



## Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Tuesday 20 November 2018

**Time:** 10.00 am                      **Public meeting**                      Yes

**Venue:** Room 116, 16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

### Membership

Councillor Peter Hughes (Chair)	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Cathy Bayton	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Paul Brown	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Dean Carroll	Shropshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Mike Chalk	Worcestershire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Stephen Craddock	Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Stuart Davis	Joint Coventry/Solihull Representative
Councillor Alan Dudson	Staffordshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor John Glass	Warwickshire Non-Constituent Local Authorities
Councillor Josh Jones	Birmingham City Council
Councillor Tariq Khan	Coventry City Council
Councillor Angus Lees	Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils
Mike Lyons	Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Ian Shires (Vice-Chair)	Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils
Councillor Stephen Simkins	City of Wolverhampton Council
Councillor Joe Tildesley	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Councillor Lisa Trickett (Vice-Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Sarah Windrum	Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Councillor Ken Wood	Birmingham City Council

Quorum for this meeting shall be 13 members

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact:

**Contact** Tanya Patel, Governance Services Officer  
**Telephone** 0121 214 7689  
**Email** Tanya.Patel@wmca.org.uk

# AGENDA

No.	Item	Presenting	Pages
<b>Meeting Business Items</b>			
1.	Apologies for Absence	Chair	None
2.	Declarations of Interests Members are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they have in an item being discussed during the course of the meeting. In addition, the receipt of any gift or hospitality should be declared where the value of it was thought to have exceeded £25 (gifts) or £40 (hospitality).	Chair	None
3.	Chair's Remarks	Chair	None
4.	Call In Procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provisions within the Constitution relating to Call-In</li> <li>• Call-In - Town Centres Programme</li> </ul>	Chair	1 - 4
5.	Housing & Land Delivery Board - Town Centres Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centres Programme Report</li> <li>• Minutes – 25 October 2018</li> </ul>	Gareth Bradford	5 - 20



**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**

## **Provisions within the Constitution Relating to Call-In**

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee must scrutinise the decision within 10 clear working days of the Monitoring Officer receiving the request for call-in. If it does not meet within this time, or does not conclude its scrutiny of the decision, the decision will automatically take effect at the end of the period unless the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and the relevant portfolio lead have agreed to an extension of the period.

Where the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised a decision, it may:

- endorse the decision; or
- refer the decision back to the Mayor and/or the Authority or committee for reconsideration, setting out, in writing the nature of its concerns.

A decision which has been endorsed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee may be implemented immediately.

Where a decision has been referred back, the Mayor and/or the Authority or the committee shall reconsider the decision at its next ordinary meeting or at such earlier meeting as may be called to deal with the referral or dealt with under the urgency provisions within the Constitution, where the matter becomes urgent.

For these purposes, a decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would, in the opinion of the Chief Executive, seriously prejudice the Mayor's/ Authority's, Constituent Council's or the public's interests.

A decision which has been recommended for re-consideration may not be implemented.

### **Re-considering the Decision**

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (or their nominee) may attend the meeting of the Authority/committee which is re-considering the decision, or where the Mayor is reconsidering the decision, meet with the Mayor prior to their reconsideration, to present the report or recommendations. Where the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee elects to present a report or recommendations, the meeting/Mayor must allow reasonable time to facilitate this.

The Mayor and/or the Authority or its committees may confirm, amend, modify or rescind their original decision.

A decision which has been confirmed or amended may be implemented immediately.

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**Call-In - Town Centres Programme**

In accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the decision of the Housing & Land Delivery Board on 25 October 2018 has been called-in within the prescribed timescale by the following members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- Councillor Cathy Bayton (Dudley)
- Councillor Peter Hughes (Sandwell)
- Councillor Ian Shires (Walsall)
- Councillor Stephen Simkins (Wolverhampton)
- Councillor Lisa Trickett (Birmingham)

The reason for the call-in was stated as:

*There is a clear lack of transparency within the report, supplementary information document and minutes as to the process used leading up to the selection and naming of the sites chosen.*

*The outcomes expected are vague as to:*

- (a) *the outcomes expected;*
- (b) *the time scales for the programme;*
- (c) *the funding and staffing implications; and*
- (d) *next steps.*

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**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**

