



**Housing & Land Delivery Board**

**Monday 16 July 2018 at 10.00 am**

**Minutes**

**Present**

Councillor Mike Bird (Chair)	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Sharon Thompson	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Peter Bilson	City of Wolverhampton Council
Bill Blincoe	Coventry and Warwickshire LEP
Councillor Shaun Keasey	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Roy Stokes	Environment Agency
Karl Tupling	Homes England
Councillor Matthew Dormer	Redditch Borough Council
Councillor Nic Laurens	Shropshire Council
Councillor Ian Courts	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Daren Pemberton	Stratford on Avon District Council
Councillor Peter Butlin	Warwickshire County Council
Kevin Rodgers	West Midlands Housing Association Partnership

**In Attendance**

Gareth Bradford	West Midlands Combined Authority
Eleanor Young	Blackstock Partnership
Carl Craney	West Midlands Combined Authority
Kate Martin	City of Wolverhampton Council
Jasbir Kaur	Warwickshire County Council

**Item Title  
No.**

**1. Apologies for Absence (if any)**

Apologies for absence had been received from David Cockroft (Coventry City Council), Simon Marks (Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership), Councillor David Humphreys (North Warwickshire Borough Council), Councillor Paul Moore (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council), Councillor Steven Claymore (Tamworth Borough Council) and Councillor Peter Butlin (Warwickshire County Council).

**2. Declarations of Interests (if any)**

No declarations of interest were made in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

**3. Nomination of Substitutes (if any)**

No nominations of substitutes had been received.

#### **4. Chair's Opening Remarks**

At the invitation of the Chair introductions were duly made. He apologised that all the documents for consideration at the meeting had not been circulated in a timely manner and he assured the Board that this would not happen in the future. All papers would be circulated in sufficient time to afford members the opportunity to read them and consult with Officers as appropriate.

He advised that all future meetings of the Board would commence on time and that he did not believe in holding meetings for meetings sake.

He commented that the last meeting of the Board had been held in February 2018 but that going forward the Board would meet on a bi-monthly cycle with updates being made in the intervening period as necessary.

#### **5. Minutes of last meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **6. Matters Arising**

Councillor Ian Courts referred to Minute No. 10 (Matters Arising) insofar as it related to the provision of further information with regard to the award of £3.690 million to Telford and Wrekin Council to assist in bringing forward approximately 540 housing units across that area. At the meeting held on 21 February 2018 he had expressed concern with regard to this award given the discussions held under the Duty to Co-Operate requirements and the stance taken previously by Telford and Wrekin Council. It had been agreed at that meeting that a detailed clarification on the background to this matter and the decision be provided to all members of the Board. He reported that, despite the passage of time since the last meeting he had still not received the information requested.

The Chair commented that there needed to be an improvement in communication to members of this Board and for it to be provided in a timely manner if the Board was to operate effectively. Councillor Ian Courts reminded the Board on the need to recognise what was happening within the various Housing Market Areas.

Resolved:

That a detailed report on this outstanding issue be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

#### **7. Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan - Update**

Gareth Bradford presented a report which updated the Board on progress on the development of the Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan (SIDP) which was a key recommendation of the West Midlands Land Commission, the subsequent Land Delivery Plan and the recent Housing Deal agreed with HM Government. He assured the Board that the SIPD was not intended to supersede Local Plans prepared by the local authorities.

He explained that the SIDP had been built from emerging and adopted plans in order to set out a framework for growth that included priority sites and growth areas and associated infrastructure requirements and the actions participating authorities, including the WMCA and its strategic partners, Homes England, TfWM, HS2, Network Rail and the Highways Agency, would take to support the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities in the region. Eleanor Young advised that the SIDP had been developed in close liaison with Officers from the respective local authorities. She referred to Map 4 and an error with regard to the Bus infrastructure in Coventry which would be amended before the consultation process commenced.

Councillor Ian Courts raised the following questions and points:

- i) The reference on page 7 to agreeing the consultation – with whom and by whom?
- ii) The reference on page 33 to ‘quality’ – this meant different things to different people and needed to be supplemented and reference made to ‘place making’
- iii) References to ‘Affordable Homes’ – this required explanation and needed to reflect the need for more starter homes and smaller homes to be provided;
- iv) Pages 40/44- an explanation was required on how the 27 corridors related to ‘Inclusive Growth Corridors’
- v) The reference on page 54 to the adoption of a ‘brownfield first approach to the development of land’ – the need to include reference to wider environmental improvements including ‘green credentials’.

The Chair reminded the Board that the intention of the SIDP was not to conflict with Local Plans. Councillor Peter Bilson supported the comments now made and welcomed the report but commented that it was deliverability upon which the success of the Board would be judged. He suggested that once the consultation exercise commenced the Board would be better placed to assess the support it would receive.

