Towns Fund: Performance Reporting FAQ's

October 2023

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Getting Started

Q	We have Town Deals and FHSF. Do we submit two separate forms?
A	Yes, complete one form for each Towns Deal and/or each FHSF.

Q	Do we need to complete a separate form for each individual project?
A	No. Just complete one form for each Town Deal and/or each FHSF. There are sections to complete at project level within the forms.

Q	Can I use the same template as the last reporting period?
A	No. There are minor changes to the appearance of the template, however, there have been important updates behind the template which will be crucial for DLUHC to aggregate and analyse your return. **If you complete an older version, you will need to resubmit before we can review.**

Q	When selecting FHSF, questions seem to be asking about Towns Fund. Is this correct?
A	Towns Fund includes 2 programmes: i) Town Deals; ii) Future High Streets Fund and the monitoring & evaluation is across both programmes.

Q	Do we include projects in receipt of Accelerated Funding (Town Deals only) within the template?
A	Please use section B1 to detail how the Accelerated Funding has been utilised. Section B on tab 4 is for Town Deals places only.

Q	New staff may not have previous guidance documents such as the PAR guidance. Are all historic guidance notes online somewhere?
A	Guidance notes up to November 2022 are available online at https://townsfund.org.uk/government-resources If you require other guidance notes for the Towns Fund Programme, please contact your Area Lead or the towns fund inbox towns.fund@levellingup.gov.uk.

Q	Apart from delays to 23/24 payment - are there any other assurance reviews relating to Towns slippage at the end of 2023 being more than 40%? Slippage has been unavoidable due to land acquisition /CPO etc.
A	The Levelling Up Funds Local Authority Assurance Framework describes the annual assurance cycle for Town Deal and Future High Streets Fund grants. Within this there are annual checks ahead of payment recommendations to review the active first line of assurance control in place by the local authority / accountable body. Based on identified risks as set out in the framework and a random sample, second line checks of deep dive reviews take place throughout each financial year. For Town Deals a compliance check of governance in line with the Prospectus and guidance is undertaken during the annual cycle of assurance. Being behind on spend by over 40% is one of a number of factors used to inform whether a deep dive happens or not. Once identified for a deep dive, there is a second check and balance based on the most current intelligence held by DLUHC

	which is used to determine whether a deep dive would be a helpful and proportionate step.

Tab 2 – Project Admin

Q	What do we do if the list of project names pre-populated in Section B2 of the form is incorrect?
A	Please contact the Towns Fund inbox for specific queries if your auto-populated project list is incorrect for the reporting period. You can also note this in section B2.a and B2.b at the bottom of the page if the error will not impact your completion of the report.

Q	Programme management is no longer listed as a project, how do we record this?
A	This has been removed as a project line and Programme Management expenditure should be recorded in Tab 4a – Funding Profiles, Section B2 shown below:

B2 TD Programme Management	Before 2020/21	Financial Year 2020/21 (£s)			H1
		H1 (Apr-Sep) Actual	H2 (Oct-Mar) Actual	Total	
Towns Fund CDEL Programme Management Payment (only complete if profiled separately)				£0.00	
Towns Fund RDEL Programme Management Payment (only complete if profiled separately)				£0.00	
Total	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	

Q	What if we are not sure what will be the exact location of the project (post code)?
A	If you do not have an exact project location please add the postcode for the address of the Local Authority.

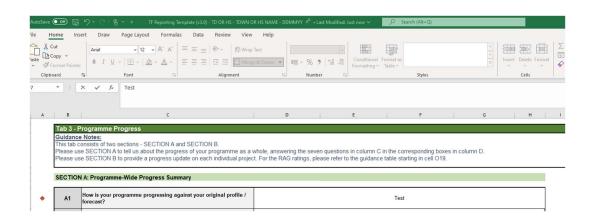|	
Q	For public realm projects that spread a wide area, on Sheet Two for location / postcode, do we list the postcode for each affected street or pick a central point?
A	A postcode or coordinates for each street is preferable. In these situations, it may also be easier to provide a GIS map showing impacted areas. However, if neither of these are possible or practical then a postcode or coordinates for a central point is sufficient.

