



Department
for Transport

Integrated Transport Digital Twins Fund

Applicant Guidance



Contents

Purpose of this document.....	2
Introduction to the ITDT.....	2
Funding Available	3
Who can apply	5
How funding will be prioritised.....	6
How to apply	7
Assessment process	8
Additional information.....	9

Purpose of this document

This guidance document sets out the purpose, scope and requirements of the Integrated Transport Digital Twin (ITDT) funding competition. It provides Local Transport Authorities in England with the information to develop and submit applications, the objectives of the ITDT programme, the expected outcomes of funded trials, and the criteria against which proposals will be assessed. The document also defines the rules governing eligibility, funding arrangements and grant conditions, as well as the requirements placed on successful applicants in relation to delivery, governance, data sharing, interoperability and evaluation.

This document is intended to support a fair, transparent and proportionate competition process, enabling the Department for Transport to identify projects that are deliverable, represent value for money, and generate robust evidence to inform future national rollout.

Introduction to the ITDT

In recent years, rapid advances in digital technologies, data science and artificial intelligence have created new opportunities to transform how transport networks are planned, managed and operated. In 2023, the Department for Transport (DfT) recognised this potential through the publication of the *Transport Digital Twin Vision and Roadmap to 2035*, setting out a long-term ambition for the use of digital twins to support safer, more efficient and more resilient transport systems.

Digital twins are live digital representations of assets or systems that can be used to model, test and optimise decisions in a virtual environment before they are implemented in the real world. In transport, they offer the potential to link data and decision-making across different modes, operators and authorities, enabling a more integrated, whole-system approach to network management.

In *Better Connected: A Strategy for Integrated Transport*, the Department committed to invest £30 million to trial the Integrated Transport Digital Twin (ITDT) programme to enable local leaders to deliver better integrated transport at key corridors using digital twins.

ITDT trials will support local authority-led consortia to develop and operate digital twins focused on key transport corridors or regions, bringing together multiple transport modes and stakeholders. The trials will run through to 2030 and are intended to demonstrate how integrated digital twins can

improve network performance, resilience and user experience, while generating robust evidence to inform potential future national rollout.

[Research](#) published by the Department in 2024 indicated that, if scaled nationally, integrated transport digital twins could deliver significant benefits, primarily through reduced congestion, improved journey reliability, better management of planned works and more effective response to incidents and crises. However, digital twin deployment in transport has largely occurred in silos, limiting the ability to realise these wider, system-level benefits.

The ITDT trials are designed to address this challenge by enabling better integration of transport locally, be it between local transport authorities, arm's-length bodies, operators and other partners. They will test how digital twins can be used in practice to improve coordination across organisational and modal boundaries, and how locally led solutions can be connected to national capabilities, including the Department's Crisis Response Digital Twin.

The programme will be delivered through a competitive grant funding process. We anticipate awarding funding to between four and six local authority-led consortia. Funding will be provided as capital grants paid against agreed milestones set out via bespoke Memoranda of Understanding. Successful applicants will retain ownership of their digital twins and be responsible for their delivery and long-term sustainability.

As a research and development programme, the ITDT trials place a strong emphasis on learning and evaluation. An independent evaluator has been appointed to assess impact, value for money and processes across the programme, ensuring that lessons are captured and shared to support wider adoption. Projects are encouraged to arrange their own evaluation and lessons learned processes. Successful applicants will also be expected to publish datasets openly, contributing to innovation, transparency and economic growth in the digital and transport technology sectors. Successful applicants are also expected to join a working group to enable sharing of learnings across the programme and with leading external stakeholders.

Through this funding, the Department aims to support leading local authorities towards more integrated, data-driven and locally owned transport management, while building the evidence base, standards and skills needed to scale this approach in the future. The ITDT trials will play a critical role in shaping how digital twins can be used to deliver better outcomes for passengers, freight, communities and the economy as a whole.

Funding Available

Up to **£30 million** of capital funding has been made available to the Integrated Transport Digital Twin (ITDT) programme over the period **2026 to 2030**.

Funding will be profiled across the spending review period. Final funding allocations and payment profiles will be confirmed for each successful applicant through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed with the DfT. Authorities are encouraged to have procurement plans in place and ready for implementation to enable significant progress during FY 2026–27.

