generally positive about the guidance and support available, although some reported that they were not aware it existed. Ensuring that local authorities were aware of the guidance and support available, including the resource support available, would have encouraged additional engagement.

The funding available for external consultants and expert input was welcomed by local authorities, several of whom said they would not have been able to develop their bids without it.

Some local authorities and government stakeholders felt that the guidance provided was not detailed enough. Others queried whether a competitive funding model was the right approach for the HIF, given the scale some of the projects.

Some local authorities reported significant delays in getting answers to queries about their bids. In some cases, this was thought to be because the details of the fund and eligible schemes had not been fully ironed-out. Having a longer Fund development phase may enable issues to be resolved before bidding starts. Providing a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to, or instead of, the Homes England contact, may also have enabled quicker responses, as well as ensuring there was sufficient resource available to handle queries. In addition, setting up a system to share answers to queries with all parties on a regular

basis would reduce duplication of queries and might allow bids to be developed more quickly.

## Assessment

Local authorities saw the final business case assessment process as a constructive and “joined up” process. Local authorities and government stakeholders were generally positive about the common assessment framework, although they would have welcomed a lighter touch and more proportionate approach for smaller projects. Some local authorities also felt the assessment criteria could be clearer.

Some local authorities and government stakeholders felt that bids which had little chance of being funded should have been dropped at an earlier stage, avoiding significant time and financial resources being spent on projects that had little chance of being funded. Changing assessment timescales or having stricter thresholds for bids to move to the co-development phase, should be considered.

## Contracting

The contract award phase was seen as a robust and rigorous process. It was also necessarily collaborative and extensive, which ensured that the conditions agreed upon were accurate and projects met the objectives of the HIF-FF. However, local authorities and some government stakeholders reported long delays in agreeing contracts, which in some cases affected the viability and deliverability of schemes. A changing political landscape may have also had an impact on the project requirements as the bidding process spanned from 2017 to 2020. The process could have been made more efficient by setting shorter deadlines for approvals and returning awarded contracts to local authorities more quickly. Incorporating efficiencies such as providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of the contract could have also allowed local authorities to progress with less delays. Equally, ensuring that the conditions to be negotiated on in the contract award phase were resolved in earlier phases could have made this phase shorter. This would require additional dedicated resources at Homes England.

Specific recommendations for future Fund design are as follows:

### **The Expression of Interest (EOI) phase:**

1. Allow a pre-engagement phase for potential bidders to develop relationships with government stakeholders/funders
2. Provide more/ better support to local authorities at EOI stage to help ensure that the quality of EOI bids more closely mirrors the quality of the schemes
3. Ensure that local authorities are aware of the guidance and support available, including the resource support available
4. Establish a quicker and smoother process for responding to local authorities’ questions, and sharing the responses among all potential bidders



5. Provide a direct contact at DLUHC in addition to, or instead of, a Homes England contact, to enable quicker responses
6. Work closely with HM Treasury (HMT) to ensure that timescales for funding approval are better aligned (where scheme delivery is also dependent on parallel HMT funding for infrastructure)
7. Allow a longer overall timescale for bids with additional interim deadlines both for local authorities and government stakeholders, or potentially incorporating a CME approach, to make the process more efficient and limit the time spent developing bids for schemes that are unlikely to be funded
8. Stress-test pressure points in the process (e.g., assessment windows) in advance, and ensure sufficient staff resource is available to make quicker decisions.

#### **The co-development phase:**

9. DLUHC and Homes England could work more closely with external consultants to answer queries and circulate responses (or an FAQ document covering common themes) to all consultants and bidders to prevent duplication of resource/delays
10. More frequent (but shorter) interactions between local authorities and external consultants could help drive bid development forward
11. Additional promotion of the type and level of support available could encourage local authorities to make more use of support and result in stronger bids
12. Encourage genuine dialogue between local authorities and Homes England (avoiding any assumption that discussion is solely focused on how local authorities can best meet Homes England's requirements)
13. The co-development phase should weed out bids which had little chance of being funded at an earlier stage
14. Be clear upfront if there is scope to extend delivery deadlines, as this provides clarity and certainty to bidders.

#### **The Contract Award phase:**

15. Providing an upfront outline of consent whilst negotiating the details of contracts could have allowed local authorities to progress schemes with fewer delays
16. Ensure that the conditions to be negotiated on in the contract award phase are considered/ resolved in earlier phases of the bidding process
17. Ensure that contractual documents are ready to be issued at the start of contracting to prevent later delays.

## 8. Sample and Response

### 8.1. Online Survey with Government Stakeholders: Sample Breakdown

Organisation	N	%
DLUHC	3	21
DfT	2	14
Homes England	7	50
IPA	1	7
Steer Group	1	7
Total	14	100

### 8.2. Online Survey with Local Authorities: Sample Breakdown

Broad Region	N	%
East Midlands	2	8
East of England	4	17
London	1	4
North West	3	13
South East	4	17
South West	6	25
West Midlands	3	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	1	4
Total	24	100

## 9. Government and Local Authority Sample Breakdown

### 9.1. Government Stakeholders

Organisation	Participated in qualitative interviews	Participated in the survey
DLUHC	2	3
Homes England	9	7
DfT	3	4
Steer Group	2	1
IPA	1	1
Total	17	16

### 9.2. Local Authorities

Organisation	Participated in qualitative interviews	Participated in the survey
Outcome of bid: successful	18	13
Outcome of bid: unsuccessful	8	13
Unsuccessful at stage 1	4	5
Unsuccessful at stage 2	0	2
Unsuccessful at stage 3	4	5
Unsuccessful at stage 4	0	1
West Midlands	2	3
East Midlands	1	2
Yorkshire and The Humber	2	1
Greater London	3	1
North West	4	3
East of England	6	4
South East	2	6
South West	6	6
Total across each strand	26	26



# 10. Online Survey with Government Stakeholders: Questionnaire

## HIF-FF Process Evaluation: Phase 1 Central Government & Agencies

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- S1 Welcome to this survey, which is being carried out for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). For the purpose of this survey, we will refer to the department as DLUHC as it is the name that was used at the time of the HIF Forward Funding procurement process.

This survey is part of an evaluation of the HIF Forward Funding procurement process - from the first Expression of Interest phase through to the point of contract. It involves investigating the bidding, assessment and award processes from the perspectives of local authorities, HM Government and government agencies. Findings from the evaluation will be used to inform similar fund design in the future.

The survey relates to the **Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – Forward Funding only**. The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – Marginal Viability Funding (MVF) is **not** part of this evaluation.

### **Completing the survey**

This survey has been sent to you because you were involved in the procurement process for the HIF Forward Funding. We welcome your honest and open feedback. The more we know, the better we are able to make recommendations for similar funding opportunities in future.

### **More information and help**

For more information or assistance in completing the survey, please contact IFF Research. If you wish to check this is genuine DLUHC research, please contact the DLUHC.

### **Data protection**

Data you provide will only be used for the purposes of the research. Survey responses will be anonymised, which means that the answers you provide us will not be used in such a way that means you can be identified. We will store your survey responses securely. We will pass them in an anonymised form only to DLUHC, who will retain the anonymised data for internal research use only. DLUHC will not be able to identify any individual from their answers.

Under Data Protection law, you have the right to request a copy of your personal data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any time. Please see our website at <https://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr> for more details.

IFF Research is regulated by the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society ([www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)) and ISO27001 accredited for data security. If you wish to make a complaint about how your personal data has been handled, in the first instance please contact IFF Research. If you remain concerned, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (<https://ico.org.uk>).

## A Expression of Interest (EOI) phase

This section focuses on the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase. HIF Forward Funding bids went through a two-phase process. The first phase commenced in July 2017 with local authorities initially invited to submit an Expression of Interest via an online portal, by 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017. EOIs were mini business cases outlining early phase plans, covering value for money, deliverability and strategic cases. The survey of government stakeholders is below.