Tab 3 - Programme Progress

Q	Section A asks us to report on progress. Does this require financial information only or also an update on project activities?
A	It is inviting a narrative on all aspects of delivery and particularly helpful to elaborate on other information you have provided in the form. For FHSF Extension requests, these boxes (A1-4) provide space to explain the exceptional reasons why the FHSF funding can no longer be spent by 31 March 2024, and how the extension to the spend deadline will enable FHSF spend to be achieved.

Q	When commenting if the programme is delivering to budget - is this regarding the programme delivering to overall budget or to the latest spend profile?
A	We would welcome your assessment of the programme delivering to budget overall and its alignment to your financial profile. This is an opportunity for you to inform us.

Q	What is meant by local evaluation and why is this being requested?
A	Some places may opt to do their own local evaluation. We are requesting this information as we are interested to understand which areas are conducting local evaluation as well as what stage of development these are at, including key milestones (e.g. whether it has been commissioned or if any interim findings have been collected). Please provide any information that might add to our understanding.

If you are not undertaking any local evaluation outside of the M&E plan, please let us know by adding this to your statement in A5. |

Q	What is the project start date?
A	The scheduled start date is the date that all involved in the project have agreed upon and have been planning towards. The project start date(s) will normally be defined within your work plan. It is often the point at which project costs will start to be incurred.

Q	What is the project completion date?
A	Completion date is the date by which the agreed project outputs will be delivered. The project completion date(s) will normally be defined within your work plan.

Q	Due to the form being protected the text wrapping does not work correctly as the boxes cannot be expanded
A	This is not a problem, when we extract the data we can see it all. Also, when you are completing the form you can click on the header bar at the top and expand this so you can see everything you have written to check it is correct. See below:

Q	When completing the RAG rating section on spend, what are we comparing our rating to?
A	The RAG rating section on spend should be against reported spend in the previous performance return or payments made as per your Annex A1 for any first project payments,

Q	Are we completing the RAG ratings on a project-by-project basis?
A	Yes, there are sections to record Delivery, Spend and Risk ratings for each of your projects.

Q	If spend has slipped for our match funding but is still on track for our TF element, how do we rate this in the RAG section?
A	You do not need to record match funding slippage. Please just rate the TF element here, the delivery RAG rating gives a whole project overview. As an example, if you were planning on spending £10m of your towns fund grant and you only spent £5m then this is 50% behind on profile.

Q	If we have used Freedoms and Flexibilities with our grant and spent it elsewhere, do we report this as a 1 in the RAG rating against that project as we have spent the money? Even if it has not been spent on that actual project?
A	No, we require you to complete the RAG rating on what you have **actually spent** on the project. As an example, if you have used over 50% of the funding you have already received elsewhere using freedoms and flexibilities then you need to report a 5 rating against spend.

Q	The Project Adjustment Request Update box is new, what do we put in here?
A	Project adjustments include but are not limited to: a change in project scope or activity; splitting one project into multiple projects; merging projects; cancelling a project and reallocating funding to other projects in the deal. This column has been added to make us aware of if you have a Project Adjustment Request in progress or are planning on submitting one – if you don't have one then you can leave this blank or can enter 'PAR not required'. PARs can have an impact on project progress and funding requirements so we have added this to gather as much evidence as we can to inform payment and conversation decisions. If you would like more information on what a PAR is, please contact your Area Lead or towns.fund@levellingup.gov.uk.

Q	If we are not sure if we are going to submit a project adjustment request yet what do we enter here?
A	Please provide as much information as possible in the comments section to explain your current situation.

