

# Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool

For public sector practitioners to assess whether  
projects and interventions will support inclusive growth



West Midlands  
Combined Authority



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# Introduction - Inclusive Growth & Investment

This Toolkit is a product of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Inclusive Growth Unit - a part of its public service reform team dedicated to building the evidence base, capability and enabling resources to support a more inclusive model of economic growth in the region.

Inclusive growth stands for a more deliberate and socially purposeful model of economic growth – measured not only by how fast or aggressive it is; but also by how well it is shared across the whole population and place.

Inclusive growth in the West Midlands today is about all of our residents being able to touch, taste and feel the benefits of rising prosperity within the region. The region is on the rise again – but we know it will take a proactive, targeted approach to ensure that those communities left behind can play a full part.

The WMCA Board has been very clear in its support for this approach. But whilst the case for inclusive growth may be overwhelming, it can be a struggle to know where to start. Established logic is hard to shift, and there is no single

blueprint that can work across a diverse region with different priorities across its towns and cities.

This is why we have developed the IG Toolkit. It is designed to help practitioners understand what inclusive growth means within particular contexts, projects and places. Used consistently, it will expose a number of questions - about who benefits, how, and with what potential results - that are the basis for shaping a different way of making decisions in relation to economic growth, regeneration and change.

## It will help local partners to ask:

- What does inclusive growth look like in my project or place, and how will we know when it is happening?
- What levers do we have to do things differently, and where are the points at which different decisions could be made?
- How do we develop an evidence base for action that will be robust enough to challenge the status quo in areas where existing practice is deeply embedded?



This toolkit is part of a suite of resources being developed for the region, which includes underlying metrics, analytical tools and citizen insights. These have been produced following a period of engagement with our partners across the region (including WMCA member authorities, public services, business, citizens and civil society) and respond to a call for:

- An approach to inclusive growth that is practical and applied - giving local places, partners and project teams the means to shape what the concept means to them. Building bottom-up practice rather than top-down theory.
- An approach that has credibility with communities and civil society - first asking them what inclusive growth should look like, and supporting public sector practice to

evolve in line with these insights.

- An approach that reflects the true nature of the Combined Authority and its work - supporting collaborative practice and providing the resources and insights to build strong local partnerships that can add value within the region.

The toolkit is for policymakers, practitioners and analysts to use within real-world scenarios. It will help users to make the concept of inclusive growth specific and real – and will make considerations about social purpose and social impact more explicit within decision making processes. It will not change the game overnight, but offers us an opportunity to be deliberate about the things we choose to care about, and the extent to which our social and economic aspirations our places – and the region as a whole – are made real.

# Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool

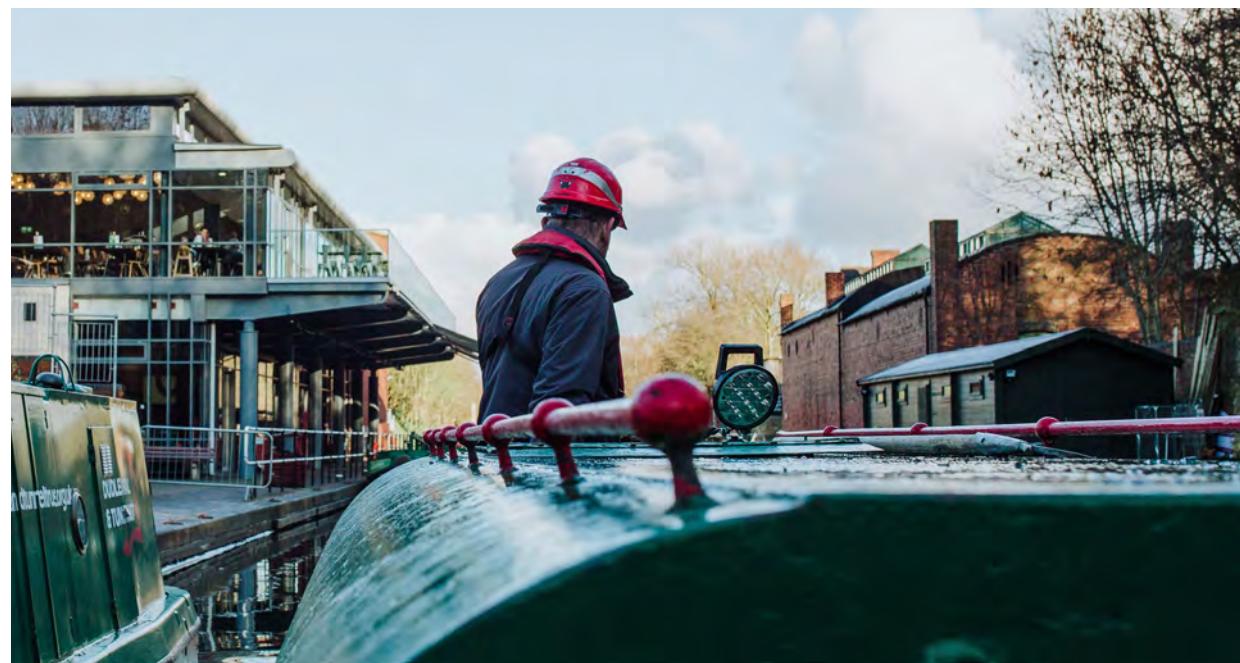
This document outlines the WMCA Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool, giving guidance for how it can be used to evaluate the contribution of projects to inclusive growth in the West Midlands.

