



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Housing & Land Delivery Board

Wednesday 5 October 2022 at 10.00 am

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor Stephen Simkins  
Councillor Charn Padda  
Jo Nugent  
Dawn Ward

Association of Black Country Authorities  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
Homes England  
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local  
Enterprise Partnership

#### Participating in the meeting via Teams

Councillor Andy Mackiewicz

#### Item Title No.

#### 16. Inquorate meeting

It was reported that the meeting was inquorate and therefore the recommendations contained within the minutes would be submitted to the WMCA Board on 28 October 2022 for formal approval and adoption.

#### 17. Apologies for Absence (if any)

Apologies were received from the Chair, Councillor Bird (Walsall), Councillor Butlin (Warwickshire), Councillor Fitzgerald (Cannock), Councillor Gakhil (Wolverhampton), Councillor Thompson (Birmingham) Kevin Rogers and Sarah Middleton.

#### 18. Nomination of Substitutes (if any)

Councillor Gakhil (City of Wolverhampton Council) had nominated Councillor Simkins to attend on his behalf.

Sarah Middleton (Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership) had nominated Delma Dwight to attend on her behalf.

#### 19. Minutes - 20 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2022 were agreed as a true record.

#### 20. Quarterly Report on Housing & Land Portfolio Deliverables and Progress on Housing and Land Annual Business Plan

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration, that provided a regular quarterly update on progress in delivering the High Level Deliverables for the Housing and Land Portfolio as

co-developed with the Housing & Land Delivery Board throughout the year and agreed by the WMCA Board in February 2022.

Councillor Simkins commented that another big priority projects in Wolverhampton had stalled and the need to look at these.

Councillor Mackiewicz enquired whether the WMCA could help make brownfield sites more sustainable in Solihull.

The Executive Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration, Gareth Bradford reported that more Government funding was needed for brownfield sites and would be submitting case studies to demonstrate the need for flexible funding. He advised the board that the WMCA regularly meets with local authority colleagues to identify their priority project and undertook to inform the board of the difficult to deliver projects/sites that coming through the WMCA funding processes.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. Positive progress to achieve the Housing and Land Portfolio's approved Annual Deliverables in Q1 & Q2 2022/23 be noted ;
2. The key performance highlights set out in Section 3 of the report be noted and
3. The positive performance and effective deployment of WMCA's devolved housing and land illustrated by the Single Commissioning Framework schemes summarised in the confidential annex to the report (many of these schemes are now in delivery phase, having progressed through to the end of the process, which shows the role of the WMCA in unlocking, accelerating and problem solving on 'difficult to deliver' schemes) be noted.

## **21. Levelling Up : Trailblazer Devolution Deal - Update**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided an update on progress on the development of the Housing & Regeneration proposals within the West Midlands Trailblazer Devolution Deal.

The Head of Strategy & Analysis, Rob Lamond, informed the board that the devolution proposals could be subject to change due to the changes made within Central Government and referred to the latest proposals set out in section 4 of the report.

The Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration, Gareth Bradford took the opportunity to update the board on Investment Zones and undertook to keep in contact with Suzanne Ward (Environment Agency )to ensure delivery happens on schemes.

The board discussed the importance of estate renewal in increasing the

supply of affordable housing along with the retrofitting homes to deliver economic growth.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. Progress made since the last meeting of the Housing & Land Delivery Board on the development of the Housing, Property and Regeneration proposals within the West Midlands Trailblazer Devolution Deal be noted;
2. The current version of these proposals as set out in the report be endorsed and
3. The ongoing extensive internal and external engagement programme supporting development and testing of these proposals with the new Government be noted and
4. The ongoing engagement and input from the Housing and Land Delivery Board Members in this process be welcomed.

## **22. Affordable Homes Supply Strategy : Discussion Paper**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that set out the work to date on the preparation of an Affordable Homes Supply Strategy and invited discussion on the proposed approach and indicative content.

The Head of Strategy & Analysis, Rob Lamond presented the WMCA's proposed approach to an Affordable Homes Supply Strategy. This included the strategic context (key drivers and key trends) and the vision and approach to the strategy (delivery arrangements and key independencies and links).

Dawn Ward (GBSLEP) commented that many individuals, in particular young people cannot to buy or rent property in the West Midlands and that the region risked losing talent to other areas where housing was affordable.

Rob Lamond reported that he was speaking to universities in the region on this issue and undertook to speak to Dawn Ward further as to how the WMCA could access students.

Councillor Padda (Sandwell) proposed that the vision needs to ensure a supply of affordable homes that are meeting local (affordable).

Rob Lamond undertook to speak Councillor Padda on the matter outside of the meeting.

Councillor Mackiewicz reported on a pilot project in Solihull that helps key workers buy a house (shared ownership) a rate that is cheaper than renting using HRA reserves.

Councillor Simkins considered the WMCA should look at best practice across the WMCA area to ensure the best housing options are utilised.

The Executive Director of Property, Housing and Regeneration, Gareth Bradford reported that the WMCA seeks to add value with regards to affordable housing and would welcome feedback from members and that further to Councillor's Simkin's suggestion would research best practice.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that :

1. Progress with developing an 'Affordable Homes Supply Strategy' as commissioned by the Housing & Land Delivery Board, to help drive the increased provision of a range of affordable homes within the region to meet local needs and establish the West Midlands as the leading UK region in terms of affordable homes and policy delivery be noted;
2. The product of this work will be an integrated strategy that directly supports key policy agendas of WMCA and local authorities through enabling affordable housing delivery and driving advanced manufacturing in construction, zero carbon homes and the design quality and devolution asks be noted;
3. The potential contents and remit of an affordable homes supply strategy as set out in the supporting slides (attached as Annex 1) be noted and
4. The proposed next steps be endorsed.