DfT may decide not to award the full £30 million if insufficient proposals of the required quality are received, or if proposed projects do not demonstrate value for money, deliverability or alignment with programme objectives. DfT will take a portfolio approach to project selection to enable trials to take place in diverse settings.

Being invited to submit a bid does not guarantee funding and DfT will select projects for funding using a portfolio approach that will consider a range of factors, including transport complexity, existing digital maturity, data readiness, geography and other operational challenges, to ensure the programme generates the widest possible set of lessons for the sector.

The ITDT programme is a **research and development (R&D) capital grant**. Funding provided under this scheme is **capital funding only (CDEL)** and must be capitalised by the receiving local authority. Authorities are expected to maintain their digital twin capability following the R&D programme at their own cost.

Successful applicants will be expected to make a contribution to their project, either through **cash or in-kind match funding**, anticipated to be around **15% of total project costs**. Match funding arrangements will be assessed as part of the application process.

Successful applicants will also be required to open up relevant datasets, in line with the scope of the competition, for example providing open access to Automatic Traffic Counter live and historic data. These datasets should be available via APIs, and be linked to appropriate data portals, for example the future Transport Data Marketplace, announced in the Transport Data Action Plan.

In addition, funded projects will be expected to take part in a reasonable programme of dissemination activities, including Communities of Practice, working groups, and a showcase event at the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) World Congress in October 2027. These activities will support wider standardisation efforts and promote consistency, interoperability and knowledge sharing across the programme and beyond. Successful projects are expected to integrate with DfT's internal digital twin applications including the Crisis Response Digital Twin. Further details will be provided following the announcement of the successful bids

Once approved, the maximum value of the grant awarded to each project will be fixed. **DfT will not provide additional funding** to cover cost increases during delivery. Any cost overruns must be managed within local budgets, existing resources or through other funding sources, including private investment where appropriate.

Funding will be paid in instalments every 6 months against the achievement of agreed milestones set out in the successful applicant's MoU agreement. Failure to meet milestones or delivery requirements may result in payments being delayed, reduced or withheld. Applicants requesting an alternative payment timeline should include justification within their project plan, and this will be considered as part of the bid assessment. Applicants may request a single early payment to support the mobilisation of their project; such requests will be considered as part of the assessment process.

There is **no minimum or maximum bid size** under the ITDT programme. However, DfT reserves the right to require applicants to submit a revised, scaled-up or scaled-down proposal where this is necessary to ensure value for money, balance across the portfolio of funded projects, or alignment with overall programme objectives.

Funding may be used to support the development, deployment and operation of Integrated Transport Digital Twins (ITDT), including associated digital infrastructure, data integration, modelling capability and enabling technology. Applications must clearly explain how proposed expenditure contributes directly to the delivery of an ITDT trial and to the objectives of the wider Integrated Transport Digital Twin programme.

All funded projects are expected to commence delivery following grant award in **October 2026**, with ITDT trials running through to **2030**, and final evaluation and programme closure completed by

March 2030. Ownership of assets created through the funding will remain with the relevant local authority following programme completion.

Who can apply

The ITDT competition is being delivered as a closed funding call, open only to a shortlist of 14 Local Transport Authorities or Combined Authorities (collectively referred to as LTAs) who can apply for this initial pathfinder phase.

The shortlist was developed through an evidence-based assessment of strategic and delivery factors to identify locations best placed to support the objectives of the trial. Each shortlisted LTA demonstrates complex network challenges where integrated digital twins can provide tangible benefits, and has demonstrated progress in developing the data, capability, and partnerships required, ensuring early trials can address real-world issues while acting as pathfinders for wider adoption across the country.

Pre-selected Local Transport Authorities
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
East Midlands Combined County Authority
Essex County Council
Transport for London
Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Hertfordshire County Council
Milton Keynes City Council
Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council
North East Combined Authority
Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority
West Midlands Combined Authority
West Northamptonshire Council
West of England Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Limiting eligibility to this cohort ensures a focused, efficient competition process, supports fair and consistent assessment based on comparable levels of maturity, and enables the programme to target investment where there is the greatest potential for early delivery, impact, and scalability.

Given their statutory role in planning, managing and operating transport networks at a local level, including through **Local Transport Plans, corridor strategies and network management duties**, bids must be **written and submitted by Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in England**, including county councils, unitary authorities, mayoral combined authorities and combined authorities.