The Decision-making Tool is designed to assess if a project is likely to make a positive contribution to inclusive growth. It does this by focusing on identifying how the economic growth will be generated and on the people likely to benefit from a project, amongst the target groups.

Although the Decision-making Tool should ideally be considered in all investment decisions, not every project will have an inclusive growth outcome, and this does not necessarily mean it should not be funded.

If a project cannot be identified as directly supporting the inclusive growth, that does not mean that it cannot produce a wider inclusive growth benefit, with a clear focus on the potential to procure and manage the project in a way that will create wider benefits.

This is a simple tool that is intended to be tested, used and improved over time. It asks a set of simple questions that, done repeatedly and systematically, can help make the consideration of inclusive growth goals the norm across our policy and practice.





### The tool is:

- Designed to encourage practitioners to include Inclusive Growth considerations when designing their project.
- Designed to qualitatively assess how projects could be modified at application stage to increase Inclusive Growth outcomes.
- Intended to instil a set of behaviours and embed Inclusive Growth principles across the WMCA partnership.



### The tool is not:

- Intended to be used for technical project monitoring or project evaluation/appraisal – though it can form the basis of more a more technical approach.
- The sole mechanism to decide whether to fund a project. Instead it's a complementary tool which asks a consistent set of questions to evaluate the extent to which projects contribute to the inclusive growth.
- Designed to provide detailed, exact figures on the inclusive growth impact of a project – though it can help to frame this approach.

# Components of the Tool

The Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool has four stages:



## Strategic Fit

To determine whether the project targets the identified strategic priorities for WMCA and the region



## Evaluation of Priorities

To assess the extent to which the project contributes to inclusive growth in the WM, across each of the priorities it targets.



## Who Will Benefit

To assess the direct impact of the project on specific inclusive growth target groups, and promote wider benefits through procurement.



## Good Work

The capacity of a project to promote Good Work should be assessed even for projects that do not directly target the IG target groups or the WM priorities set out in Stages 1 and 2.

Across each stage, the Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool poses a set of questions and provides guidance and evaluation criteria to help assess whether a project will directly or indirectly contribute to inclusive growth in the West Midlands and improve the economic well-being of the target groups. A summary diagram illustrating this process is available on the next page.

The bullet points on the right summarise some important project information that WMCA could gather to help implement the Tool. Although the main purpose of this tool is to provide qualitative assessment of a project in order to promote Inclusive Growth objectives, there might be some quantitative outcomes that partners can start testing and piloting going forward, if the necessary information is available. This toolkit is a simple gateway to doing this.

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## What you need to complete an assessment

- Details on how the project will operate.
- Details on the population that will be affected.
- Information on the data that will be collected as part of the project.
- Information on the organisations or businesses involved and whether they follow principles of 'Good Work'.
- Information on the procurement process and/or likely contractors or providers.

This toolkit is part of a suite of resources being developed for the region, which includes underlying metrics, analytical tools and citizen insights. These have been produced following a period of engagement with our partners across the region (including WMCA member authorities, public services, business, citizens and civil society) and respond to a call for an approach to inclusive growth that is practical and applied - giving local places, partners and project teams the means to shape what the concept means to them. Building bottom-up practice rather than top-down theory. An approach that has credibility with communities and civil society - first asking them what inclusive growth should look like, and supporting public sector practice to evolve in line with these insights.

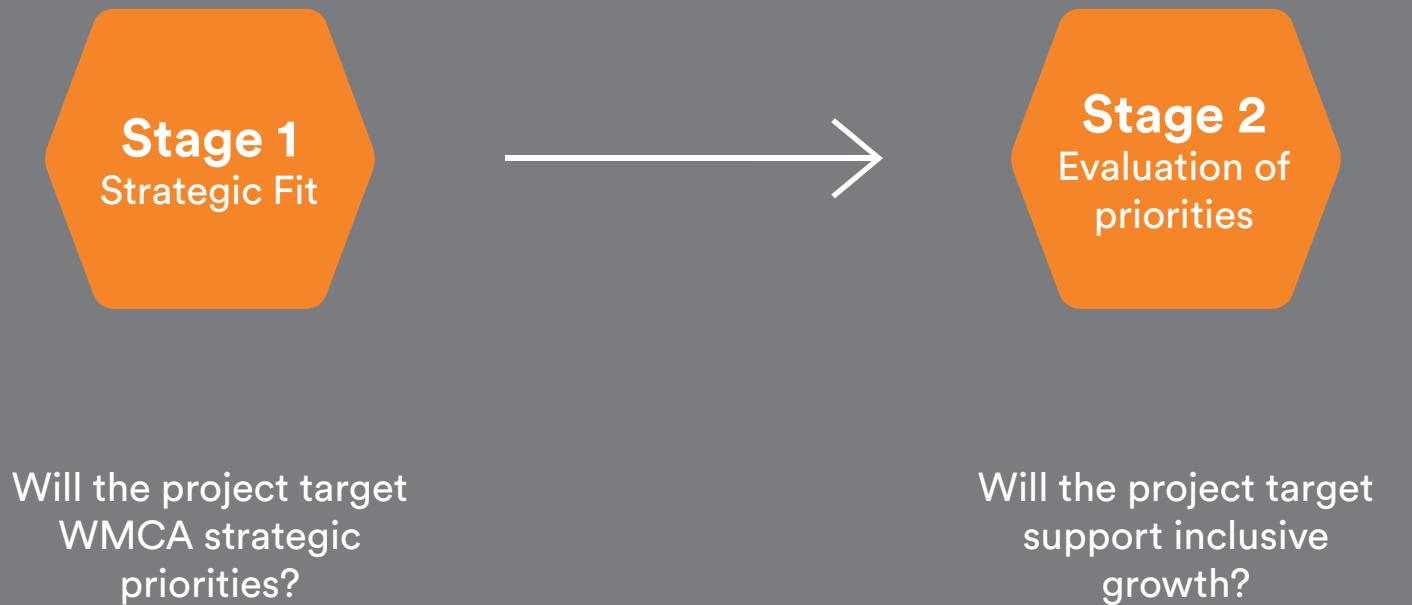
An approach that reflects the true nature of the Combined Authority and its work - supporting collaborative practice and providing the resources and insights to build strong local partnerships that can add value within the region.