Bill Blincoe commented on the work being taken on the development of Local Industrial Strategy and suggested that this and the SIDP needed to be prepared in parallel with cross referencing and cross checking as necessary. He opined that the SIDP was primarily focussed on housing matters although employment matters were referenced and, on this basis, all references to employment should be removed. Gareth Bradford reported that he did not agree with this approach, and that housing and employment needed to be looked at together in the SIDP. The limited reference to specific employment sites within the SIDP was due to awaiting the forthcoming strategic employment sites study. He advised that the SIDP had been developed in consultation with the WMCA Industrial Strategy Team.

The Chair commented that he understood that revisions to the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) were to be published shortly and this would need to be reflected in the final iteration of the SIDP. Furthermore, the Board needed to have regard to the changes in the retail sector with the likelihood of a number of town/city centre retail units being converted to use as residential properties.

With regard to the latter point, Councillor Ian Courts commented on the rapid

change in the past three months within the retail sector as a whole with many well known High Street retailers withdrawing from the sector. He reported that the affected properties were often in central areas but the properties in question not being owned by the retail operators. Resolving issues with the freehold owners was often problematic but he suggested that the WMCA could have an integral role to play in town centre regeneration in addressing such issues. The Chair commented that mapping out ownership of former retail units would be a useful starting point.

Councillor Daren Pemberton commented that responding to the rapid rate of change posed a potential problem. He was of the view that residential use of former retail premises would become commonplace. He suggested that the issue needed to be approached from a strategic perspective rather than in a piecemeal way with a regional approach being developed.

The Chair commented that the location of retail centres had been used previously to determine the location of residential areas but that this could change going forwards. He reminded the Board on the need to use finite resources carefully in providing infrastructure to service residential and retail premises. In particular, he suggested that advice on sustainable drainage systems would be a useful part of any future design guidance produced and published by the WMCA.

Roy Stokes advised that the Environment Agency was best placed to assist in addressing both 'contaminated land' and 'flooding' issues referred to in the SIDP and was keen to be of assistance.

Jasbir Kaur commented that the document waited until page 19 until it began to explain its purpose and suggested that the 'Executive Summary' should include the bold point. This view was supported by the Chair. Jasbir Kaur also referred to the report published recently by Savill's in relation to changes on the average High Street which indicated that footfall had decreased but 'click and collect' transactions had increased.

Councillor Shaun Keasey advised that Dudley MBC had taken a conscious decision to reduce the retail offer in Dudley Town Centre with priority being given to quality rather than quantity. Redundant units would be converted for residential use.

Karl Tupling welcomed the report supported by work being undertaken on site pipelines and a Land Delivery Plan. He advised that the SIDP document was 80% there in his view and would put the WMCA and partners in a very good position to secure funding from HM Government. With regard to 'affordability', he suggested that the trajectory of affordability changes be monitored as such data could prove very useful in discussions and negotiations with HM Government. He reminded the Board of the need to have regard to the various Housing Market Areas within the region.

Councillor Daren Pemberton questioned the reliability of the figures in the SIDP with regard to 'affordability' as he was of the view that the Stratford on Avon District Council area should be in the 9 -12 category rather than 7 (median house price to total annual household income ratio). Gareth

Bradford and Eleanor Young agreed to confirm the source of the data. Gareth Bradford suggested that a report on affordability using local statistics be considered at a future meeting. He reported that a recent study had indicated that the recent increase in house prices in the West Midlands was the highest of any UK region.

Councillor Daren Pemberton commented on the need for hard discussions with development companies in relation to the type, quality and density etc. of development.

Resolved:

1. Subject to the various points above:
  - a) The timely progress in taking forward the development of the Spatial Investment Delivery Plan (SIPD) in accordance with the outline scope and timetable discussed and agreed at the meeting held on 21 February 2018 and subsequently in the Housing and Land Steering Group on 24 April 2018 be noted;
  - b) That the proposed Consultation draft of the Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan be approved;
2. That a report on 'affordability' making use of local statistics be submitted to the next meeting of this Board.

#### **8. Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (Including the authority holding that information).

#### **9. Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) - Update**

At the request of the Chair, Gareth Bradford explained that this matter was being considered in the private session of the meeting as it contained commercially sensitive information.

Gareth Bradford presented a report which updated the Board on progress in taking forward work to secure Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) investment agreed in principle with HM Government. He outlined the work necessary to prepare a Full Business Case (FBC) in order to draw down funding and the need to seek a delegation to him, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the Director of Finance and the Monitoring Officer.

He responded to various questions raised.

Resolved:

1. That the WMCA Board be recommended to support delegated authority being granted to the WMCA Director of Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the Director of Finance and the Monitoring Officer, to submit the final HIF Business Case to HM Government in August 2018, securing the investment agreed 'in principle';

2. That the accelerated timetable being worked to for submission of the full HIF Business Case relative to other areas in order that a positive investment decision could be received in order to support the Commonwealth Games schemes be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.56 am.