### A1 Were you involved in the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase?

Yes	1	GO TO A2
No	2	ROUTE TO SECTION B
Don't know	3	ROUTE TO SECTION B

**A summary of the EOI assessment process is provided below.**

### Expression of Interest Assessment Process

EOIs went through a first review to check they met minimum criteria (i.e., multiple infrastructure projects to unlock a single location OR single infrastructure project to unlock 1+ locations) then, if passed, went into assessments.

The EOI Assessment framework was agreed with HMT in advance. Each of the three cases (Value for Money, Strategic and Deliverability) had its own weighting, assessment framework and 'owner' who led the assessment (with some review and comment from other government departments and agencies, where relevant):

- **Value for Money** (50%) - DLUHC assessed on the basis of an economic appraisal following the principles set out in the Green Book and the (then) DLUHC Appraisal Guide
- **Strategic** (30%) - DLUHC assessed. Required strong local leadership and joint working to achieve higher levels of housing growth in the local area, in line with price signals and supported by clear evidence
- **Deliverability** (20%) - Homes England assessed with input from IPA and other specialists. This was both delivering the infrastructure and how that would then lead

to the delivery of new homes. It also meant that all the key delivery partners needed to be working together.

Each case was scored. Any receiving the minimum required score were taken into co-development, those borderlines were interrogated further and those too low were not taken forward to co-development.

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN EOI (A1=1)

A2 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about EOI assessment:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW. RANDOMISE.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The EOI assessment criteria were understood by local authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The EOI assessment criteria were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6

_3 The EOI assessment criteria were consistently applied by all assessors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 I received the training and guidance I needed for EOI assessment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 EOI assessment was a collaborative, cross-government process.	1	2	3	4	5	6



<p>6 The weighting given to the 3 cases was right (i.e. value for money (50%), strategic (30%), deliverability (20%)).</p>	1	2	3	4	5	6
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FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN EOI (A1=1)

A3 **How would you describe the speed/timing of the feedback to bidders on the outcomes of the EOI phase?**

Much faster than intended	1
Faster than intended	2
As intended	3
Longer than intended	4
Much longer than intended	5
Don't know	6

A4

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN EOI (A1=1)

A5 **To what extent would you agree or disagree that the speed/timing of EOI feedback to local authorities affected their:**

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 Interest in the HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Viability/feasibility of proposed projects	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN EOI (A1=1)

- A6 **How helpful do you think the EOI feedback was in terms of helping bidders to understand what to consider during the Co-development phase?**

Very helpful	1
Somewhat helpful	2
Neither helpful or unhelpful	3
Somewhat unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
Don't know	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN EOI (A1=1)

- A7 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the EOI phase overall:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW. RANDOMISE.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The EOI phase was rigorous and robust	1	2	3	4	5	6

_2 The EOI phase correctly identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to Co-development	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The EOI phase was fit for purpose, i.e. it delivered on its intended objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The EOI phase was a collaborative, cross-government process	1	2	3	4	5	6

## B Co-development phase

This section focuses on the co-development phase of the bidding process.

Bids that were successful at the EOI phase were taken through to a six-month 'co-development' phase which was intended to provide tailored support for local authorities to develop their business case to a position where it could be appraised and considered for funding. This was to ensure schemes were of the highest quality and created the best opportunities for transformational delivery, and not just those where local authorities were the best at writing bids.

### B1 Were you involved in the Co-development phase?

Yes	1	GO TO B2
No	2	ROUTE TO SECTION C
Don't know	3	ROUTE TO SECTION C

#### Support available to local authorities through co-development included:

- An initial inception meeting was held between the Homes England (HE) Area Lead, DLUHC manager and the Local authority to ensure clarity on project aims, clarify expectations and make a plan to develop and submit the bid by the stated deadline. In some areas this was one combined inception meeting (for all bids in their area, e.g. bids across combined authorities) vs others one-on-one
- Regular progress meetings between the LA and HE Area Lead
- LAs were eligible to apply for capacity funding to enable key activities, i.e. to commission economic or other consultants. This application was submitted through the HE Area Lead and awards made by HE Central HIF Team
- A detailed 'stocktake exercise' was undertaken in the final months of co-development, led by HE and attended, where appropriate, by representatives from DLUHC, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA), Steer consultancy, and Department for Transport. These sessions were to explore and troubleshoot each individual bid and decide on appropriate and feasible steps to support development

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CO-DEVELOPMENT (B1=1)

B2 **Which of the following support activities were you involved in during the Co-development phase?**

*MULTICODE*

Inception meetings	1
Regular progress meetings	2
Providing troubleshooting / support to local authorities	3
Stocktake sessions	4
Submission / assessment of capacity funding proposals	5
Any other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6
None of the above	7

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN ANY ACTIVITIES (B2=1-6)

B3 **How useful did you think these forms of support were to local authorities?**

*SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

CODE	Not At All Useful	Not Very Useful	Quite Useful	Very Useful	Don't Know / Prefer Not To Say
Inception meeting	1	2	3	4	X
Regular progress meetings	1	2	3	4	X
Strategic case training	1	2	3	4	X
Access to troubleshooting / support	1	2	3	4	X
Access to external consultants	1	2	3	4	X
Access to support from government officials	1	2	3	4	X
Co-development funding	1	2	3	4	X
[VERBATIM FROM B2]	1	2	3	4	X

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CO-DEVELOPMENT (B1=1)

- B4 **The HIF Forward Funding was intended to be a collaborative, cross-government initiative. How easy or difficult did you find it working with the following stakeholders on Co-development? (Please select 'Not Applicable' for your own organisation):**  
*SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

CODE	Very Difficult	Quite Difficult	Neither easy nor difficult	Quite Easy	Very Easy	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 Local authorities	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Homes England	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 Other Government Departments	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 External Consultants (e.g. Steer, Deloitte)	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 DLUHC	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CO-DEVELOPMENT (B1=1)

- B5 **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Co-development phase:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The Co-development phase was rigorous and robust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The Co-development phase ensured that bids submitted were of the best possible quality	1	2	3	4	5	6

_3 The Co-development phase provided support that was tailored to each bid	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The Co-development phase provided enough support to local authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 The Co-development phase was fit for purpose, i.e. it delivered on its intended objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6

## C Assessment of final business cases

**This section focuses on the bid assessment process for the final business cases.**

Final business cases were assessed using a pre-agreed framework (scoring criteria and process). Assessment criteria was updated from the EOI phase to ensure better alignment / consistency across areas and with an increased weighting on deliverability.

### C1 Were you involved in the final assessment phase?

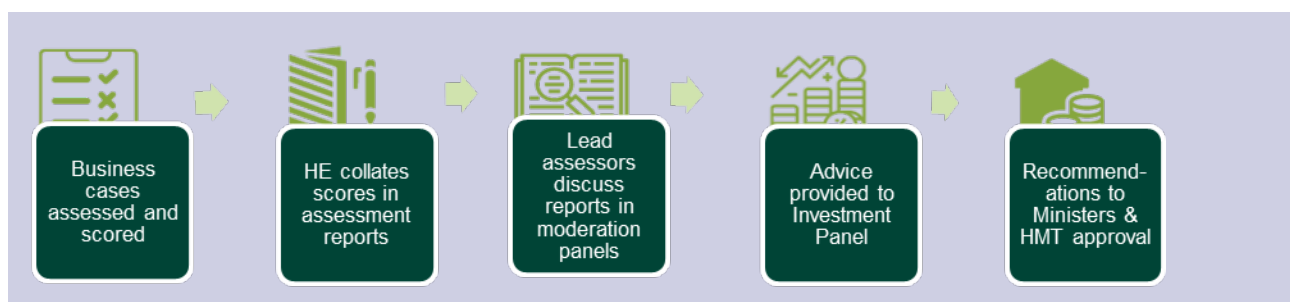
Yes	1	GO TO C2
No	2	ROUTE TO SECTION D
Don't know	3	ROUTE TO SECTION D

### Final Business Case Assessment

The assessment of each case was led by a specific department and each has its own relative weighting:

- Value for Money (50%) - assessed by DLUHC with support from DfT and economic advisers (including Steer) - recruited from Homes England Consultant Panels and Crown Commercial Procurement frameworks
- Deliverability (30%) - assessment led by HE and their consultant panel, with input from IPA
- Strategic (20%) - assessment by DLUHC

Bids were submitted and assessed in three bidding windows. The assessment process was as follows: business cases assessed and scored; HE collates scores in assessment reports; lead assessors discuss reports in moderation panels; advice provided to Investment Panel; and recommendations to Ministers and HMT approval. The process is illustrated below.