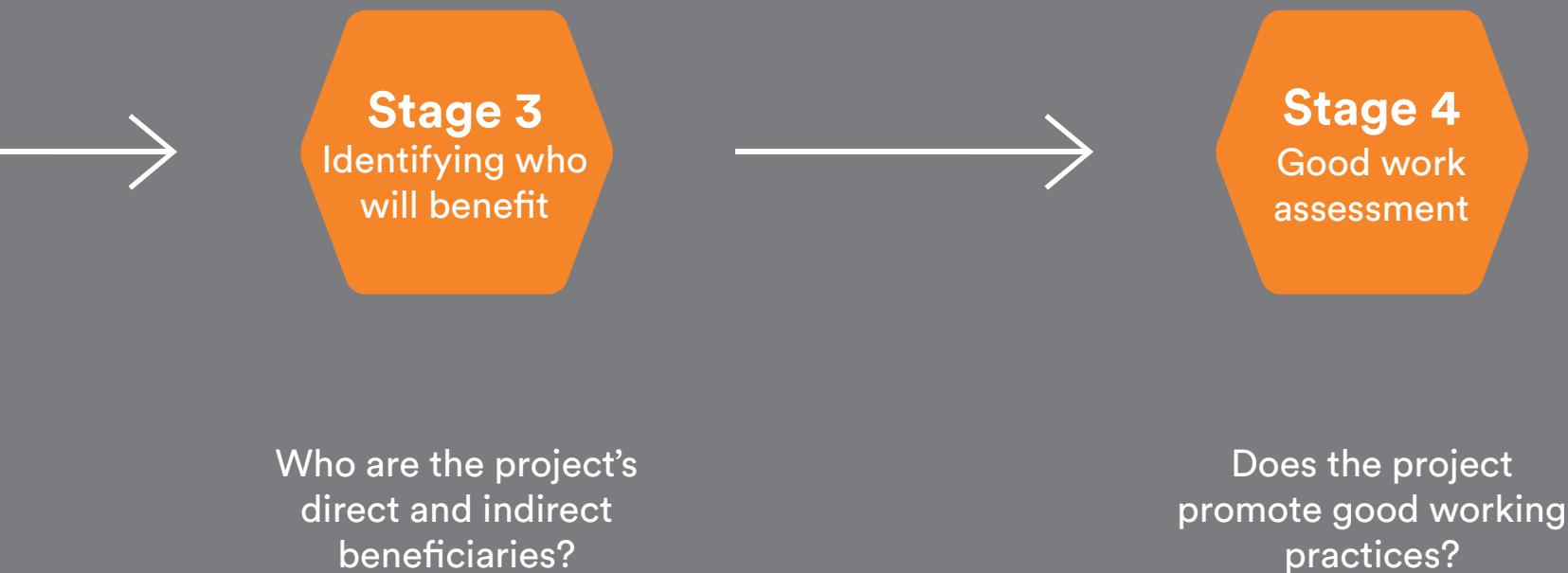
The toolkit is for policymakers, practitioners and analysts to use within real-world scenarios. It will help users to make the concept of inclusive growth specific and real – and will make considerations about social purpose and social impact more explicit within decision making processes. It will not change the game overnight, but offers us an opportunity to be deliberate about the things we choose to care about, and the extent to which our social and economic aspirations our places – and the region as a whole – are made real.

# Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool

The Inclusive Growth Decision-making Tool helps determine whether a project will directly and substantively support inclusive growth in the West Midlands.

There are four stages to completing this assessment. The diagram below summarises the process. Instructions on how to complete the different stages of the Tool are contained within this document. There is also a suggested worksheet at the end that can be used to support the process.