## WMCA Housing and Land Delivery Board

<b>Date</b>	25 October 2018
<b>Report title</b>	Town Centres Programme
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Councillor Mike Bird – Housing and Land
<b>Accountable Chief Executive</b>	Deborah Cadman – Chief Executive, WMCA
<b>Accountable Employee</b>	Gareth Bradford – Director Housing and Regeneration
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### The WMCA Housing and Land Delivery Board is recommended to:

1. **Agree** that the first wave of the town centre programme should consist of five centres; supplementary analysis will be provided at the Board meeting to inform the selection of the five centres;
2. **Delegate** authority to the Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing and Land to agree the membership of the Regional Town Centre Task Force. The types of expertise and sectors proposed to be represented on the Task Force and its role are set out at paragraph 2.12.

## **1. Purpose**

### **1.1 This report:**

- Updates the Board on the emerging regional town centre programme;
- Seeks Board agreement that five town centres should be selected to act as a vanguard and test bed for the programme in a first wave - with future waves following on from that experience and learning. Supplementary analysis will be provided at the Board meeting to inform the selection of the five centres; and
- Seeks Board agreement that authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing and Land to agree the membership of the Regional Town Centre Task Force whose role will be to champion and support the town centre programme.

## **2. Background**

2.1 There is no shortage of studies, assessments and reports identifying the deep seated structural and cyclical problems affecting the UK's town centres and high streets: from the Portas Review to Town Centre Investment Management to two Grimsey Reviews and high profile announcements of closures or re-structuring at BHS, House of Fraser, and M&S.

2.2 Existing centres are often based around their retail offer making them vulnerable to changes such as the increase in online shopping, out of town retail and changing consumer habits. This in turn manifests itself as vacant units, low end retail occupiers and areas of decline making town centres less attractive as an investable proposition.

2.3 The effects are particularly significant in small and medium sized centres, and secondary areas of larger strategic centres, that are less resilient to change.

2.4 A number of key themes apply to most centres:

- Too many centres rely too heavily on retail. Changing consumer habits and the internet are changing shopping habits along with out of town retail and leisure sites. Centres need to diversify their role to become community hubs incorporating residential, cultural, educational, leisure, business and health uses, as well as retail.
- Many centres suffer from a poor quality built environment, often dominated by cars and HGVs, too focussed on allowing people to travel through efficiently. Centres need to create people focussed environments, safe, walkable, spaces to exchange ideas and places to dwell, whilst enhancing accessibility by a range of transport modes.
- Consumers increasingly expect data and technology to be integrated into their day to day experience and make life easier, including, broadband, Wi-Fi, Artificial

Reality, Smart technology and future innovations. Centres need to embrace changing technology.

- Many centres have land ownership issues, either with multiple ownership of land, making interventions and land assembly difficult or with investment priorities not always in the interests of local communities. Strong local governance is required, with full engagement with people and business

2.5 Town centres will need to re-invent themselves as modern centres that function to meet these challenges head on and provide a centre that meets the needs of residents if they are to remain viable as centres and improve the wellbeing of residents that would otherwise suffer in failing town centres.

#### The Town Centre Programme

2.6 The town centre programme will support local councils to accelerate their plans to regenerate and renew their town and district centres, bringing Combined Authority resource, support and expertise as required to help turn those plans into reality and accelerate them. This is an opportunity to approach town centres in a new and exciting way in a limited number of pilot centres, developing the programme collaboratively with local authorities, residents and other stakeholders and testing a range of available tools and approaches such as evidence gathering, stakeholder mapping and engagement, asset management and planning tools/powers etc. First wave centres will benefit from combined authority resources in terms of funding and staff resource and act as a test bed for interventions but all centres will benefit from transferable interventions and lessons learned whether they form part of the programme or not.

2.7 The programme is not seeking to duplicate the work already being undertaken by local authorities and other stakeholders in the region; rather the programme will compliment and build on existing plans, strategies and frameworks already prepared or under preparation and be developed in collaboration with the LEPs and local authorities.

#### Actions to date

2.8 Following strong interest expressed at the Housing and Land Delivery Board in July, the WMCA wrote to the seven constituent authorities seeking expressions of interest for identified centres to form part of the first wave of the town centre programme. Since then a discussion has taken place at the Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group on the programme, key criteria and approach and there has been collaborative working with a dedicated sub group of officers from each of the seven constituent authorities. Their focus has been to consider the identification of, and rationale behind, the centres which would form the first wave.