Q	What if we have more than one PAR in progress for a project?
A	Please enter the status of the latest Project Adjustment Request relating to the project and add notes into the commentary box

Tab 4a – Funding Profiles

Section B

Q	For Town Deals, do we include projects in receipt of Accelerated Funding within the template?
A	Yes, this can be detail in Section B, which is for completion of Town Deals places only. There is a column specifically for the Accelerated Funding.

Q	For Town Deals, if we received Resource funding (RDEL) only, do we need to report fully on the projects?
A	If this is a project specific payment, you will need to report on that project throughout the template. If you have only received the RDEL capacity funding, you should only complete Tab 1, Tab 2 (Section A only), Tab 4 (Sections A and B only) & Tab 8.

Q	We have some Accelerated Funding that has rolled forward. What do we enter for spend at 30th September 2023 if it is ongoing?
A	Please detail what has been spent as of 30th September 2023. You can provide a brief explanation in section B1 of how and when you plan to spend the remainder, post September 2023.

Q	What level of detail should be provided for section B?
A	We are looking for a summary which provides us with an accurate picture of what this money has been spent on.

Section C

Q	One of our cancelled projects had some of the 5% early CDEL spent on it, how do we report on this now this project has been removed from our list?
A	Please add this detail into the comment boxes, if there are any costs for a project that has been cancelled and the project is no longer listed then please write the amount and the project it was for in one of the comments sections on this tab. Please do not add the amounts against another project as this will make that project's profile incorrect.

Q	On the 5% early CDEL we are in a position where we have spent this in full in this period, I am putting it against the most advanced projects but in doing this the calculation for the CDEL seems to be incorrect as this is being paid back when it is removed from our capital payments. Can you explain please?
A	The 5% early CDEL payment was calculated on the total value of a Towns deal. It was paid out on the total value of the deal to support places with as much initial funding as possible. We reconcile this internally by removing 5% from all future capital payments. The final reconciliation will be slightly larger than 5% to ensure the full amount is repaid. The figures reported per project should be spend on that project,

	no matter which payment allocation it has been used from (5% early CDEL or specific project payments).

Q	We have spent all the 5% early CDEL on one project, do we just put this against that one project or split it between all of our projects?
A	We require you to detail the spent funding per project, the 5% early CDEL and regular project funding needs to be separated on lines 38 and 39 and this will total in line 40. See below:

Project 1:

Note: this table should only include funding received through the Towns Fund. It should not include co-funding, which should be reflected in the "Other Funding Sources" table below.	Before 2020/21	Financial Year 2020/2	
		H1 (Apr-Sep)	H2 (Oct-Mar)
		Actual	Actual
Towns Fund CDEL which is being utilised on TF project related activity (For Town Deals, this excludes the 5% CDEL Pre-Payment)	£0.00		
Town Deals 5% CDEL Pre-Payment			
How much of your CDEL forecast is contractually committed?			
Total Towns Fund CDEL	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Q	We have a project that is complete but are holding back 5% on retention to the contractor which will be paid in November, how do we report this?
A	The payment should be profiled in the financial year the spend occurs.

Q	We have brought forward some funding for this year, we didn't profile individually the Programme Management costs so if we enter these at the top of the page how does this work for our payments?
A	If you have never had Programme Management profiled separately and these costs were built into each project, then please continue reporting as such.

Q	How do we report when we have used freedoms and flexibilities, for example if we borrow funds from another project?
A	You need to report the actual spend on projects and in the comments box for that project you can provide an explanation on what you have done in terms of freedoms and flexibilities. Financial profiles here need to be actuals showing what you have spent and are planning to spend in the next financial year.

Q	The boxes are greyed out for spend beyond 30 September 2024, how do we profile forecast FHSF spend into next financial year?
A	Most FHSF grant funding will be spent by March 2024. Where you can demonstrate there is need for an extension to the spend deadline, to 30 September 2024, we will need you to set out how much of the grant is expected to be spent by 30 September 2024. The FHSF spend may include sums contractually committed by 30 September provided it is for works/activities delivered within the 2024/25 financial year.