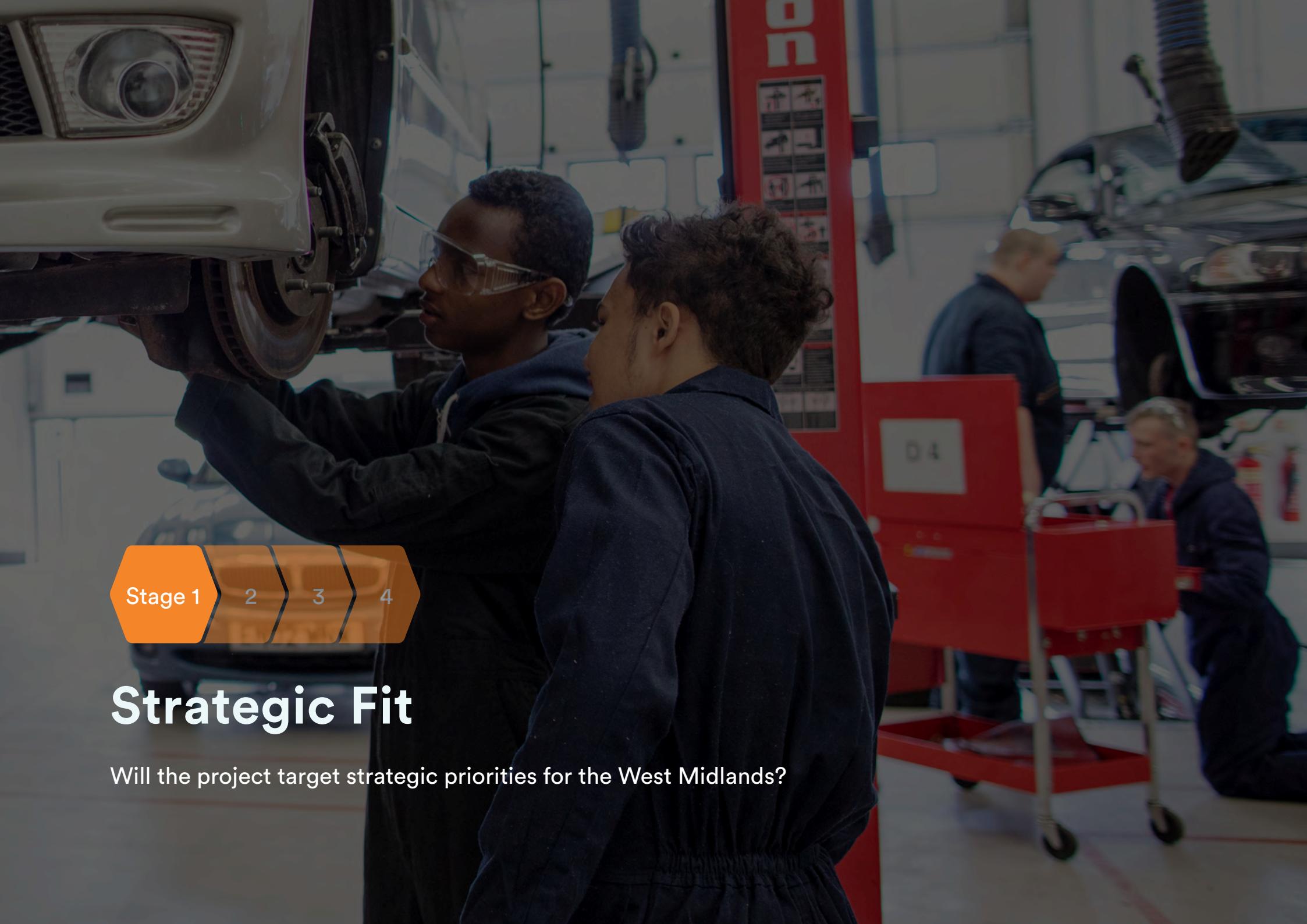




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Stage 1

2

3

4

## Strategic Fit

Will the project target strategic priorities for the West Midlands?



# WMCA Strategic Priorities

Many different types of projects contribute to economic growth. However, the Tool specifically addresses the strategic priorities for WM/WMCA. We propose considering seven areas in the Strategic Economic Plan. These priorities have been adapted from the targets and objectives defined by the West Midlands Strategic Economic Plan to focus on the aspects which are most relevant to be targeted by inclusive growth projects and interventions.

This is not a rigid or static list; project appraisal should be flexible enough to consider other priorities stated in WMCA policy documents when appropriate and this list of priorities can be periodically reviewed and updated.

The first question that needs to be answered is: How is the proposed project going to target the different strategic priorities set out by WMCA and partners?

Please review the list of priorities to the right and mark those to be delivered directly by the project. You should consider how the project will deliver positive outcomes. A worksheet is provided on the final pages where you can record the information for each section.

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## Which of the following WMCA priorities does the project target?

- Employment
- Skills
- Business competitiveness and productivity
- Accessibility - connectivity and mobility
- Housing
- Land and environment
- Health





1 Stage 2

3 4

# Evaluation of Priorities

Will the project support inclusive growth?



## Overview

# Inclusive Growth

Through Stage 1, it has been established that the project's primary aim is to drive growth in the context of at least one of the 7 priority areas. In this second step you should go through those areas which you checked as yes in Stage 1.

Through Stages 2 and 3 we will establish whether that growth is likely to be inclusive, that is, whether it will benefit those who are on the lower end of the income distribution, or who face specific economic barriers.

It is not sufficient to assume that the outcomes of growth will benefit these groups or individuals automatically or to leave it to chance. Nor is it sufficient to leave the social benefits until afterwards. Through Stage 2 we seek to probe the nature and quality of those outcomes by reviewing operational plans in order to determine the mechanics of how the project will work.