2.9 A desk top analysis of potential sites has been undertaken by the sub group. The analysis provided an initial qualitative assessment of each town centre, based on information provided by local authorities in response to a series of questions posed on defined characteristics, qualities, etc. Supplementary analysis will be provided to the Board to inform the selection of five centres for the first wave of the programme

- 2.10 It is proposed to assess the programme over the coming months with a second wave commencing in approximately six months' time. This would be open to all constituent and non-constituent members where they would like support.

#### The Regional Town Centres Task Force

- 2.11 Strong, vibrant, healthy and inclusive town centres are an essential part of the West Midlands' economy and social fabric. WMCA is proposing to establish a Regional Town Centres Task Force to champion our town and city centres locally and nationally, explore and influence the national agenda and help support local partners in deploying targeted interventions in our centres.

- 2.12 Given this remit, membership of the Task Force will need to include a variety of public and private sector organisations whose representatives can deliver theory, best practice and practical support. Governance arrangements will need to be put in place to ensure that the knowledge and innovation can be shared with commercial organisations, local communities and others so that they can be quickly turned into action. The types of organisations who could make a difference are listed below; their knowledge and expertise, translated into local action, could make the West Midlands an exemplar of good practice on a matter of national interest.

- Academia
- Advisory
- Commercial property
- Finance
- Government
- Housing
- Local Government
- Public Services
- Retail, leisure and other town centre uses

#### Next Steps

- 2.13 Once a decision has been made by the Housing and Land Delivery Board on the town centres to form the first wave of the programme, each will be the subject of further, more detailed analysis with local partners under a number of headings. This needs to be proportionate but needs to provide the evidence to demonstrate that interventions are deployed to tackle problems, not symptoms, maximise opportunities and address challenges. This will help ensure that each town centre can deliver effective and meaningful change in the timescale required. Arrangements for monitoring progress on delivery will also be put in place.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of approving the recommendations within this report. Any investment into the chosen sites by WMCA will require appropriate funding to be identified and the budget approved in line with WMCA governance processes.

#### **4. Legal Implications**

- 4.1 Section 113A(1)(a) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 gives the CA a power of competence appropriate for the purposes of carrying-out any of its functions. Part 4 of The West Midlands Combined Authority Order 2016 (2016 No 653) confers that the functions relating to any Economic development and regeneration in the constituent councils are exercisable by the CA. Part 3 of The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 confers the functions corresponding to the functions of the Housing Community Agency has in relation to the combined area.
- 4.2 Part 7 of the Mayoral of The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 confers the power to pay Grant (pursuant to s31 of the Local Government Act 2003) to the Mayor with assistance of members and officers of the Combined Authority.
- 4.3 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report. However, the proposals set out in this report may have legal implications in the future which will be considered at the appropriate time through future reports as necessary

#### **5. Equalities Implications**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted to identify key equality implications and engagement needs for the overall programme.

#### **6. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 6.1 An important success factor for the programme will be the extent to which it promotes inclusive growth. Individual interventions have the opportunity to address this through the programme.

#### **7. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

- 7.1 First wave centres will demonstrate a reasonable spread of activity across the conurbation. Future waves of the programme will be open to all constituent and non-constituent members so the spread of activity could be widened, cascading benefits to other areas. In addition, sharing learning from the pilot centres is a crucial part of the programme and lessons learned will apply across the region.

#### **8. Other Implications**

None

#### **9. Schedule of Background Papers**

None

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# Housing and Land Delivery Board, 25 October 2018

## Supplementary Town Centre Information

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This supplementary paper has been provided as per recommendation one of the Town Centres Programme Housing Land and Delivery Board Meeting paper. The paper provides supplementary information on the process and analysis for recommending the centres to form the first wave of the programme.