Bids must be led by a single LTA, which will act as the **lead accountable body** and will be responsible for receiving and managing the grant funding on behalf of its consortium.

In line with the objectives of the Integrated Transport Digital Twin (ITDT) programme, applications are expected to be developed and delivered through **local authority-led consortia**, working in partnership with relevant stakeholders such as arm's-length bodies, transport operators, infrastructure owners, emergency services and other public sector partners where appropriate.

How funding will be prioritised

Programme focus and experience

The ITDT programme aims to support the delivery of **four to six Integrated Transport Digital Twin trials** that can demonstrate clear benefits, strong delivery capability and meaningful learning for future scale-up.

The Department recognises that levels of digital maturity vary across the sector and hence support has been directed at a shortlist of 14 leading authorities to act as pathfinders, generating evidence, standards and lessons that can be shared more widely across the sector.

Given the innovative and technically complex nature of digital twin delivery, LTAs were pre-selected because they have demonstrated:

- sufficient **digital, analytical and delivery capability** to deliver an ITDT trial successfully; and
- a strong **strategic case**, including clear alignment with local transport challenges and national priorities. Commitment to use the solution in the long-term, and a willingness to support the wider benefits through dissemination, evaluation and data sharing.

It should be noted that pre-selection for the shortlist does not guarantee that an LTA will receive a grant following the assessment phase.

Prioritisation at assessment phase

The assessment process will prioritise bids that can deliver strong value for money, balance risk and maximise learning for future national rollout.

The selection process aims to fund:

1. **Proposals that demonstrate strong digital capability, a clear vision for integration, and the ability to build on existing work**, to deliver meaningful learning for a wider Integrated Transport Digital Twin rollout.
2. **Proposals targeting corridors or regions where integrated network management is expected to deliver significant benefits**, including improved resilience, reduced congestion, better multimodal integration or enhanced crisis response.
3. **Proposals that demonstrate strong partnership working**, particularly across transport modes, administrative boundaries or with arm's-length bodies and operators.

A detailed breakdown of the scoring approach is available in the ITDT Fund Application form.

DfT reserves the right to use a portfolio approach to assess the bids to ensure diversity of geography, transport context and use cases, and may therefore adjust funding decisions to achieve an appropriate mix across the programme.

Joint and consortium bids

Each pre-selected LTA may submit **one bid as lead authority**. As with other local authority-led innovation programmes, bids are expected to be developed in **close partnership with delivery partners and operators** who will play a role in implementing and using the digital twin.

LTAAs may submit **joint bids**, with one LTA designated as the **lead bidder**. Shortlisted LTAs can partner with non-shortlisted LTAs but must act as lead bidder and project lead and prioritisation will be based on the characteristics, capability and experience of the lead bidder. Each LTA may be the lead bidder for **one application only**.

Applications must include **evidence of partner commitment**, proportionate to the scale and scope of the proposal. This may include letters of support or memoranda of understanding from key partners, setting out their intended role in delivery, data sharing and long-term use of the ITDT.

Existing funding and related programmes

LTAAs that have received funding from other schemes to improve, decarbonise or digitise their transport networks may apply to the ITDT programme. Applicants must clearly declare any relevant existing or planned funding in their application and explain how the ITDT proposal complements, rather than duplicates, other initiatives.

How to apply

ITDT is a single-stage funding competition open to pre-selected local transport authorities (LTAs) based in England only.

Pre-selected LTAs wishing to apply for the ITDT Fund must register on the Department for Transport's e-Sourcing platform: [Department for Transport Sourcing Portal](#). Once registered, applicants will be able to access the ITDT Grant Fund application documents. Guidance on the registration process is available via the e-Sourcing portal.

LTAAs need to complete and submit electronically the following documents:

- fully completed application form
- annex documents requested in the guidance

Once the opportunity is live and LTAs have accessed the relevant documents, all clarification questions must be submitted through the portal within the specified timeframes. The deadline for clarification questions will be **4pm on the 10th of August**.