The objective behind Stage 2 is to interrogate the logic chain behind the intended priority area and the mechanics of how growth will be delivered in a way that promotes inclusive growth. We have set out example evaluation criteria for each of the major inclusive growth priority areas to provide suggested outcomes. It is important that different impacts on the same beneficiaries are not double counted. It is also important that this assessment is done in a flexible way, which values projects that make a cross-cutting contribution across different areas.

Across each strategic priority selected, the project should be assessed on whether it contributes to inclusive growth using a qualitative score – 'requires improvement', 'satisfactory' or 'good' – based on a set of evaluation criteria outlined in pages 9 to 15. The evaluation process can be carried out by filling in the worksheet at the end of this document, together with a short note justifying the chosen score for each objective.

## Criteria in Stage 2

Employment	20
Skills	22
Business competitiveness and productivity	24
Accessibility - connectivity and mobility	26
Housing	28
Land and environment	30
Health	32



## Inclusive Growth

# Employment

Employment is an important contributor to inclusive growth. However, not all employment opportunities will have the same impact. Employment that pays a decent income and offers the potential for training and growth – in short, a quality job – will help drive economic growth at the macro level whilst also helping to improve the lives of individuals and households.

Not all jobs will necessarily deliver inclusive growth. For example, the creation of highly skilled opportunities is unlikely to target some of the most vulnerable groups of people. It is important to ensure a balance of both skilled jobs and quality entry-level or more accessible roles and to be deliberate about developing future looking career pathways.

To assess whether the jobs created through your project could be considered sustainable, quality jobs, further diligence may be required to check the nature of the jobs (type/length of contract, pay rates, etc.) and the likely employers. It will also be important to identify the net additional jobs. This will help to determine whether the final jobs are

likely to support inclusive growth by paying the real living wage and providing training, or contribute to cycles of precarious work with people moving between low-pay work and being out of work.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)



Jobs that pay the real living wage or higher



Jobs with employers that provide career ladders or on the job training



Employment that is accessible to young people as their first full time job, paying the real living wage or higher



An apprenticeship paying the living wage or higher



Jobs with employers that actively support health and wellbeing of employees or who are 'investor in people' (or similar) certified



Jobs which include predictable hours or can be flexible around caring responsibilities



## Inclusive Growth

# Skills

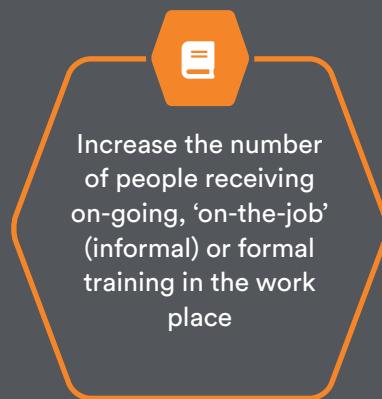
The provision of skills is an important measure to deliver inclusive growth. Training opportunities, whether in-work, or through a dedicated programme supporting people to transition into better quality work at better wages, also improve productivity at the macroeconomic level.

Some economic growth projects are dedicated skills projects - for instance, sector-based training. Infrastructure developments (including within identified growth corridors and urban centres) can consider access to up-skilling opportunities as part of their delivery plans and the potential to offer access to skills provision in community settings – for example English as a second language.

When establishing criteria to evaluate the training & skills contribution in is important to consider both those individuals who are in-work and those who are out-of-work.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)





## Inclusive Growth

# Business Competitiveness and Productivity

Promoting innovation to boost productivity is an element of economic growth policy and one of the focuses of the UK Industrial Strategy. But productivity also matters for developing an inclusive economy. According to the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, stagnating productivity is the main driver of stagnating earnings since the financial crisis. Boosting productivity could therefore help improve living standards, raise earnings and achieve inclusive growth.

Although productivity policies often focus on places and sectors that are already performing highly, many productivity challenges and opportunities are in traditionally low pay sectors. Moreover, there are notable differences between productivity levels of businesses within sectors, which require targeted action and diverse forms of business support (including financial support, expert advice, etc.).

There are a number of mechanisms whereby grants or loans can be made to small businesses to support growth and productivity improvements. Often, the case for funding is based on whether there is a market failure or an opportunity for business growth, and/or innovation can be accelerated through public finance, in lieu of private sector finance, which is often not available.

These projects can also be assessed to determine whether they support inclusive growth. This should include factors such as whether the SME will employ additional people who are living in, or at risk of, poverty as a direct result of the investment; or whether the investment will provide additional capacity to train or upskill people.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)





## Inclusive Growth

# Accessibility - Connectivity and Mobility

Connectivity can enable economic and productivity growth, linking key markets and businesses, and connecting labour markets to economic activity. In the WM this means a multi-modal system, with a high value on environmental sustainability by encouraging use of public transport, walking and cycling, and reduced car usage.

But public transport does not always run through areas in which people, particularly people on low incomes, live. In other cases where areas are served by transport infrastructure, the quality of service is not good enough or the cost of use might be prohibitive, excluding certain groups.

It is important to assess transport projects on the basis of the population that will be served by the investment, considering the spatial areas that will be opened up and connected to each other by the new or improved transport link; the cost of the transport mode (both in terms of time and money) when compared to alternative transport mode; and the environmental impact.