Clarifications could be asked of local authorities at any point in this process either via the portal or direct mail



FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN FINAL BUSINESS CASE (C1=1)

- C2 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about assessment criteria for the final business cases:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW. RANDOMISE.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The assessment criteria for final business cases were understood by local authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The assessment criteria for final business cases were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The assessment criteria for final business cases were consistently applied by all assessors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 I received the training and guidance I needed to assess final business cases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 The assessment process for final business cases was a collaborative, cross-government approach.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 The weighting given to the 3 cases was right (i.e. value for money (50%), strategic (20%), deliverability (30%)).	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN FINAL BUSINESS CASE (C1=1)

- C3 **Which of the following assessment activities were you involved in?**  
MULTICODE

Scoring business cases	1
Developing Assessment Reports	2
Moderation Panels	3
Investment Panel	4
None of the above	5

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES (C3=1-4)

- C4 **How useful did you think these activities were to the bid assessment process?**  
SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.

SHOW ONLY THOSE SERVICES CODED AT C3

	Not At All Useful	Not Very Useful	Quite Useful	Very Useful	Don't Know / Prefer Not To Say
Scoring business cases	1	2	3	4	X
Developing Assessment Reports	1	2	3	4	X
Moderation Panels	1	2	3	4	X
Investment Panel	1	2	3	4	X

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN SCORING BIDS (C3=1)

- C5 **To what extent would you agree that the common assessment framework used to assess the bids was:**

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
_1 Easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Easy to use	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 Fit for purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN FINAL BUSINESS CASE (C1=1)

- C6 **How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the assessment process:**  
*SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

	Not At All Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Neither Satisfied or Unsatisfied	Quite Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't Know
Having multiple bid windows	1	2	3	4	5	6
The process for asking clarification questions	1	2	3	4	5	6
The quality of assessment reports	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN FINAL BUSINESS CASE (C1=1)

- C7 **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the process of final business case assessment:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW.*

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The final assessment process was rigorous and robust	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The final assessment process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to contract	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The final assessment process maximised value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The final assessment process identified the most deliverable projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 The final assessment process identified the most strategic projects	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 The final assessment process identified the right range of projects to take forward	1	2	3	4	5	6

## D Contract award

All funding decisions made were subject to conditions - both pre-conditions (before contract signed) and pre-fund conditions (to be met before drawdown commences). This set of questions cover the process of negotiating the conditions and contract between Homes England and successful local authorities.

D1 Were you involved in the process of negotiating and awarding contracts?

Yes	1	GO TO D2
No	2	ROUTE TO SECTION D
Don't know	3	ROUTE TO SECTION D

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CONTRACT AWARD (D1=1)

D2 To what extent would you agree or disagree that the process to agree local authorities' conditions and contracts was:

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
_1 Easy	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Flexible	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 Collaborative	1	2	3	4	5	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CONTRACT AWARD (D1=1)

D3 How would you describe the time taken to get local authorities into contract?  
SINGLE CODE

Much faster than expected	1
Faster than expected	2
As expected	3
Longer than expected	4
Much longer than expected	5
Don't know / Not applicable	6

FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN CONTRACT AWARD (D1=1)

D4 **To what extent do you think that the speed/timing of the pre-contract process affected:**

*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
_1 Local authorities' level of interest in the HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The viability/feasibility of proposed HIF-FF projects	1	2	3	4	5	6

## E Overall reflections

- E1 **Thinking about the bidding process for HIF Forward Funding overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
_1 The process was rigorous and robust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The process enabled local authorities to produce higher quality bids.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The process enabled local authorities to produce more innovative bids.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The process provided enough support to local authorities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 The process identified the right range of projects to take forward to contract	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6 The process identified projects that would not have taken place without HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
_7 The process identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to contract.	1	2	3	4	5	6

_8 The process was fit for purpose, i.e., it delivered on its intended objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- E2 **Is there any specific advice you would give about how to improve the bidding process for funding opportunities of this kind in future?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1

- E3 **Finally, could we recontact you with questions about any of your answers?**

Yes	1
No	2

YES TO RECONTACT (E3=1)

- E4 **Please could you confirm the best phone number(s) to contact you on?**

WRITE IN	
Refused	1

On behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and IFF Research, thank you for the time you have taken to complete this survey. Your responses will help shape future funding opportunities.



# 11. Online Survey with Local Authorities: Questionnaire

## HIF-FF Process Evaluation: Phase 1 Local Authorities

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**S1** Welcome to this survey, which is being carried out for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). For the purpose of this survey, we will refer to the department as DLUHC as it is the name that was used at the time of the HIF Forward Funding procurement process.

The survey relates to the **Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) – Forward Funding**.

This survey is part of an evaluation of the HIF Forward Funding procurement process - from the first Expression of Interest phase through to the point of contract. It involves investigating the bidding, assessment and award processes from the perspectives of local authorities, HM Government and government agencies. Findings from the evaluation will be used to inform similar fund design in the future.

The HIF Marginal Viability Funding (MVF) is **not** part of this evaluation.

### **Completing the survey**

This survey has been sent to you because you were involved in the procurement process for the HIF Forward Funding. We welcome your honest and open feedback. The more we know, the better we are able to make recommendations for similar funding opportunities in future.

### **More information and help**

For more information or assistance in completing the survey, please contact IFF Research. If you wish to check this is genuine DLUHC research, please contact the DLUHC.

### **Data protection**

Data you provide will only be used for the purposes of the research. Survey responses will be anonymised, which means that the answers you provide us will not be used in such a way that means you can be identified. We will store your survey responses securely. We will pass them in an anonymised form only to DLUHC, who will retain the anonymised data for internal research use only. DLUHC will not be able to identify any individual from their answers.

Under Data Protection law, you have the right to request a copy of your personal data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any time. Please see our website at <https://www.iffresearch.com/gdpr> for more details.

IFF Research is regulated by the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society ([www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)) and ISO27001 accredited for data security. If you wish to make a complaint about how your personal data has been handled, in the first instance please contact IFF Research. If you remain concerned, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (<https://ico.org.uk>).

## A Expression of Interest (EOI) Phase

This section focuses on the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase. HIF Forward Funding bids went through a two-phase process. The first phase commenced in July 2017 with local authorities initially invited to submit an Expression of Interest via an online portal, by 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

EOIs were mini business cases outlining early phase plans and were assessed against the following criteria:

- The proposal takes a **strategic** approach, with strong local leadership and joint working to achieve higher levels of housing growth in the local area, in line with price signals and supported by clear evidence
- The proposal is **value for money**, on the basis of an economic appraisal following the principles set out in the Green Book and the DLUHC Appraisal Guide
- The proposal can be **delivered**. This is about both delivering the infrastructure and how that will then lead to the delivery of new homes. It also means all the key delivery partners need to be working together.

EOIs were assessed by a cross-government panel. Schemes were prioritised based on their impact against the criteria above, with an emphasis on value for money. The survey of local authorities is below.