### 2. Selection Process

#### Nominations

- 2.1 Following the initial request, a total of seventeen centres were nominated for consideration as wave one centres:

Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bordesley Green</li> <li>• Coventry Road</li> <li>• Stirchley</li> <li>• Sutton Coldfield</li> </ul>
Dudley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brierley Hill</li> <li>• Lye</li> <li>• St Thomas Quarter, Dudley Town Centre</li> </ul>
Sandwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bearwood</li> <li>• Cradley Heath</li> <li>• Wednesbury</li> <li>• West Bromwich (East)</li> </ul>
Walsall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aldridge</li> <li>• St Matthews Quarter, Walsall Town Centre</li> <li>• Willenhall</li> </ul>
Wolverhampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilston</li> <li>• Wednesfield</li> <li>• Wolverhampton City Centre</li> </ul>

- 2.2 Solihull responded to the request stating that they already have well developed programmes for their centres working with support from the combined authority. The UK Central masterplan sets out the long-term growth and development ambitions of Solihull, and identifies four economic opportunity zones. Three of these contain town and local centres that fall within the scope of the WMCA's Town Centres Programme. These centres are already benefiting from WMCA support through the approved UK

Central Infrastructure Package Strategic Outline Cases (UKC IP SOC Phase 1 and Phase 2). Therefore, at this stage, the town centre programme first wave was not seen as adding value to that existing work.

- 2.3 At this stage, Coventry are not proposing to put forward any town centres for the first wave but are very interested in the programme and shared learning.

#### Assessment

- 2.4 From the nominations, to date five centres were chosen by the officer sub-group to be included within the first wave. It was considered that five centres would be an appropriate number to test and learn from a broad range of interventions, whilst remaining focussed to ensure successful delivery and allow lessons learned to be rolled out quicker across the region. Centres not chosen at this stage will still be eligible in the second wave of the programme. This is an opportunity for live research on town centres and interventions which will benefit centres across the region.
- 2.5 The Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group (HLDSG) agreed that it was important that the programme identifies ways of working that can cascade assistance to all town centres regardless of size, geography or issues and not just focus on the larger strategic centres. The town centre programme will not, therefore, reduce the support or priority of these centres and they remain an important focus for delivery inclusive growth in the region; instead it will allow other centres to access assistance.
- 2.6 Working collaboratively with a sub-group of the HLDSG a holistic approach has therefore been taken to identifying the centres for inclusion in the first wave to ensure that a broad range of centres are chosen to maximise the potential to learn lessons and apply that learning to all types of centre across the region. This has been based on a desk top analysis of the centres using the information provided by local authorities.

#### Recommendation for wave one centres

- 2.7 Based on the analysis above, five centres have been recommended for inclusion in the first wave of centres. The programme will be assessed over the coming months with the benefits of a second wave being considered in six months. A second wave would be open to all constituent and non-constituent members where they would like support. The recommended centres are:
- Bilston
  - Bordesley Green
  - East West Bromwich
  - St Thomas Quarter, Dudley
  - St Matthews Quarter, Walsall
- 2.8 A summary of each centre is set out in Annex A.

## Annex A: Recommended Wave One Town Centre Summary

Town Centre	Strengths and Opportunities	Connectivity	Community & Business	Planning West Midlands Investment Prospectus, Emerging industrial strategy and SEP
<b>Bilston</b>	Identified as an area of significant change. Current priorities are bringing forward proposals for the High Street Link to attract a new offer to the town and provide an events space, focused interventions on poor quality retail units, increasing the quantity and quality of town centre residential stock and significant enhancements to the Metro stop. Now require a place based delivery plan and feasibility work. Opportunity to build on investment in Bilston Urban Village.	Well connected with the exception of pedestrian connections to the Urban Village regeneration sites to the south where the Black Country Route presents a real and perceived barrier to movement. Good tram connections – Bilston is the second busiest intermediate stop on metro line 1.	Bilston BID provides focus. Strong community loyalty to the town focussing on specific sites/issues e.g. former town hall, war memorial etc. Voluntary activity also takes place in terms of cultural events e.g. film screenings	Bilston Area Action Plan and Bilston Neighbourhood Plan (2014).
<b>Bordesley Green</b>	<p>A linear centre with proposed Metro extension to serve the area.</p> <p>Alongside the proposals for the Wheels Site and Environs (Key Opportunity 1) and Cherrywood Road (Key Opportunity 2), a number of opportunities to realise the vision for the Bordesley Green neighbourhood have been identified in the AAP. Mixed use regeneration of Bordesley Green North.</p> <p>Opportunities for land assembly and site acquisitions to accommodate business in advance of metro works. Public realm enhancements (southern side). Parking Strategy - to reflect loss of on-street parking from metro works.</p>	Adderley Park rail station less than a 10 minute walk from the centre. Metro will run along the entire length of Bordesley Green.	East Birmingham & North Solihull Project Board has been established which includes representation from BCC, Solihull MBC, the WMCA, Transport for West Midlands, Department for Work & Pensions, HS2, Homes & Communities Agency, and the NHS.	<p>Emerging Bordesley Park Area Action Plan, which promotes the creation up to 3000 new jobs and the delivery of around 750 new homes (Winter 2018 Examination).</p> <p>Bordesley Green is identified as a Local Centre in the BDP and within the Bordesley Park Growth Area (Policy GA7).</p>