Digital connectivity is equally important. To be inclusive, all residents must have both access to and the ability to benefit from investment in digital infrastructure. This means a focus on where the infrastructure is laid, accessibility to kit (e.g. access to a computer with internet connection, for

instance in a library) and digital literacy through targeted training. Technology can also have an important role in improving access to services, participation and quality of life for residents, particularly in more remote areas.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)





## Inclusive Growth

# Housing

The provision of housing has become an important government priority; the lack of availability of affordable housing across many parts of Britain is leading to financial squeezes on household income whilst also impacting on quality of life. With population set to increase by 400,000 by 2038, the West Midlands is one of the areas leading the country in provision of new housing and retrofitting older properties, prioritising brownfield sites and areas well connected by public transport.

The construction of housing has the additional advantage of providing an immediate and effective boost to economic growth through the creation of jobs and consumption of building materials. The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy is committed to invest £250m in land remediation across the region and developing the skills required through the National Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton

With that said, consideration should be given to who will benefit from the additional houses – are they being designed and constructed to change an area's population and reduce demand and

need upon public services? Or are they being designed and constructed for low-income people who require good quality, affordable homes? The ownership & size of the housing and the public realm, such as access to green space, should also be considered in assessing if the homes are 'good quality'.

If the primary objective of the project is to provide additional housing, it may also be useful to consider skills and jobs created through the construction process.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)





## Inclusive Growth

# Land & Environment

Much locally available funding is focussed on developing and improving places. While it is clear that the aim of such projects is to increase economic growth by changing the population and economic dynamics of a place, it is also possible to achieve these aims whilst also ensuring that the net additional growth created is shared throughout a community. Alongside this, there can be environmental inclusive growth benefits by increasing clean energy and local storage.

The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy highlights the need for some town centres to re-invent themselves and meet the needs of their residents. It also commits us to a net gain in biodiversity, including the West Midlands extensive river and canal network and the links between town centres and the regions diverse wildlife.

Good use of land can deliver economic growth, improve quality of life, and to promote inclusive and sustainable build environments. Following the principles of Universal Design will ensure places can be accessed, understood and used by all people regardless of their age, size, ability

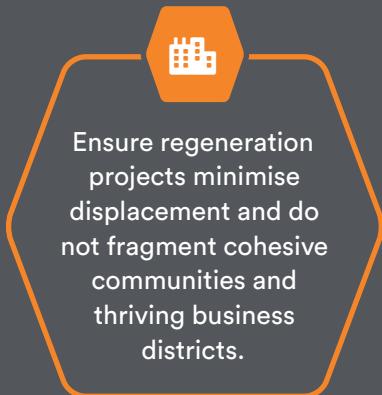
or disability. Regeneration projects should also promote energy-efficient solutions, the use of sustainable sources of energy, protect natural and cultural heritage and maximize access to the natural environment.

Inclusive growth in land & environment projects can be achieved through the actual physical

construction. But it can also be achieved by ensuring that the regenerated environment is designed for all in the community, and not just those with the largest disposable income, protects and enhances the local natural landscape and promotes the principles of sustainable development.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)





## Inclusive Growth

# Health

Good health is a pre-requisite for economic productivity and prosperity and improves people's quality of life. It feeds into the economy through higher productivity, higher labour supply, improved skills and increased savings for investment in physical and intellectual capital.

Ill-health and disease has ramifications beyond the individual – it creates challenges for families with additional caring responsibilities, reduced incomes and a potentially wider negative effect on life chances. For businesses, it has a negative impact on their productivity and competitiveness through absenteeism and poorer in-work performance. Whilst for cities and communities the consequences compound, with a detrimental impact on economic prosperity and reduced levels of social and economic inclusion. Indeed, policies and actions that work for populations as a whole often act to entrench inequality for certain portions of it. Accordingly, ensuring that prevention reaches all, and does not act to further entrench health inequalities will need to be central to the prevention agenda.

The links between health, wellbeing, inclusion and successful economies have long been recognised. Prevention is about far more than just health; it has a strong role to play within an inclusive growth agenda and improving wellbeing. A preventative approach strengthens the social infrastructure so

that individuals, families and communities have the capacity, capabilities and resilience to participate fully in society and economic growth. And where individuals are unable to participate, prevention can contribute to creating stronger, inclusive communities by maximising their wellbeing.



## Evaluation criteria (examples)







# Identifying Who Will Benefit

Who are the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries?



Identifying who will benefit

## Who Will Benefit?

It has now been established that the project should:

- Deliver economic growth across the priority areas in WMCA (Stage 1)
- Deliver outcomes that are not inconsistent with inclusive growth (Stage 2)

It is now important to consider the direct and indirect impacts of the project. This will be done in two ways:

1. By assessing whether the project is targeted at population groups who are not as likely to benefit from macroeconomic growth.
2. By identifying wider positive impacts through promoting Good Growth through procurement and business/institutional practices.

We have identified five priority groups at this point. These are:

1. Residents who are out of employment
2. In work, low earning individuals
3. Individuals with low skill levels
4. Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
5. Residents living in areas of high deprivation
6. For more detailed analysis on the impact of a project on different segments of the population, a full distributional analysis, following the Green Book, could be undertaken.