A0 **Which team(s) or department(s) were involved in the EOI phase at your local authority?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1

A1 **If you had any external support from outside the local authority at this phase, please could you tell us who was involved and what their role was?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1
None, it was all handled within the Local authority	2

A2 **How well developed was your project plan when you began the EOI phase?**  
SINGLE CODE

Fully developed	1
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Fairly well developed	2
Somewhat developed	3
Not at all developed	4
Don't know / not applicable	5

A3 **How familiar were those involved in the EOI with the five business case model used for HIF Forward Funding?**  
**SINGLE CODE**

Very familiar i.e., having used it before on more than one occasion	1
Somewhat familiar i.e., having used it once before	2
Neither familiar or unfamiliar	3
Somewhat unfamiliar i.e., heard of it but never used it before	4
Very unfamiliar i.e., never heard of it or used it before	5
Don't know	6

A4 **Were you / your colleagues aware of the minimum requirements you needed to achieve for your proposed project to be eligible for HIF consideration?**

The minimum requirements for a bid to be eligible were:

- Require grant funding to deliver physical infrastructure and provide strong evidence that the infrastructure is necessary to unlock new homes and cannot be funded through another route
- Support delivery of an up-to-date plan or speed up getting one in place
- Have support locally
- Spend the funding by 2020/21.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

A5 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the EOI phase:**  
**SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW**

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 It was clear what was required for the EOI business case	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 There was sufficient support and guidance available for completing the EOI.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 It was easy to bring together the information required for the EOI.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The process for submitting the EOI was simple (i.e., via the online portal).	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5 The assessment criteria for the EOI phase were clear	1	2	3	4	5	6

A6 **How would you describe the speed/timing of the feedback on the EOI outcome?**  
**SINGLE CODE**

Much faster than expected	1
Faster than expected	2
As expected	3
Longer than expected	4
Much longer than expected	5
Don't know	6

A7 **To what extent would you agree or disagree that the speed/timing of the EOI feedback affected:**  
**SINGLE CODE EACH ROW**

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know/NA
_1 Your level of interest in the HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The viability/feasibility of your proposed project	1	2	3	4	5	6

A8 **Were you successful at EOI phase?**  
SINGLE CODE

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

A9 **How helpful was your EOI feedback in terms of understanding [IF UNSUCCESSFUL (A9=2): why you were unsuccessful? IF SUCCESSFUL (A9=1) what to consider at the next phase to ensure a successful bid?]**  
SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Somewhat helpful	2
Neither helpful or unhelpful	3
Somewhat unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
Don't know	6

IF SUCCESSFUL (A9=1)

A10 **Did you continue on to the Co-development phase?**

**The Co-development phase involved working closely with Homes England to develop your project further before submitting the full bid.**

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF SUCCESSFUL BUT DID NOT CONTINUE (A11=2)

A11 **Why did you decide not to continue to the Co-development phase?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1

A12 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the EOI phase overall:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW. RANDOMISE.*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The EOI phase was rigorous and robust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The EOI phase correctly identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to Co-development.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The EOI phase was fit for purpose, i.e. it delivered on its intended objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6

## B Co-development phase

SECTION B SHOULD ONLY BE ASKED OF THOSE THAT WERE INVOLVED IN THE CO-DEVELOPMENT PHASE (A11=1 OR 3)

This section focuses on the co-development phase of the bidding process.

Bids that were successful at the EOI phase were taken through to a six-month 'Co-development' phase which was intended to provide tailored support for local authorities to develop their business case to a position where it could be appraised and considered for funding. This was to ensure schemes were of the highest quality and created the best opportunities for transformational delivery, and not just those where local authorities were the best at writing bids.

**Support available through co-development included:**

- An initial inception meeting with the HE area lead, DLUHC manager and local authority to ensure clarity on project aims and expectations and make a plan to develop and submit the bid by the stated deadline
- Regular progress meetings between the LA and HE area lead
- Access to expert advice from external consultants at Steer and from government officials at DLUHC, DfT, DfE, IPA
- A small amount of capacity funding was also to be made available to some local authorities.

B0 **Which of the following forms of support did your authority receive during the Co-development phase?**

*MULTICODE*

<b>Inception meeting with the Homes England Area Lead and DLUHC</b>	1
<b>Regular progress meetings with Homes England</b>	2
<b>Strategic case training</b>	3
<b>Access to troubleshooting / support</b>	4
<b>Access to external consultants</b>	5
<b>Access to support from government officials</b>	6
<b>Co-development funding</b>	7
<b>Any other support from DLUHC or Homes England (<i>please specify</i>)</b>	8
<b>Any other support from sources <u>other than</u> DLUHC and Homes England (<i>please specify</i>)</b>	9
<b>None of the above</b>	10



FOR THOSE ACCESSING SUPPORT (B1=1-9)

B1 **How useful did you find the support provided during the Co-development phase?**

*SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

SHOW ONLY THOSE SERVICES CODED AT B1

Code	Not At All Useful	Not Very Useful	Quite Useful	Very Useful	Don't Know / Prefer Not To Say
<b>Inception meeting</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Regular progress meetings</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Strategic case training</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Access to troubleshooting / support</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Access to external consultants</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Access to support from government officials</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Co-development funding</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Other support from DLUHC and Homes England</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Support from sources <u>other than</u> DLUHC and Homes England</b>	1	2	3	4	5

IF RECEIVED CO-DEVELOPMENT FUNDING (B1=7)

B2 **How easy or difficult was it to apply for the Co-development funding?**

*SINGLE CODE.*

Very easy	1
Somewhat easy	2
Neither easy or difficult	3
Somewhat difficult	4
Very difficult	5

Don't know	6
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- B3 **Local authorities were required to submit business cases in one of three bidding windows: September 2018, December 2018, and March 2019. Which of the below best describes your bid at the time of submission?**

*SINGLE CODE*

The bid was completely ready	1
The bid was mostly ready and we preferred not to wait for the next window	2
The bid wasn't ready but we felt pressure to submit in that window	3
Our bid wasn't ready but it was the last opportunity	4
Other [ <i>Please specify</i> ]	5
Don't know	6

- B4 **How many clarification questions did you receive after submitting your final business case?**

*SINGLE CODE*

One question	1
2-4 questions	2
5+ questions	3
No clarification questions received	4
Don't know	5

- B5 **How satisfied were you with the following elements of the Co-development phase:**

*SINGLE CODE EACH ROW.*

CODE	Not At All Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Neutral	Quite Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't Know / NA
The frequency of contact from the Homes England Area Manager	1	2	3	4	5	6

The quality of support provided by the Homes England Area Manager	1	2	3	4	5	6
Clarification Questions process	1	2	3	4	5	6
Multiple windows to submit final bids	1	2	3	4	5	6

B6 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the requirements for the full business case:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 It was clear what was required for the final business case.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 There was sufficient support and guidance available for completing the final business case.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 It was easy to bring together the information for the final business case.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The process for submitting the final business case was simple.	1	2	3	4	5	6

_5 The assessment criteria for the final business case were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

B7 **Were you successfully awarded HIF Forward Funding?**

*SINGLE CODE*

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

B8 **How would you describe the speed/timing of feedback on the outcome of your bid?**

*SINGLE CODE*

Much faster than expected	1
Faster than expected	2
As expected	3
Longer than expected	4
Much longer than expected	5
Don't know	6

IF SUCCESSFUL (B8=1)

B9 **To what extent would you agree or disagree that the speed/timing of the bid feedback affected:**

*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / NA
_1 Your level of interest in the HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6

_2 The viability/feasibility of your proposed project	1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

IF UNSUCCESSFUL (B8=2):

B10 **How helpful was your feedback in terms of understanding why you were unsuccessful?**  
SINGLE CODE

Very helpful	1
Somewhat helpful	2
Neither helpful or unhelpful	3
Somewhat unhelpful	4
Very unhelpful	5
Don't know	6

IF SUCCESSFUL (B8=1)

B11 **Did you continue on to contract award?**  
SINGLE CODE

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF SUCCESSFUL BUT DID NOT CONTINUE (B12=2)

B12 **Why did you decide not to continue to the contracting phase?**

Please write in	
Don't know	1

B13 **Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Co-development phase:**  
SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW. RANDOMISE

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / Not Applicable
_1 The Co-development phase was rigorous and robust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2. The Co-development phase identified opportunities to improve the project bid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3. The Co-development phase produced new ideas for the project bid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4. The Co-development phase identified additional risks to be considered in the project bid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_5. The Co-development phase reduced the risks of delivering the project.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_6. The Co-development phase provided the support that was required to submit the best bid possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6

_7. The Co-development phase enabled all local authorities to feel supported.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_8. The Co-development phase provided support that was tailored to each local authority.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_9. The Co-development phase correctly identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to contract.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_10. The Co-development phase was fit for purpose, i.e., it delivered on its intended objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## C Contract Award

SECTION C SHOULD ONLY BE ASKED OF THOSE THAT PROCEEDED TO CONTRACTING (B12=1 OR 3)

All funding decisions made were subject to conditions - both pre-contract conditions (before contract signed) and pre-fund conditions (to be met before drawdown commences). This set of questions cover the process of negotiating the conditions and contract between Homes England and successful local authorities.