Q	Where do we report Local Authority Match funding for Programme Management Costs? When Programme Management costs were reported as a separate project line we could report this easily.

A	If you can attribute this to a number of projects then you can report it between them all in the match funding section, or just attribute it to one project if you so wish noting this in the comments box.

Q	How should we report underspends and how will this impact on payments?
A	You should outline what you have spent, and at what point you forecast you will spend the remaining balance. For example, if you were paid £2m and have only spent £1m of the grant, you should declare the first £1m as spent and then outline how and when you plan to catch up on the remaining £1m. We will manage any reconciliations centrally so you should not request a reprofile if you have underspent or overspent at a project level.

Q	How will the 5% capital advance payment be calculated and how will it be reconciled?
A	The advance payment was paid out as a capital payment, based on 5% of each town's total deal. We will make a 5% adjustment on each capital payment until the amounts are reconciled. The 5% payment did not include any revenue, so RDEL payments will continue to be made in full.

Q	There is reference to Towns Fund CDEL only. Should we include the FHSF grant here?
A	Yes. The Towns Fund terminology is used with reference to Towns Deals and Future High Streets Fund.

Q	What is CDEL? Is FHSF all CDEL?
A	CDEL (Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits) refers to grant funding that may be used for capital spending only. Yes. The Future High Streets Fund is a capital grant programme.

Q	What should be recorded as spent?
A	Money that has been defrayed or costs incurred that are yet to be paid.

Q	What should be recorded as forecast?
A	The forecast spend should include the amount that you currently forecast will be spent in each financial period. This may differ from the grant allocation profile in the MOU or your Annex A1 document Please use the 'Finance' comments box to explain any difference in the forecast.

Q	The form asks for details of how much of our forecast spend is contractually committed. How is this defined?
A	Contractual Commitments – Contracts that the organisation has already signed, or likely to be signed in the short term. We need to know how much of the forecast spend relates to contracted work where the local authority has entered into a formal arrangement to pay for goods or services.

Q	Should we include contingency funding (FHSF only) in the financial reporting?
A	Yes. If you have profiled contingency, please include this in Section C.

Q	Are we expected to fully spend the full grant allocation in year on town projects, or can we manage the allocation using freedoms and flexibilities?
A	Local Authorities should endeavour to spend the grant amount paid by the end of the financial year in which they were paid. Where you are unable to spend the total allocation paid, it will be for the Chief Finance Officer/Section 151 officer to ensure that the financial affairs of the Local Authority are being properly administered. Please use the 'Finance' comments box to explain how you are planning to spend the grant across the financial years including how you may be using, or plan to use, freedoms and flexibilities to manage the finances.

Q	The template asks for the data split between first and second half of the year. We can provide this for actuals but haven't got this level of detail for future forecasts. Would a 50/50 split be acceptable?
A	If you are unable to provide an accurate forecast of spend bi-annually, please provide the annual forecast as a 50/50 split for the meantime.

Q	What if Accelerated Funding is being used as co-funding for FHSF how do we include it?
A	Add it to 'Other' in co-funding tab.

Tab 4b – Private Sector Investment

Q	Is this not just the same information that we have entered in Tab 4a?
A	Tab 4b is solely for Private Sector Funding. Essentially tab 4a is to report all match funding that is secured and unsecured. If you have lost match funding or have any funding gaps that could be filled by private investment you can record this here and add comments or describe actions you are taking to reach a conclusion. We are trying to get a picture of Private Sector Funding gaps to be able to make suggestions or offer support to bridge any of these gaps.

Q	We have a project for a college where they are adding funding themselves, is this classed as PSI?
A	No. Colleges and other further education entities are classed as public sector entities. The private sector consists of industries and commercial companies that are not owned or controlled by the government. This includes businesses that are owned by individuals or other firms.