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## WMCA inclusive growth target groups - definition

### Residents who are out of employment

Working age residents who are unemployed or economically inactive. It might be useful to identify and monitor three sub-groups:

1. Unemployed residents (all working ages)
2. Young unemployed (under 25)
3. Particularly disadvantaged ethnic communities

### In-work, low-earning individuals

Residents or workers earning below the 'real' living wage (LW). The living wage is calculated annually by the Living Wage Foundation (£9.00 per hour in 2018/19, outside London).

### Individuals with low skill levels

Residents or workers with qualifications below NVQ level 2 (either NVQ1 or no formal qualification).

### Young people not in education, employment or training

Residents aged 16-24 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

### Residents living in areas of high deprivation

People living in deprived neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods can be defined through aggregation of small geographical areas, informed by data from the multiple deprivation indices and any relevant locally collected information.



## Identifying who will benefit

# Identifying the Direct Beneficiaries

We suggest that you assess each project by identifying the groups of people who may directly benefit from the project. This exercise can be used to back a qualitative judgement of how inclusive growth oriented the project is, based on the 5 IG target groups listed on the previous page or, if you choose to, to go one step further and quantify these beneficiaries, by estimating the number of people in each target group.

**The information for both the qualitative and a potential quantitative approach may be available in sources, including:**

- Project documentation
- As part of work undertaken for existing appraisal frameworks, such as the Treasury's Green Book
- Local sources such as JSNA, baselining documents etc.

If it is unclear from the project documentation who would benefit, you may need to consider the type of project and assume who is likely to benefit. For example, an investment focused on high skilled/high growth activities that will require highly skilled staff is unlikely to target people in the lowest income quintile.

Social baselining may be useful here through the creation of an asset map or Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which underpins and gives ready access to data which might be useful to estimate inclusive growth outcomes.

**We would encourage you to speak to the Office of Data Analytics who can support this kind of approach.**

This may also be an opportunity to consider how a project could be shaped to support an inclusive economy. For example, would a retail academy that supports unemployed people to gain the skills needed to access jobs in a new retail development help increase the inclusive growth dimension? If so, how can this be put in place?

In the longer-term, you may want to consider ensuring project documentation contains the types of information needed to assess whether a project has an inclusive growth dimension.

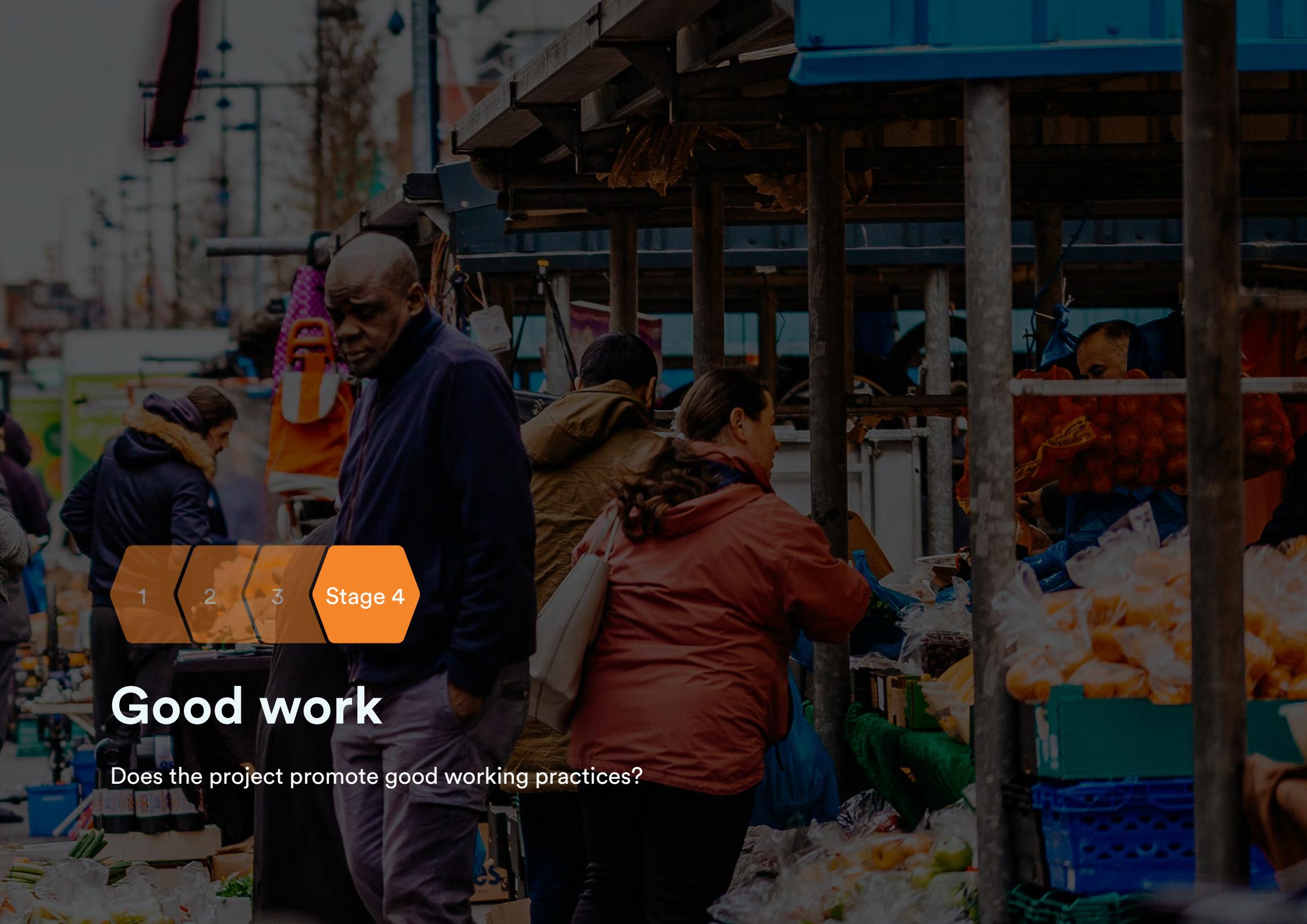
Beneficiaries should not be double counted. Even if there are multiple impacts (such as jobs that pay above minimum wage and are with an employer that provide career ladders or jobs that pay above minimum wage and are accessed through improved transport links), the number of beneficiaries identified should be the total number of individuals who will be positively affected.