- DfT will respond to each question individually.
- To ensure that all parties have equal access to information relating to this Grant Application, responses to clarification questions raised by Potential Recipients will be shared with all parties who confirm their interest by email during the period in which the Grant Application is live.
- Responses will not identify the party that submitted the question.
- If a Potential Recipient wishes to submit a question or seek clarification without the question and response being published in this manner, the Potential Recipient must notify us and provide a clear justification for withholding the question and any response. If we do not consider the justification sufficient, the Potential Recipient will be asked to confirm whether:
 - the question, clarification, and response should be published; or
 - the question or clarification should be withdrawn.

Please note DfT is unable to respond to specific questions regarding an LTA's developing bid before they are submitted.

All applications should be submitted electronically via the e-Sourcing platform no later than **4pm on the 1st of September**

When applying, LTAs must ensure they:

- adhere to the word limit when filling out the application form
- only provide information in annexes when requested

You will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days that the application has been received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement, then the bid has not been received.

Once applications have been submitted, the DfT may contact LTAs to seek clarification on their applications, which may take the form of a clarification interview. These clarifications will be used to inform the assessment of applications.

Table 1: Funding application timetable

Event	Date
Scheme launch	9 th of July 2026
Clarification window open	9 th of July 2026
Deadline for clarification questions	10 th of August 2026 (4pm)
Deadline for responses to Clarification questions	17 th of August 2026
Deadline to submit application	1 st of September 2026 (4pm)
DfT reviews and makes funding decisions.	October 2026

Assessment process

The assessment process for the Integrated Transport Digital Twin (ITDT) programme is based on **HM Treasury's Five Case Model** with the addition of a Digital and Data Case to reflect the critical role of data and interoperability when delivering successful digital twin solutions. The programme takes a proportionate and pragmatic approach, reflecting the research and development nature of the fund and drawing on lessons learned from comparable local authority innovation schemes.

The assessment framework has been designed to focus on the **key information required to assess deliverability, value for money and learning potential**, rather than requiring fully developed commercial or technical solutions at application stage. This approach recognises that ITDT proposals are innovative and that detailed designs and procurement arrangements will continue to evolve during delivery.

Applicants must adhere to the **word limits** set out in the application form for each section. Supporting documents should **only be provided where explicitly requested or allowed** in the guidance.

DfT reserves the right to:

- reject applications that exceed the stated word limits;
- reject applications that do not include mandatory information or requested supporting documents; and

- disregard additional material submitted outside the scope of the application form.

Applications will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel including policy, analytical, commercial, financial and delivery expertise, with challenge built into the process to ensure consistency, proportionality and defensibility of decisions.

DfT reserves the right to undertake its own assessment of subsidy control compliance and will only award funding where it is satisfied that the proposed grant complies with relevant legal requirements.

Additional information

Branding

For LTAs that are successful in obtaining funding, DfT will communicate the latest expectations in terms of branding including on communications materials issued related to the scheme.

LTAs in receipt of a DfT local transport grant that is at least 10% of the total costs of the project or programme are required to signal the government's funding contribution by displaying the 'Funded by UK Government' logo when publicising it.

Transparency and privacy

LTAs will be expected to spend funds in an open and transparent way. We would expect plans relating to the project to be publicly available. In addition, we will expect details of the project and progress to be made available to other LTAs (except where this is commercially confidential) and DfT over the duration of the project including cooperating with any central monitoring and evaluation activity that the department undertakes to ensure learning is drawn from projects to inform future policy development and scheme design.

When LTAs submit an application, as part of the government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, we encourage them to also publish a version or summary, excluding any commercially sensitive information, on their own website after submitting the final bid to DfT.

Any personal data provided through the application will be processed in line with data protection legislation and DfT is the data controller. The lawful basis that applies for processing of personal data is 6(1)(e) of the GDPR: the processing of personal data is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority.

Your personal data is being collected to identify solutions to receive support from the scheme. We are processing your data as part of phase one of the application process. We may also use it to contact you about further opportunities to apply for this project if we expand the scheme in future.

We may share information, including your personal data, with external assessors as we assess the applications. Your personal data will only be shared with the assessor for that purpose and will only be retained by them for the duration of the assessment process. Your personal data will be held for the duration of the fund, including the duration of any monitoring and evaluation activity – which may be 2 years after the conclusion of a trial.

[DfT's privacy policy](#) has more information about your rights in relation to your personal data, how to complain and how to contact the Data Protection Officer.