Q	We have a scheme that maybe funded directly or with a dev partner. The delivery model is not decided yet. For now, do we just reflect what we said in the business plan submission?
A	Yes, please report what stage you are at and then if this changes in the next reporting period you can update then

Q	Are housing associations private sector?
A	Yes they are defined as such by the ONS.

Tabs 5 – Outputs

Q	Please can a link be shared to the output and outcome indicator guidance?
A	The outcome indicator list is available on the towns fund website.

Q	I have a Town Deal, do I need to record footfall?
A	For Town Deals recording and reporting on footfall is only a recommendation and is not mandatory, however if you have the data for your own purposes, please do add it as this gives us a much better view on the outcomes of the fund overall. For FHSF projects footfall recording is mandatory

Q	If we have recorded footfall for our FHSF project and also have a TD project covering the same area can we add the figures in to both reports or is this double counting?
A	If the footfall data is relevant to both TD and FHSF projects, then we request that you include the data in both returns and that you note this duplication in the template.

Q	If we don't have the outcome data (yet) do we leave the outcome tab blank?
A	Yes, if you have no data to report you can leave this tab blank. We don't expect forecasts to be completed if you do not have this data. Please see the Towns Fund Website for Outcome Indicator Guidance and Expanded Outcome Indicators to check the frequency of reporting for specific outcomes.

Q	Do we need to submit evidence to prove expenditure and outputs/outcomes achieved?
A	You are not required to submit evidence as part of this reporting process – however, please ensure you collect, and store, required evidence (as detailed in previously issued Annex 1 indicator guidance on M&E) throughout the programme. Evidence will be required for the baseline exercise, and for the evaluation of the programme upon completion.

Q	In each column on the Outputs tab, should we report the change in outputs during the 6-month period or the running/cumulative total of outputs delivered?

A	In each column, please indicate the <u>change</u> in outputs for that 6-month period. This means that, in some reporting periods, you could record a negative change (e.g., particularly for the employment indicators). Please do not input the cumulative change for the indicator – this is calculated automatically by the total and grand total columns, highlighted grey and yellow, respectively.

Q	Why are there less mandatory output indicators than what's appeared in previous guidance and what was included in our M&E Plan?
A	We have removed a number of mandatory indicators from the Outputs tab to reduce the reporting burden on places. However, you still need to report against the three mandatory employment indicators (highlighted blue) that are included at the top of each project table on the Outputs tab.

Q	How do we calculate temporary construction jobs in half yearly reporting when it can take considerable time and effort to calculate?
A	Please contact your supplier or contractor for help in forecasting these. Jobs should only be recorded once – please take care not to double count. They should be recorded when the job is expected to start (i.e., if you expect there to be 100 jobs created in financial year 2025/26, and all are expected to be created at the start of the financial year, these should all be attributed to the first 6 months). Evidence can take the form of a written note or email from suppliers.

Q	If an output or outcome indicator cannot be found in the dropdown lists, how should we report on these?
A	The standard output and outcome indicators have been designed to make it easier for places to select indicators to report against (including how they should measure these) and to bring consistency to reporting across the entire Towns Fund programme, which will make the data far more useful. The department requests that places use these standard indicators unless there is a compelling reason not to. However, we also recognise that we won't have captured all types of outputs/outcomes in our standard lists, which is why we've provided space in the tables on both the Outputs and Outcomes tabs for you to record your own custom (or "additional") indicators. The standard indicators in the dropdown lists are the same in both the main reporting template and the baseline template. Please ensure your selections (both standard indicators and "custom" ones) are consistent across both templates.

Q	Where should towns report back on outputs and outcomes listed in HoT's and subsequent PARs that aren't captured in M&E Plans?
A	Once any changes to outputs and outcomes have been agreed by DLUHC through the Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process, you should provide us with an updated M&E Plan. Subsequently, you should reflect these changes in your baseline template and any future reporting returns.