Town Centre	Strengths and Opportunities	Connectivity	Community & Business	Planning West Midlands Investment Prospectus, Emerging industrial strategy and SEP
<p><b>West Bromwich (East)</b></p>	<p>Increased town centre living Proximity to Birmingham Build on recent regeneration 27ha of development sites. Redevelopment of retail sites.</p> <p>Build on New Square shopping development, public realm improvements and improved transport hubs. Consolidation of education facilities of Sandwell College to West Bromwich. Established commercial quarter at Providence Place.</p> <p>Across the wider Black Country region, including more routes through Birmingham City Centre, access to West Bromwich town centre will be even easier.</p>	<p>Generally good with 3 Metro Stops, active Bus Station. Good connection to the Motorway Network via M5 (J2) and trunk road system;</p> <p>Connection to Birmingham and Wolverhampton by the Midland Metro line, which provides tram services every six minutes. Metro line provides access to Birmingham City Centre, Birmingham New Street Station, and HS2 within 15 minutes.</p>	<p>West Bromwich has a central (BID) which co-ordinates improvements to benefit and connect business, retail and the community in the town centre.</p> <p>Linkages and focus on town centre issues is also tackled through a Town Centre / Markets Management team.</p> <p>Existing community links could be improved.</p>	<p>West Bromwich Area Action Plan (AAP) 2012.</p> <p>An interim planning policy statement to update the AAP is currently being considered.</p> <p>West Bromwich Investment Prospectus has been produced</p> <p>West Bromwich Town Centre falls within the Southern (West Bromwich) Triangle Corridor identified in the emerging WMCA SIDP</p> <p>Will develop Town Centre programme strategies in line with National and local industrial strategies, clean growth strategy and the emerging Black Country SEP.</p>
<p><b>St Thomas Quarter, Dudley</b></p>	<p>Historic market town, regional and national tourism, Dudley Zoo, Castle, Living Museum, Canal Trust. Purpose built shopping centres have considerable redevelopment potential. Potential for residential led redevelopment. Land assembly opportunities.</p> <p>Meets the local needs of shoppers, students and office workers.</p>	<p>Metro Extension Bus station refurbishment Autonomous vehicle hub linking attractions.</p>	<p>Strong community and town includes a community building. History provides a strong sense of place. Dudley Town Centre Programme Board established February 2018.</p>	<p>Dudley Area Action Plan (2017) £200 million investment package under preparation through the town centre investment programme.</p> <p>Dudley Town Centre included in the prospectus.</p>

Town Centre	Strengths and Opportunities	Connectivity	Community & Business	Planning West Midlands Investment Prospectus, Emerging industrial strategy and SEP
<b>St Matthews Quarter, Walsall</b>	<p>Opportunities around investment, shopping, living, leisure, transport, public realm and business. WMCA support, both capacity and resource, is required to accelerate and augment the Council's existing plans for the town centre. Opportunity to challenge thinking of how to achieve a thriving and vibrant town centre including the scope for cultural and other events, and how long term maintenance of the physical environment can best be achieved. St Matthews Quarter offers a 'blank canvas' to re-purpose this part of the centre.</p> <p>Recent investment providing modern floorspace, significant leisure investment, historic market, good public transport (train station) and strong local character.</p>	<p>Walsall train station. Good car access but inadequate parking. Proposals to redevelop Bradford Place interchange.</p>	<p>A Town Centre Management Group brings together key businesses in the centre a number of social enterprises active within the town centre including the Vine Trust.</p>	<p>AAP being prepared (found sound August 2018).</p> <p>The AAP and emerging masterplan will provide Walsall Council and its partners with an up-to-date analysis of the health of the centre and areas that it will need to diversify into to remain a focal point for the local communities.</p> <p>Walsall Town Centre included in the Prospectus.</p>