### **23. Future Homes Strategy Update : Themes and Structure**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration that provided an update on the wide-ranging activity that has been undertaken to develop a new Future Homes Delivery Strategy and programme of targeted action.

The Head of Policy & Planning, Pat Willoughby, introduced the report and the Chair of Future Homes Taskforce, Mark Farmer.

Mark Farmer, CEO of Cast Consultancy and the UK Government's MMC Champion reported on the work of the Future Homes Taskforce that seeks to shape the strategy development programme and to identify opportunities for industry-driven leadership on Future Homes in the West Midlands.

In relation to an enquiry from Suzanne Ward (Environment Agency) as to whether Severn Trent were involved with the Taskforce, Mark Farmer advised that Taskforce would look at water consumption and sustainable drainage along with changing behaviour.

Projects Officer, Rachel-Ann Atterbury outlined the report, the context for the Future Homes Strategy, the four key points of difference which frame the Future Homes Strategy putting the region in pole position, the key themes and structure of the strategy and next steps.

Councillor Mackiewicz (Solihull) considered the need for a vision for the next 5 to 10 years that encourages local suppliers to come into this space and make a long-term commitment.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. Work undertaken to date to develop an integrated West Midlands Future Homes Strategy that establishes the West Midlands as the centre of excellence for low carbon living, modular construction in the UK and demonstrates the WMC is going faster than national regulatory standards due to be introduced in 2025 be noted;
2. The expert Future Homes Taskforce has now been established and is fully engaged in development of the strategy and its successful implementation be noted;
3. The proposed key themes and points of difference of the West Midlands Future Homes Strategy be endorsed and
4. The proposed structure of the Future Homes Strategy be endorsed.

**24. West Midlands Brownfield Regeneration Strategy : Discussion Paper**

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that sought their views on the WMCA's current thinking on the nature and form of West Midlands Brownfield Regeneration Strategy as previously commissioned by this board.

The Head of Policy and Planning Pat Willoughby, outlined the report and advised the board that the brownfield regeneration strategy would bring together the different brownfield, housing and regeneration initiatives, projects and programmes the board is overseeing into a single coherent strategy. Working with local authorities, it was proposed the strategy document that would be produced would be similar to the Investment Prospectus document and that seeks to unlock private sector investment.

Councillor Welsh (Coventry) expressed concerns about brownfield sites being utilised, and the need to include reference to local authorities and other agencies in the document so that it reflected a partnership approach. He reported that the WMCA does not have the powers to intervene in this area and would appreciate a meeting with the Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration to discuss the matter further him with regards to Coventry City Council.

The Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration, Gareth Bradford reported that the document is intended to be a partnership document that seeks to add value like the Investment Prospectus and that he was happy to re-cast the document.

Councillor Welsh confirmed that he agreed the strategy document should be adding value and the report should come back to the board to agree an approach.

Councillor Mackiewicz (Solihull) considered the document should reference economic growth as this was now central to the Government's policy agenda.

The Director of Housing, Property and Regeneration in the light of comments on the report he would defer consideration of the report to a future meeting to enable further work to be undertaken and for discussions to be held with individual local authorities.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that :

The report be deferred to a future meeting.

**25. WMCA & Homes England - Strategic Partnership Opportunity**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that sought discussion and endorsement of the initial conversations held with between the WMCA and Homes England to establish a new strategic partnership, the fifth partnership to be signed by the WMCA under the Housing and Land Delivery Board.

The Head of Strategy & Analysis, Rob Lamond outlined the report and highlighted the principles of establishing a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England.

Jo Nugent (Homes England) reported that Homes England supported the WMCA's Public Land Charter and would look at how land could be utilised to support local plans.

The board acknowledge this positive report.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that :

1. The principles and progress to date on establishing a formal strategic partnership between the WMCA and Homes England to unlock the delivery of new homes in the West Midlands be endorsed;
2. The proposed next steps of work be endorsed and
3. This would form part of the work under the Housing & Land Delivery Board to establish formal strategic partnerships be noted.

**26. WMCA Housing Deal Local Plans : Progress Update**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided a further update on the progress of local plans in the region following a request from the board at its meeting in April that local plans update should be provided at all future meetings. The report also provided a regional overview on employment land supply and demand.

Councillor Mackiewicz (Solihull) reported on a recent inspection visit in Solihull and that he was very disappointed with the inspector's opinion regarding the delivery of the authority's Local Plan for a NEC housing site and that he was seeking clarification on the matter.

The Head of Policy and Planning, Pat Willoughby advised that she would be happy to help Councillor Mackiewicz in any way.

Tracy Darke (Shropshire) updated the board on the status of Shropshire's Local Plan; a final first stage hearing was planned for January 2023.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

The progress update on local plans in the West Midlands be noted.

**27. WMCA Taskforces : Progress Update**

The board considered a report of the Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration that provided an update on the activities of the WMCA taskforces which support the Housing & Land Portfolio and provide vital industry insight, challenge and steer across its range of projects and programmes.

The Head of Policy and Planning, Pat Willoughby introduced the report that was submitted for information.

It be recommended to the WMCA Board that:

1. The positive work and contributions to date of the industry-led taskforces established by the WMCA under its Housing & Land Delivery Board be noted and
2. The recent activity that has taken place around each of the four taskforces in operation be noted.

**28. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**29. Confidential Appendix to Quarterly Report**

The meeting ended at 11.49 am.