Q	There appear to be some discrepancies between the Annex 1 Indicator Guidance and the standard outputs in the dropdown lists on tab 5.
A	The indicator regarding green retrofits was slightly amended following feedback from towns. It is intended to be the same indicator and can be used in the same way. For any indictors you are unable to find in the dropdown list, please use the space in the template to record "additional" outputs indicators.

Q	Please could you confirm why a 6 monthly forecast is needed?
A	Forecasts help the department understand when outputs are expected. It is split by 6 monthly periods as places are required to report on project progress every 6 months and having forecasts by 6-month periods will help the department understand when outputs are expected to be delivered.

Q	There is a column to report forecasted outputs beyond 2025/26 but these must all be combined into one figure. Will the department provide an updated template at some point to enable places to report actual and forecasted outputs by 6-monthly periods beyond the end of 2025/26?
A	Yes, at a future date the department will provide an updated template that will enable places to disaggregate the total outputs expected beyond 2025/26, into forecasts and actuals for as many 6-monthly periods as is required.

Tab 6 – Outcomes

Q	I receive a commission every 6 months to submit outcome results. However, this doesn't align to the suggested collection and submission frequency for the outcome indicators on my project found in the DLUHC guidance. Do I still need to submit outcome results?
A	The 6 monthly commission provides you an opportunity to submit outcome data where you have it available. If you are following suggested submission frequencies outlined in the guidance and have not collected outcome data for appropriate indicators, then this is not an issue. FHSF - Places are still required to collect and submit footfall data every 12 months.

Q	The recommended frequency of collection for the indicator suggests I should do this after the scheme has been opened. What should I do if I have multiple projects?
A	If the data being collected for the outcome indicator is only relevant for <u>one</u> project, you should interpret this as after that project/scheme has opened. If the data being collected for the outcome indicator is relevant for <u>more than one</u> project, you should interpret this as after all relevant schemes have opened.

Q	I haven't collected any outcome data for a period. Should I insert 0 into the reporting return?
A	Yes, the new submission tool requires a figure to be provided so please enter 0 if you have no data to report.

Q	I would like to collect, or already have plans in place to collect, data for outcomes more frequently than the suggested frequency in the guidance. Is this an issue and would DLUHC still like me to submit all the data?
A	It is not an issue if you collect data more frequently than what is suggested in the guidance. These are just suggested frequencies. DLUHC would also welcome you to submit this data when available through the reporting commissions.

Q	I am using a custom outcome indicator which is not in the list shared by DLUHC. How frequently should I collect and report on this?
A	DLUHC's suggested outcome collection frequencies have been designed to consider when we believe collection will be most useful and likely to demonstrate change resulting from interventions, noting that it can be costly to collect and submit data. If your custom outcome indicator is similar to one in the standard list, the suggested collection frequency may be sensible.

Q	I am unsure whether I should forecast the outcome indicator. What would DLUHC advise?
A	Forecasting outcome indicators is optional. This activity can be really useful to understand what changes are expected and when these are expected to occur. This can improve learning as projects progress and we are able to better understand changes that materialise. However, we understand it can be complicated and difficult to forecast outcomes. We would only recommend places forecasting outcomes where they believe they can do this robustly.

Q	Should we report outcomes at a programme level or at a project level?
A	The Outcomes tab allows you to select whether an outcome relates to a single project or to "multiple" projects.

Q	We cannot find any relevant outcome indicators in the dropdown. Should this be left blank, where the projects do not have these indicators?
A	Each project is expected to have at least one outcome. If the relevant outcome cannot be found in the dropdown lists, then you can enter the indicator manually in the "Additional Outcome Indicators" section. You should at least be reporting against the outcomes in your M&E Plans.
	Please note that we have significantly expanded the number of outcome indicators in the dropdown list since we issued the "Annex 1 – Indicator Guidance". It is not mandatory to align with these – although it is strongly encouraged; these should be seen as an aid to help places measure outcomes in a consistent manner, which will improve the quality of data at the programme level.

Q	What are the footfall data requirements for Towns Fund interventions?
A	For FHSF places: we have previously communicated the requirement that you must contract a footfall provider for the collection of this data within your relevant area of interest.