C1 **To what extent would you agree that the process to negotiate conditions and contracts was:**

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know /Not applicable
_1 Easy	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 Flexible	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 Collaborative	1	2	3	4	5	6

C2 **How would you describe the time it took to meet your pre-contract conditions?**  
*SINGLE CODE*

Much faster than expected	1
Faster than expected	2
As expected	3
Longer than expected	4
Much longer than expected	5
Don't know / Not applicable	6

C3 **How would you describe the time taken to get into contract?**  
*SINGLE CODE*

Much faster than expected	1
Faster than expected	2
As expected	3
Longer than expected	4



Much longer than expected	5
Don't know / Not applicable	6

- C4 **To what extent would you agree or disagree that the speed/timing of the pre-contract process affected:**  
**Single code for each row**

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / NA
_1 Your level of interest in the HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The viability/feasibility of your proposed project	1	2	3	4	5	6

- C5 **Did you successfully agree a HIF Forward Fund contract?**  
**SINGLE CODE**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF DID NOT CONTINUE (C5=2)

- C6 **Why did you not agree a contract?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1

## D Overall reflections

- D1 **Thinking about bidding process for HIF Forward Funding overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**  
*SINGLE CODE FOR EACH ROW*

CODE	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know / NA
_1 The bidding process was rigorous and robust.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_2 The bidding process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects to take forward to contract.	1	2	3	4	5	6
_3 The bidding process was fit for purpose, i.e., it delivered on its intended objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6
_4 The time taken for the bidding process was reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	6
_ IF SUCCESSFULLY AGREED A CONTRACT (C5=1)						
5 This project would not have gone ahead without HIF Forward Funding	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF DID NOT CONTINUE OR WAS UNSUCCESSFUL (A9=2, A11=2, B8=2, B12=2, C5=2)

- D2 **Did the project go ahead without the HIF Forward Funding?**

*SINGLE CODE*

Yes, it went ahead as planned	1
Yes, it went ahead but at a reduced scale	2

No, it did not go ahead but is expected to in future	3
No, it did not go ahead and is not expected to	4
Other (please specify)	5
Don't know / Not applicable	6

D3 **Is there any specific advice you would give to government about the tender process for funding opportunities of this kind in future?**

<i>Please write in</i>	
Don't know	1

D4 **Finally, could we recontact you with questions about any of your answers?**

Yes	1
No	2

YES TO RECONTACT (D3=1)

D5 **Please could you provide the best phone number(s) to contact you on?**

WRITE IN	
Refused	1

**On behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and IFF Research, we would like to thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will help shape future funding opportunities.**

## 12. HIF-FF Theory of Change

The theory of change and logic model was created for the programme. The model presents the background for the intervention, the types of infrastructure, the detail of the funding stages and the anticipated impacts.

### The background

- Context for the intervention - land market failures from infrastructural barriers inhibiting the development of new housing
- Objectives of the intervention - to develop additional homes and create a more joined up approach to infrastructure provision
- Underlying assumptions - that HIF sites are desirable locations; planning permissions will be granted; the infrastructure unlocks land; the infrastructure is sufficient to support and sustain communities; commitments are delivered; and housing market stability

### Types of infrastructure

- Transportation infrastructure - cycling lanes, station capacity, new routes/tracks/roads/tracks, station improvements
- Community infrastructure - creation of green spaces, community/leisure centres, capacity at schools/GPs
- Other – new energy connections or capacity, flood defences, digital infrastructure, land assembly or remediation

### Stages of funding

- Stage 0 – pre-award activity, co-working to develop business plan, input from government departments, funding of expert advice/consultancy
- Award Decision
- Stage 1 – pre-funding activity
- Stage 2 – funding drawdown and infrastructure activity commences
- Stage 3 – infrastructure delivered and additional housing completed
- Impacts – IFF-FF contributes to the delivery of more, and more appropriate, housing through increased access and affordability in both house prices and rents resulting from additional housing being delivered.

# HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND – FORWARD FUND: THEORY OF CHANGE & LOGIC MODEL

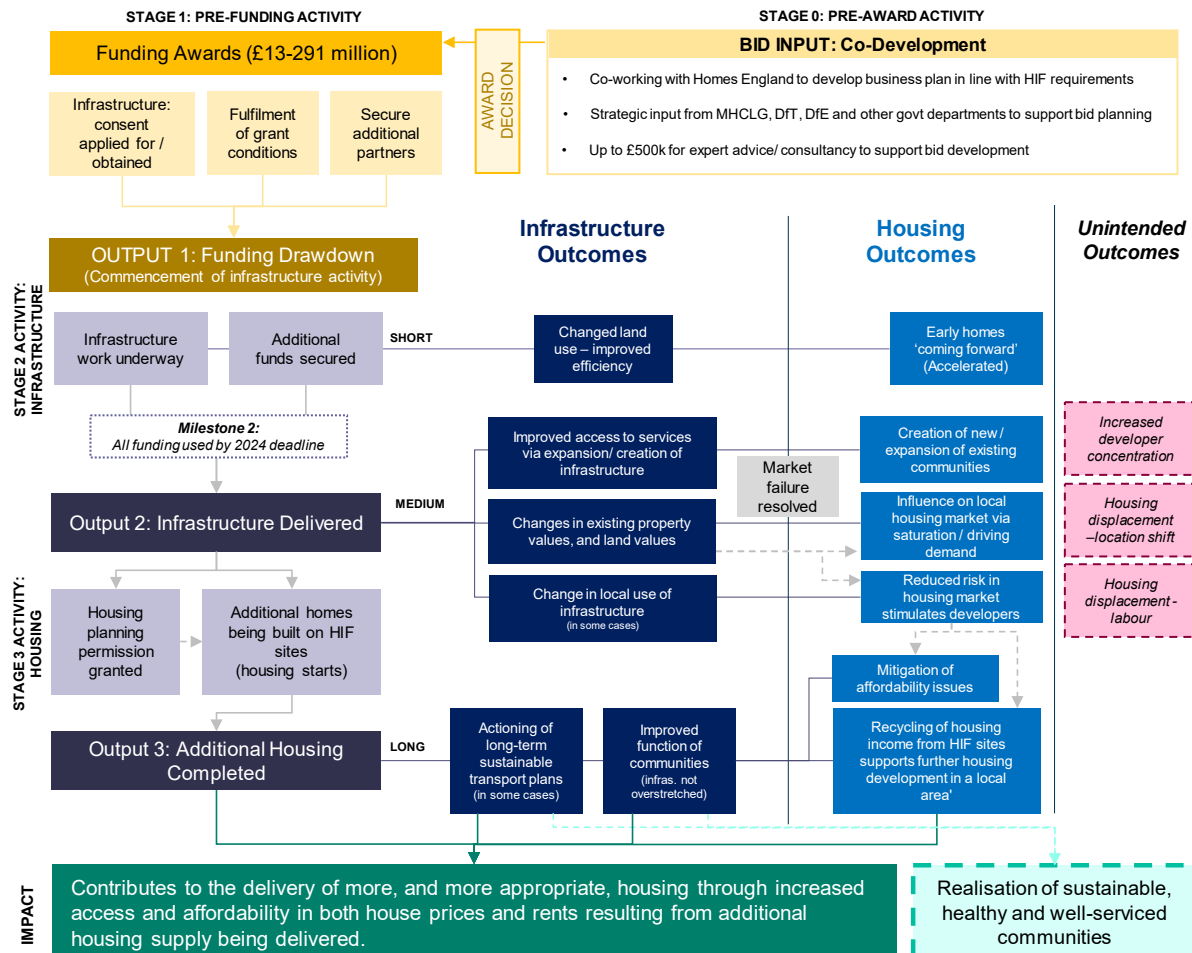
## BACKGROUND:

CONTEXT OBJECTIVES ASSUMPTIONS	Land market failure from infrastructural barriers is inhibiting the development of new housing.		
	Develop additional homes through investment to Local Authorities overcome infrastructure barriers and open up land for new communities or urban extension.		
	Create a more joined up approach to infrastructure provision by bringing Local Authorities, central Government, and delivery partners together to improve delivery		
	HIF sites are desirable for potential buyers and viable	Planning consent / permissions granted	Funders, developers, etc. deliver on commitments
	Funded infrastructure unlocks land as intended	Housing market stability	Added infrastructure is sufficient to support/sustain new housing/communities

**HIF-FF Impact Statement:**  
HIF grant funding addresses market failures that prevent more land being allocated for housing, and by addressing these market failures, contributing to the delivery of more, and more appropriate housing, through increased access and affordability in both house prices and rents resulting from additional housing supply being delivered as a result of more land being allocated and built out for development.

## TYPES OF INFRASTRUCTURE:

Transportation Infrastructure	Creation of cycling lanes	Community Infrastructure	Creation of green spaces	Utilities Infra.	Add new electricity or gas connections
	Other station improvements		Building of community / leisure centres		Increase gas, electricity, water capacity
	Purchasing of additional trains		New/increased capacity at local GP(s)		New/improved flood defenses
	Increase station capacity		New/increased capacity at local schools(s)		New/increased capacity of digital infrastructure
	Creation of new train routes or tracks				Moving of waste facilities (free up land)
	Creation of new roads or bridges				Land assembly or remediation



## 13. Evaluation Framework

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
HIF overall	Policymakers	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>process to design the Housing Infrastructure Fund overall was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Design	Policymakers	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>process to design the EOI phase was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Design	Policymakers	Degree to which fit for purpose	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>EOI phase was fit for purpose</b> , i.e., that it delivered on its intended objectives? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Submission	Local Authorities	Clarity of objectives of HIF	How clear were you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission on the <b>objectives of the Housing Infrastructure Fund?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Submission	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	How clear were you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission on the <b>requirements of the mini business case</b> required for the EOI submission? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Submission	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	What was unclear about the requirement? What other information or guidance would have been useful to better support your submission?	Qualitative interviews
EOI Submission	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	How easy did you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission find the	Quantitative survey,

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			<b>process of completing the mini business case</b> required for the EOI submission? [5 or 10-point scale]	qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Submission</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Availability and quality of support / troubleshooting	To what extent do you agree or disagree that there was <b>sufficient support available</b> to help you complete the mini business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Submission</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Availability and quality of support / troubleshooting	[If felt support available] How would you <b>rate the quality of support available</b> to help you complete the mini business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Submission</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Availability and quality of support / troubleshooting	What additional support would have been useful to better support your submission? From whom? For what purpose?	Qualitative interviews
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	How clear were you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission on the requirements of the full business case required for the HIF bid? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	Had you / your colleagues <b>ever heard of or used the five business case model</b> for any other work before? [Yes - a lot / Yes - some / Yes - once or twice / No - but knew of or had seen it before HIF / No - had never heard of it before HIF]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	How confident were you / your colleagues in delivering a strong funding bid using the five business case model? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	What was <b>unclear</b> about the requirement? What other information or guidance would	Qualitative interviews

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			have been useful to better support your submission?	
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	How easy did you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission find the process of completing the full business case required for the HIF bid? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	How clear were you / your colleagues on the assessment process and criteria being used for the HIF bids? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Clarity on assessment criteria / minimum requirements	Were you / your colleagues <b>aware of the minimum requirements</b> you needed to achieve in order for your proposed project to be eligible for HIF consideration? [ Yes - completely / Yes - somewhat / No] *Could include an i.e., with the minimum requirements if desired.	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>EOI assessment process was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the EOI phase assessment criteria were clear? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and	To what extent do you feel the EOI assessment criteria were consistent or well-aligned across the business cases and	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up



Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
		criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	assessing departments? [5 or 10-point scale]	
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	What recommendations, if any, do you have to improve the consistency and alignment of an assessment like this in future?	Qualitative interviews
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	[For departmental assessors]: Did you receive any <b>training or guidance</b> to help you with assessing HIF bids? If yes, which / what?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	[If received training / guidance]: To what extent do you agree / disagree that the <b>training / guidance you received was useful and fit for purpose</b> to help you successfully assess HIF EOI submissions?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose	What recommendations, if any, do you have to improve the training or guidance for any future similar programmes?	Qualitative interviews
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the EOI phase correctly identified the strongest prospective projects? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	To what extent do you feel the EOI phase assessment was rigorous and robust? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
<b>EOI Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	What do you think were the strengths / weaknesses of the EOI phase assessment approach (i.e., what would you recommend or retain vs what would you change if you could)?	Qualitative interviews
<b>EOI Overall</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	What do you think could/should have been done differently to <b>improve the overall rigour and robustness</b> of the EOI phase and its assessment?	Qualitative interviews
<b>EOI Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	How would you <b>describe the speed/timing of your EOI result</b> and feedback? [Much faster than expected / Faster than expected / As expected / Longer than expected / Much longer than expected]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	To what extent did the speed/timing of your EOI outcome <b>impact your interest in HIF</b> funding? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	To what extent did the speed/timing of your EOI outcome <b>impact the viability/feasibility of your proposed project</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>EOI Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How would you rate the <b>quality of the EOI response</b> you received in terms of its [format / content / feedback]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
EOI Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	Overall, how <b>useful was your EOI feedback</b> in helping you understand [if rejected: your bid decision / if accepted to Co-Dev: what to consider at the next stage to ensure a successful bid]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How did the EOI response you received <b>impact your interest in HIF funding</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How could the <b>EOI decision process and feedback be changed</b> to better meet your needs?	Qualitative interviews
EOI Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	How would you <b>describe the speed/timing of EOI result</b> and feedback? [Much faster than intended / Faster than intended / As intended / Longer than intended / Much longer than intended]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	To what extent do you think the speed/timing of delivering EOI outcome <b>impacted Local authority interest in HIF funding</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	To what extent do you think the speed/timing of delivering EOI outcomes <b>impacted the viability/feasibility of the proposed projects</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	
EOI Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How would you rate the <b>quality of the EOI responses</b> provided to Local Authorities in terms of its [format / content / feedback]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	Overall, how <b>useful do you think EOI feedback</b> in helping Local Authorities understand [if rejected: their bid decision / if accepted to Co-Dev: what to consider at the next stage to ensure a successful bid]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How do you think the EOI responses impacted <b>Local authority interest in HIF funding?</b> [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
EOI Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How should the <b>EOI decision process and feedback be changed</b> to better meet Local authority needs for any future similar programmes?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Design	Policymakers	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>process to design the Co-development phase was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Design	Policymakers	Degree to which fit for purpose	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>Co-development phase was fit</b>	Quantitative survey,