A scorecard is provided in the worksheet in the final page which can be used to support the qualitative assessment of how different groups might be benefited, or to quantify the number of beneficiaries in each group, if you opt to use a quantitative approach.

If your project does not directly benefit any of the target groups, you should ask whether any further thought can be given to the beneficiaries of the project and consider ways to improve it.







1

2

3

Stage 4

# Good work

Does the project promote good working practices?



## Good Work

# Promoting Good Work

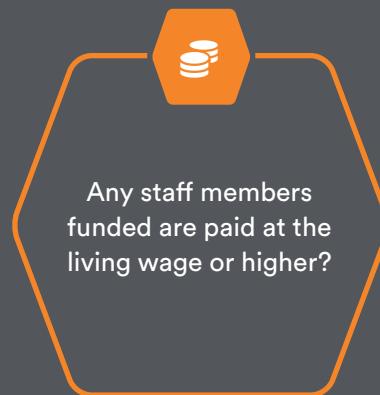
There are further ways that can be considered to assess and enhance the potential of a project to generate wider benefits to the inclusive growth by promoting Good Work.

The capacity of a project to promote Good Work should be assessed even for projects that do not directly target the IG target groups or the investment priorities set out in Stages 1 and 2. This will help challenge whether projects can be managed or procured ways that maximises the project's contribution to the Inclusive Growth and provides a sustainable positive impact through a resident's life.

The questions in this page are designed to help aid the identification of how any project could have a positive effect on growing an inclusive growth. They are not conclusive. Indeed, it is possible to include a range of potential other benefits with both short and long-term positive consequences (e.g. the provision of mentoring to SMEs or third sector organisations by large companies, business engagement in schools, etc.).

There is already a wide-range of material available on how to use procurement in this way. Benefits should be assessed and monitored through the procurement process and contracting activities, but also for projects designed in-house or for grant schemes. It is critical these aspects are considered at the very start of the process, and it will require active contractual management and effective reporting, and monitoring, to ensure that the project's benefits are being delivered.

## Can this project be managed so that:



## Worksheet - Stage 1

Is the project designed to target WM strategic priorities?

If yes, it will be through (tick all priority areas directly targeted by the project):

	Yes	No
Employment		
Skills		
Business competitiveness and productivity		
Accessibility - connectivity and mobility		
Housing		
Land and environment		
Health		

Note – the following pages provide a simple way of working through the Toolkit in a way that gives an early assessment of inclusive growth potential, and provides a framework against which further detailed analysis can be done. Please talk to the WMCA PSR team who can set up facilitated workshops to help teams work through this.

## Worksheet - Stage 2

### Will the project support inclusive growth?

For each priority marked as YES in Stage 1, you should now evaluate the extent to which the project is consistent with inclusive growth benefits (using the evaluation criteria outlined in Stage 2). This can be done by attributing a qualitative score to each objective (worksheet below), accompanied by a short note justifying the choice.

	Requires improvement	Satisfactory	Good
Employment			
Skills			
Business competitiveness and productivity			
Accessibility - connectivity and mobility			
Housing			
Land and environment			
Health			

## Worksheet - Stage 3

### Who will benefit?

This scorecard can be used to note a qualitative assessment of how the five target groups will be impacted or to quantify the number of beneficiaries in each group.

Residents who are out of employment		
In work, low earning individuals		
Individuals with low skill levels		
Young people not in education, employment or training		
Residents living in high areas of deprivation		
<b>Total Beneficiaries (optional)</b>		

# Worksheet - Stage 4

## Promoting good work

This checklist should be used to assess the capacity of a project to promote Good Work even for projects that do not directly target the inclusive growth target groups or the WMCA priorities set out in Stages 1 and 2.

	Tick
There is an increase in the number of people in the local area who receive sustainable employment opportunities?	
Any staff members funded are paid at the living wage or higher?	
There is an increase in the number of people who receive work placements, training or apprenticeships?	
Zero-hours contracts are precluded?	
There is a stipulated proportion of the total contract costs awarded to local SMEs?	
The applicant can demonstrate accreditation or compliance with the any threshold or scheme for a 'good work employer' put in place by the WMCA.	





**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**

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more prosperous West Midlands.**

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April 2019