	For Town Deal places: while contracting a footfall provider is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that you collect footfall data if your interventions are occurring in or around the high street or town centre or if your intervention is aiming to bring more people to an area. Unless there are compelling reasons otherwise, the department expects footfall to be measured using in-situ, electronic footfall counters. We expect data to be broken down by monthly time periods (although places may have their own use for looking at specific times of day (e.g., day and night-time economies) or days of the week (e.g. implementation of a new market in a square)) but we only ask you to report these data annually. We have commissioned you (November 2022) to provide baseline data to help establish what footfall was like prior to the Towns Fund intervention.

Q	How frequently does footfall data need to be provided?
A	Our original guidance stated that footfall data needs to be submitted on an annual basis, but the footfall section in the reporting template will always remain unlocked, so you are able to provide it on a more frequent, 6-monthly basis if you wish. Regardless of when you submit your footfall data, it needs to be broken down by individual month at a minimum (we request it by month in the templates, but we may request more granular data on a case-by-case basis as part of our programme evaluation activities). If this is not possible given your current data provider, then please notify the Towns Fund team.

Q	What methods can we use to measure footfall?
A	Our original guidance stipulated that footfall measurements should be made using in-situ, electronic footfall counters. This remains our strong preference. However, we are aware that some places may have had existing contracts that relied on GPS data (or other), and it may not be possible or value for money to change provider. Where footfall is not measured using in-situ, electronic footfall counters, we expect places to be able to provide a compelling rationale for why the preferred methodology was not deemed appropriate, as well as evidence to demonstrate the robustness and accuracy of the alternative data collection methodology.

Q	We have multiple footfall count routes. Do we need to provide data for all routes?
A	There may be multiple cameras collecting footfall data for the same project. Depending on the location of cameras and their proximity to the intervention area either an average for the area or data from just one camera should be reported. It may be appropriate to submit the same footfall count or different figures for other projects depending on their proximity to each other. The template has multiple tables for recording footfall where appropriate – you need to use the "+" symbol to reveal these. Multiple tables then allow you to record footfall for multiple projects and, on each table, you are able to specify which projects the data relates to.

Q	We have not been collecting footfall for a year, so the yearly month-on-month change is not yet available, what do we report?

A	Use the baseline template to provide the earliest relevant footfall data that you have available. We understand that if you don't currently have a year's worth of data that you cannot yet report the year-on-year change, but it would be good if you can advise when this year-on-year change data will be available (e.g. through your cover email).

Q	Is the year-on-year monthly change in footfall comparing months in different years, for example the % change between April 2020 and April 2021?
A	Yes. At the early stages of reporting, this will rely on the baseline data collected prior to delivery commencing, which can then be used to calculate change in subsequent years.

Q	If we change our footfall data provider during delivery will this cause a problem? If this has happened, should we explain it within the report somehow?
A	Unfortunately, this will reduce the usefulness of the data and therefore changing provider is to be avoided if possible. However, if a change of provider has occurred then please indicate this both in the reporting template (by using the "highlight" or "fill" tool to differentiate the two different sources of data) and in your cover email.

Q	If we think an outcome measurement (e.g., footfall) is erroneous or inaccurate due to, for example, building works disrupting people's activities, then how should we reflect this in the reporting template?
A	If an outcome measure has fallen but is still believed to be accurate (e.g., footfall dropped because a street was closed for building works) then please still report this as it's useful information. If you are able to explain fluctuations due to known events, then please explain these in your cover email but be reassured that we understand there will be fluctuations in the data and this won't be automatically flagged as a concern. If, however, a reading is judged to be inaccurate for whatever reason (e.g., equipment failure), then please leave the column blank and, again, please explain this in your cover email.

Tab 7 - Risk Register

Q	Some key programme risks also apply to projects. Can these risks be repeated, or should the risks be different?
A	We expect that there might be some overlap in the programme and project risks. If this is the case, please add the risk to both sections.