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			<b>for purpose</b> , i.e., that it delivered on its intended objectives? [5 or 10-point scale]	qualitative follow up
<b>Co-Dev Bidding</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Value of provision – inception meeting, regular PM catch ups, troubleshooting, 'stock take' sessions	Codes: Inception meeting, Regular PM catch ups, Provision of troubleshooting / support to Local Authorities, 'Stock take' sessions. Which of the below activities were you involved in as part of the Co-development phase? [For each selected] To what extent did you find [activity] <b>valuable</b> to the Co-development phase, e.g., its successful running or completion? [5 or 10-point value scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Co-Dev Bidding</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	Did you work directly with Local Authorities in your role? [If yes] How <b>easy / difficult did you find working with Local Authorities</b> as part of the Co-development phase? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Co-Dev Bidding</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	What could Local Authorities have done different to making working with them during Co-development easier?	Qualitative interviews
<b>Co-Dev Bidding</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	Did you work directly with Other Government Departments (OGDs) in your role? [If yes] How <b>easy / difficult did you find working with OGDs</b> as part of the Co-development phase? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Co-Dev Bidding	Policymakers	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	What could OGDs have done different to making working with them during Co-development easier?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Bidding	Policymakers	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	Did you work directly with external consultants (such as Steer, Deloitte) in your role? [If yes] How <b>easy / difficult did you find working with external consultants</b> as part of the Co-development phase? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Policymakers	Ease of working with LAs and with OGDs/consultants	What could external consultants have done different to making working with them during Co-development easier?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarity of objectives of HIF	How clear were you / your colleagues involved in the business case submission on the <b>objectives of the Housing Infrastructure Fund</b> ? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	How clear were you / your colleagues involved in the business case submission on the <b>requirements of the full business case</b> required for the final bid submission? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	What was unclear about the requirement? What other information or guidance would have been useful to better support your submission?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Business case – clarity, ease	How easy did you / your colleagues involved in the EOI submission find the <b>process of completing the full business case</b> required for the final bid submission? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	You were required to submit your business cases in one of three bidding windows. Our records show your Local authority submitted your bid in [Window]. Which of the below best describes your Local authority's submission at this time? [Our bid was completely ready / Our bid was mostly ready and we didn't want to wait for the next window / Our bid wasn't ready, but we felt pressured to submit in that window / Our bid wasn't ready by it was the last opportunity]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	Overall, what <b>effect did the bidding windows have</b> on your final business case? [Extremely positive / Positive / No impact / Negative / Extremely negative]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	How did the <b>bidding windows affect your final submission</b> - thinking about completeness, timings of submission or anything else important to you?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Value of provision – inception meeting, regular PM catch ups, strategic case training, specialist consultants (incl financial support for this) - If used - Most/least valuable & why	Codes: Inception meeting, Regular PM catch ups, Strategic case training, Provision of troubleshooting / support, Access to external consultants, Access to representatives from other Departments (i.e., DfT, DfE, IPA, etc.) Which of the below <b>activities were you involved in</b> as part of the Co-development phase?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Value of provision – inception meeting, regular PM catch ups, strategic case training, specialist consultants (incl financial support for this) - If used - Most/least valuable & why	[For each selected] To what extent did you find [activity] <b>valuable</b> to the Co-development phase, e.g., its successful running or completion? [5 or 10-point value scale] [For all selected] Which if these did you / your colleagues find most valuable in helping you complete your final business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Ease/outcome of financial support request process	Did your Local authority apply for any <b>Co-development funding</b> to pay for external consultants? [If yes] How <b>easy/difficult</b> did you find the process of applying for this funding? [5- or 10-point scale] [If yes] Did you <b>receive funding</b> ? [Yes - more than request / Yes - the amount requested / Yes - less than requested / No]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Frequency of contact (where applicable)	<b>How often were you in contact</b> with your Homes England area manager? [Daily / Weekly / Every two weeks / Monthly / Less often] To what extent were you / your colleagues satisfied or dissatisfied with the amount and type of contact you received from your HE area manager? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Frequency of contact (where applicable)	Overall, how would you <b>rate the level of support</b> you / your colleagues received from your HE area manager to help you complete your business case submission? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up



Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Frequency of contact (where applicable)	What would you have liked your <b>HE area manager to do differently</b> to better support you / your colleagues with your submission?	Qualitative interviews
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Availability and quality of support / troubleshooting - Was specialist consultant and HMG troubleshooting support sufficient? - Were issues resolved generally and in a timeline manner?	To what extent do you agree or disagree that there was <b>sufficient support available</b> to help you complete the full business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Availability and quality of support / troubleshooting - Was specialist consultant and HMG troubleshooting support sufficient? - Were issues resolved generally and in a timeline manner?	[If felt support available] How would you <b>rate the quality support available</b> to help you complete the full business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarity on assessment criteria / requirements - Did LAs feel they received enough guidance and support to craft a strong bid?	Overall, did you / your colleagues feel you <b>received enough and clear enough instruction, guidance and support</b> to craft a strong bid? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarification questions	Was your Local authority <b>asked any clarification questions</b> after submitting your final business case?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarification questions	[If yes] <b>How of often and by what means</b> were you asked clarification questions? [Once - direct by email / Once - via the submission portal / Once - through the HE area lead / 2-4 times - direct by email / 2-4 times - via the submission portal / 2-4 times - through the HE area lead / 5+ times - direct by email / 5+ times - via the submission portal / 5+ times - through the HE area lead	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarification questions	[If yes] Overall, to what extent were you / your colleagues <b>satisfied with the clarification questions process?</b> [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Co-Dev Bidding	Local Authorities	Clarification questions	What could have been <b>done differently in asking clarifications</b> to make this process easier / smoother for you / your colleagues?	Qualitative interviews
Department / PMO meetings	Policymakers	Value of provision – department / PMO meetings - Were PM and PMO/Dept meetings frequent enough?	To what extent did you find <b>department / PMO meetings valuable</b> to the Co-development phase, e.g., its successful running or completion? [5 or 10-point value scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Department / PMO meetings	Policymakers	Value of provision – department / PMO meetings - Were PM and PMO/Dept meetings frequent enough?	How would you <b>rate the frequency</b> of these meetings? [Too often / Just right / Not often enough]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Department / PMO meetings	Policymakers	Was necessary information readily available as/when needed to support Departmental requirements?	To what extent do you agree or disagree that any <b>necessary information</b> on Local Authorities, bid progress, or general phase status was readily available as/when	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			needed to support Departmental requirements? [5 or 10-point scale]	
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>Co-development bid assessment was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which feel it correctly identified the strongest prospective projects	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>Co-development phase correctly identified the strongest prospective projects?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which feel it correctly identified the strongest prospective projects	To what extent do you feel the <b>Co-development phase assessment was rigorous and robust?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the assessment criteria for the final bids were clear? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria	To what extent do you feel the final assessment criteria were consistent or well-aligned across the business cases and assessing departments? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria	What recommendations, if any, do you have to improve the consistency and alignment of an assessment like this in future?	Qualitative interviews
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of	[For departmental assessors]: Did you receive any <b>training or guidance</b> to help	Quantitative survey,

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
		assessment process and criteria	you with assessing HIF bids? If yes, which / what?	qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria	[If received training / guidance]: To what extent do you agree / disagree that the <b>training / guidance you received was useful and fit for purpose</b> to help you successfully assess HIF final submission?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria	What recommendations, if any, do you have to improve the training or guidance for any future similar programmes?	Qualitative interviews
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	Local Authorities were required to submit business cases in one of three bidding windows. Which of the below best describes Local Authorities' bids at the time of submission? [Our bid was completely ready / Our bid was mostly ready and we didn't want to wait for the next window / Our bid wasn't ready, but we felt pressured to submit in that window / Our bid wasn't ready by it was the last opportunity]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	Overall, what <b>effect do you think the bidding windows had</b> on Local Authorities' final business cases? [Extremely positive / Positive / No impact / Negative / Extremely negative]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Assessment Design</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Opinions on bidding windows – if useful/not	In what ways (positive or negative) did the <b>bidding windows affect their final submissions</b> - thinking about completeness, timings of submission or anything else you can think of?	Qualitative interviews