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**24. Town Centres Programme**

Gareth Bradford presented a report which updated the Board on the emerging regional town centre programme and which sought agreement to the five town centres to be selected as a vanguard and test bed for the first wave of the programme. The report also sought delegated authority to be granted to the Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing and Land to agree the membership of the Regional Town Centre Task Force, the role of which would be to champion and support the town centre programme and to provide hands-on support, where appropriate, to the selected centres.

A supplementary report was circulated at the meeting which identified the five centres which were recommended as the first wave of centres. He explained that Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council had not made bids for consideration for inclusion in the first wave.

Councillor Ian Courts referred to the need for flexibility with the implementation of this initiative. This remark was acknowledged by the Chair who urged the Board to seize the opportunity to re-invent town centres including the acceptance that the retail offer would continue to change and the possibility of town centre living becoming more popular.

Gareth Bradford commented on the need for a structured process to assess the success of the criteria used for the selection of the first wave in order to determine how the criteria could be best adapted for the second wave. This matter would be considered at the Housing and Land Steering Group and subsequently by this Board.

The Board acknowledged the difficulties faced by town centres and the traditional market towns in competing with on-line shopping and out of town stores. Councillor Ian Courts commented on the need to identify which interventions would be successful.

Councillor George Adamson reminded the Board of the work which had already been undertaken by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership on town centres and the opportunity to benefit from this work. He also referred to the 'Designer Village' which was scheduled to open in Cannock in 2020 and the need to ensure that this did not affect detrimentally the town centre.

Councillor Richard Overton reported on a development by Telford and Wrekin Council which had focussed on the night time economy but that nationally a number of such premises had encountered financial difficulties. He suggested that HM Government needed to consider addressing Business Rates but acknowledged that, in turn, this affected potentially, funding for local government. He supported the concept of promoting the use of town centre premises for residential purposes.

Gareth Bradford reminded the Board of the interdependencies of the report under consideration with the other two reports to be considered at the meeting (Affordability and Social Housing Supply Proposition and Housing and Land Funding) inasmuch as the town centres would play an important part in delivering affordable housing on brownfield sites and on the need for investments to be made carefully in order to generate a return which could, in turn, be re-invested.

Councillor David Humphreys referred to the problems encountered with securing the build out of developments with planning permission and enquired if there was any way this could be controlled. Gareth Bradford suggested that the sector was waiting to see if there would be an announcement in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget Statement on this matter following the independent review of build out rates conducted by the Rt. Hon. Sir Oliver Letwin MP.

Councillor Daren Pemberton advised the Board of the interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) used by Stratford on Avon district Council where developers were encouraged to submit full planning applications rather than outline applications. A recent planning Appeal decision had also supported the Council's stance in disregarding outline planning applications in the calculation of available land supply. The Council also prepared an Action Plan for each development of over 30 units which identified any barriers to development. These Action Plans were updated regularly and, as necessary, he would, as the responsible Cabinet Member, intervene with developers seeking to ensure developments were progressed. He offered to provide a report on this matter to the Board in six months' time.

With regard to the selected five town centre schemes he questioned how success would be measured. Gareth Bradford advised that progress on early delivery and impacts versus the criteria used to determine the first wave would be monitored and reviewed by the Housing and Land Steering Group and this Board in due course and best practice shared consistently.

Resolved:

1. That the first wave of the town centre programme consist of the following five town centres:
  - Bilston;
  - Bordesley Green;
  - East West Bromwich;
  - St Thomas Quarter, Dudley; and
  - St Matthews Quarter, Walsall
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Lead for Housing and Land to agree the membership of the Regional Town Centre Task Force with the type of expertise and sectors to be represented on the Task Force and its role as set out in the report;
3. That the offer of Councillor Daren Pemberton to present a report in six months' time on the Action Plan process at Stratford on Avon District Council be accepted;
4. That examples of best practice be forwarded to the Director of Housing and Regeneration for circulation to partner authorities.

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