Q	What level of detail is required for the project risks?
A	For each risk, we have asked for detail regarding the nature of the risk, the consequences should it materialise and the mitigations you are putting in place as preventative actions.

Q	Should 'Tab 7 - Risks' only be completed for projects where Summary Documents are approved?
A	Yes

Q	Can we provide the project risk registers used by the local authority rather than recreating it in the performance template?
A	We are unable to accept risk registers in a different format for the performance reporting cycles. This is because the template has a built-in system, which is instrumental to the aggregation of the and review process.

Q	Do we still need to report risks on projects that are complete?
A	No

Q	If risks have changed since the end of the reporting period in March, do we report from that point in time or update to what the risks are now?
A	We understand risks will change over time so please report these from the most up to date perspective as possible.

Q	If we have more than three risks for projects what do we do here as we cannot add extra lines?
A	Please just add here the top three risks for each project, we understand you may have more when you are reporting internally but we only need to see the top three at the moment in time that the return is completed.

Q	Should programme and projects risks change with each reporting period as the programme progresses?
A	Yes, it is expected that risks will evolve as the projects progress. You should provide an update of the top live risks for the programme/projects, along with their proximity ie whether that be in the next six months, year, or years. For example, if you previously reported a procurement risk that is no longer relevant, as the procurement process has now completed, it can be removed from the risk tab.

Project Adjustment Requests (PARs)

For the latest PAR guidance please see here

Q	I have a Project Adjustment Request that hasn't been approved yet. How should I complete the form?
A	In the instance that you do not receive approval of your Project Adjustment Request (PAR) in time for submission, please proceed with a return based on the current project without the proposed amendments. Please ensure the PAR status is selected on the Programme Progress tab and provide narrative within the return that the project is subject to a PAR and the impact of this.

Q	What should we do if we are about to request a PAR?
A	Please proceed with a return based on the current project without the proposed amendments. Please ensure the PAR status is selected on the Programme Progress tab and provide narrative within the return that the project is subject to a PAR, the likely impact and when it is anticipated it will be sent to DLUHC.

Q	What if I want to move money in a particular project within financial years will this require a PAR?
A	No, if you have over or underspent on a project this financial year, there will be an opportunity to declare this in the performance monitoring return. This will inform payments to you next financial year. You should not submit a PAR.

Q	One of our projects is slipping but we are trying to claw back time, so changeable and this will affect profile spend. When do we submit the PAR?
A	Please contact us for advice via the towns fund inbox, copying in area team representatives. You should continue to report on your project as it currently stands.

Q	Do we need a PAR if we are expecting outputs to be delivered later than originally planned?
A	No, a PAR is not required if you are still expecting the outputs to still be achieved at a later date. Please email the towns fund inbox for specific PAR queries towns.fund@levellingup.gov.uk

Technical Issues

Q	We are having some problems with the Excel form. + and – buttons are locked. Do we need a password to fix?
A	You should not require a password to unlock this functionality. However, if you are experiencing technical issues please email and send any screenshots available to Towns.Fund@Levellingup.gov.uk.

Q	The Traffic Light System doesn't seem to be working correctly.
A	The Traffic Light System is guidance only. If you are content that a section is complete even though it is showing amber, please continue to progress through the template. You are welcome to note in the return email of any section where a green light is not showing but you are satisfied of its completion. The new submit tool will also validate your return fully and ensure fields are correctly completed after the template is uploaded.

Other

Q	Have Area Leads been appointed to work with local authorities regarding FHSF projects?
A	Yes. FHSF places should now engage with Area Leads regarding their FHSF projects.

Q	Please can you confirm how long after the FHSF spend deadline we will be required to continue with monitoring and evaluation?
A	For the duration of the programme lifecycle. You may also be required to continue monitoring on some outputs for up to three years following the completion of projects unless agreed otherwise with DLUHC.