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which this was collaborative, cross government	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the <b>EOI assessment process was a collaborative, cross-government initiative?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the final business case <b>assessment criteria were clear?</b> [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	To what extent do you feel the final <b>assessment criteria were consistent or well-aligned</b> across the business cases and assessing departments? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria	What recommendations, if any, do you have to <b>improve the consistency and alignment</b> of an assessment like this in future?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
		and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process		
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	[For departmental assessors]: Did you receive any <b>training or guidance</b> to help you with assessing HIF bids? If yes, which / what?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	[If received training / guidance]: To what extent do you agree / disagree that the <b>training / guidance you received was useful and fit for purpose</b> to help you successfully assess HIF EOI submission?	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	What recommendations, if any, do you have to <b>improve the training or guidance</b> for any future similar programmes?	Qualitative interviews
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	The final bids were scored using a common assessment framework. Please <b>rate this assessment framework</b> on the following: [5- or 10-point scale] - Ease of understanding - Ease of use - Value to the assessment process	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of	What would you suggest <b>changing about the assessment framework</b> in any future, similar assessments to improve the process?	Qualitative interviews

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
		assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process		
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	Were you involved in <b>asking Local Authorities clarification questions?</b>	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process	[If yes] <b>How of often and by what means</b> did you ask clarification questions? [Once - direct by email / Once - via the submission portal / Once - through the HE area lead / 2-4 times - direct by email / 2-4 times - via the submission portal / 2-4 times - through the HE area lead / 5+ times - direct by email / 5+ times - via the submission portal / 5+ times - through the HE area lead	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Clarity and consistency/alignment of assessment process and criteria, degree to which criteria	[If yes] <b>How important were clarification questions</b> to the assessment process? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up



Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
		and process fit for purpose - Sufficiency of assessment training - Ease of use / value of assessment framework (used for scoring) - Ease, consistency and value of clarifications process		
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Co-development phase and assessment <b>correctly identified the strongest prospective projects</b> ? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	To what extent do you feel the final assessment was <b>rigorous and robust</b> ? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Degree to which criteria and process correctly identified the strongest prospective projects (robustness)	What do you think were the <b>strengths / weaknesses</b> of the Co-development phase / final assessment approach (i.e., what would you recommend or retain vs what would you change if you could)?	Qualitative interviews
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Value of assessment reports, moderation panels, Investment Panel - Quality of assessment reports	Codes: <b>Assessment reports, moderation panels, Investment Panel.</b> Which of the below did you use / were you involved in as part of the Co-development phase? [For each selected] To what extent did you find [activity] <b>valuable</b> to the Co-development phase, e.g., its successful running or completion? [5 or 10-point value scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Value of assessment reports, moderation panels, Investment Panel - Quality of assessment reports	Taking into account the content and quality of the information provided and what was needed to make a clear assessment of each bid, how would you rate the <b>quality of the assessment reports</b> you reviewed? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Assessment</b>	<b>Policymakers</b>	Overall	Overall, to extent do you agree/disagree that the bid assessment process drove higher VfM and resulted in more deliverable, strategic projects? [5-to-10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	How would you <b>describe the speed/timing of your bid result</b> and feedback? [Much faster than expected / Faster than expected / As expected / Longer than expected / Much longer than expected]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	To what extent did the speed/timing of your bid outcome <b>impact your interest in HIF</b> funding? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
<b>Bid Award</b>	<b>Local Authorities</b>	Speed/timing	To what extent did the speed/timing of your bid outcome <b>impact the viability/feasibility of your proposed project</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Bid Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How would you rate the <b>quality of the bid response</b> you received in terms of its [format / content / feedback]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	Overall, how <b>useful was your bid feedback</b> in helping you understand [if rejected: your bid decision / if accepted to Co-Dev: what to consider at the next stage to ensure a successful bid]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How did the bid response you received <b>impact your opinion of HIF funding</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Local Authorities	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How could the <b>bid decision process and feedback be changed</b> to better meet your needs?	Qualitative interviews
Bid Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	How would you <b>describe the speed/timing of bid results</b> and feedback? [Much faster than intended / Faster than intended / As intended / Longer than intended / Much longer than intended]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	To what extent do you think the speed/timing of delivering bid outcomes <b>impacted Local authority opinions of HIF funding</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Bid Award	Policymakers	Speed/timing	To what extent do you think the speed/timing of delivering bid outcomes <b>impacted the viability/feasibility of the proposed projects</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How would you rate the <b>quality of the bid responses</b> provided to Local Authorities in terms of its [format / content / feedback]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	Overall, how <b>useful do you think bid feedback</b> in helping Local Authorities understand [if rejected: their bid decision / if accepted to Co-Dev: what to consider at the next stage to ensure a successful bid]? [5 or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How do you think the bid responses impacted <b>Local authority interest in HIF funding</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Bid Award	Policymakers	Quality of response (i.e., format, content, bid feedback)	How should the <b>final award process and feedback be changed</b> to better meet Local authority needs for any future similar programmes?	Qualitative interviews
Bid Award	Policymakers	Overall	What do you think were the <b>strengths / weaknesses</b> of the Co-development phase assessment approach (i.e., what would you recommend or retain vs what would you change if you could)?	Qualitative interviews

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Flexibility and ease of agreeing contract / conditions	Were you involved in the contracting process, i.e., agreeing contract conditions? [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that this <b>process to agree HIF contracts and conditions</b> was... [5- or 10-point scale] - Easy - Flexible - Collaborative	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	How would you <b>describe the time it took most Local Authorities to meet their pre-contract conditions</b> ? [Much faster than expected / Faster than expected / As expected / Longer than expected / Much longer than expected]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	Overall, how <b>easy or difficult</b> do you think it was for Local Authorities to <b>meet the pre-contract conditions</b> ? [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	To what extent do you think the time needed for Local Authorities to meet their pre-contract conditions <b>impact the viability/feasibility of your proposed project</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, how would you <b>describe the speed/timing of getting winning bids into contract</b> ? [Much faster than intended / Faster than intended / As intended / Longer than intended / Much longer than intended]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, to what extent do you think the speed/timing of the contracting process <b>impacted Local authority opinions of HIF</b> funding? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Policymakers	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, to what extent do you think the speed/timing of the contracting process <b>impacted the viability/feasibility of the proposed projects</b> ? [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	OGDs only (where relevant)	Flexibility and ease of agreeing contract / conditions	Were you involved in the contracting process, i.e., agreeing contract conditions? [If yes] To what extent do you agree or disagree that this process to agree HIF contracts and conditions was... [5- or 10-point scale] - Easy - Flexible - Collaborative	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Flexibility and ease of agreeing contract / conditions	To what extent do you agree or disagree that this <b>process to agree HIF contracts and conditions</b> was... [5- or 10-point scale] - Easy - Flexible - Collaborative	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	How would you <b>describe the time taken to meet your pre-contract conditions?</b> [Much faster than expected / Faster than expected / As expected / Longer than expected / Much longer than expected]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	Overall, how <b>easy or difficult</b> was it for your Local authority to <b>meet the pre-contract conditions?</b> [5- or 10-point scale]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Ability and time needed to meet pre-contract conditions - Impact of this on project timeline/success	To what extent did the time needed to meet your pre-contract conditions <b>impact the viability/feasibility of your proposed project?</b> [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, how would you <b>describe the speed/timing of getting your project into contract?</b> [Much faster than expected / Faster than expected / As expected / Longer than expected / Much longer than expected]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, to what extent did the <b>contract process affect your views of HIF funding?</b> [Significantly - positively / Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up
Pre-Contract	Local Authorities	Overall contract speed/timing	Overall, to what extent did the speed/timing of getting into contract <b>impact the viability/feasibility of your proposed project?</b> [Significantly - positively /	Quantitative survey, qualitative follow up

Element	Audience	Theme	Metrics	Method
			Somewhat - positively / Not at all / Somewhat - negatively / Significantly - negatively]	