



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Housing & Land Delivery Board

Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 10.00 am

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor Ian Courts (Chair)  
Councillor Mike Bird  
Councillor Matthew Dormer  
Councillor Wayne Little  
Councillor Andy Mackiewicz  
Councillor Richard Smith

Suzanne Ward  
Councillor David Welsh

Portfolio Lead for Housing & Land  
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council  
Redditch Borough Council  
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough  
Council  
Environment Agency  
Coventry City Council

#### Item No.

#### 12. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Butlin (Warwickshire), Councillor Jayne Francis (Birmingham), Jo Nugent (Homes England) and Councillor Richard Overton (Telford & Wrekin).

#### 13. Minutes - 10 July 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on the 10 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 14. West Midlands Strategic Place Partnership Update

The committee considered a report of the Head of Strategy & Analysis updating it on the significant progress being made with the development of a West Midlands Strategic Place Partnership following the Trailblazing Devolution Deal announcement in March 2023. The report also outlined the work, engagement undertaken to date, the strategic direction of the partnership and the next steps to formally launching the Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England.

The Chair welcomed the joint up approach between the WMCA and Homes England, as the sharing of expertise and knowledge would be beneficial for the region. In regard to the funding opportunity from Homes England, the Chair sought details of the mechanisms in place for feedback of applications that were unsuccessful. Callum Smith, Homes England, provided detail on the schemes that had been awarded funding and some detail of the evaluation process that was undertaken which captured the strategic regeneration ambition. He also noted that all local authorities would have an opportunity to receive feedback. Councillor Mike Bird considered that schemes that did not use the allocation awarded to them should have those funds reinvested into the unsuccessful projects.

Resolved:

- (1) The significant progress made in developing a West Midlands Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England be noted and endorsed.
- (2) The 2023/24 revenue funding opportunity available for housing and housing-led mixed-used development schemes, where local authorities could submit applications for priority projects, be noted.
- (3) The intent for consultation on the work to date and how best the Strategic Place Partnership Business Plan could support delivery across the region be noted.

#### **15. Affordable Homes Programme and Supply Strategy Update**

The committee considered a report of the Head of Strategy & Analysis updating it on the trailblazer approach to delivering the Affordable Homes Programme in the West Midlands, as set out in the Deeper Devolution Deal agreed by WMCA and the Government in March 2023. The Government had committed to piloting a new, two-phase trailblazer approach to the Affordable Homes Programme in the West Midlands, this programme would provide grant funding towards the supply of new social and affordable housing.

The Chair requested that members be provided with the definition of affordable housing and the criteria used through Homes England scheme / Affordable Homes Programme. He also sought clarity on whether developers and other within the sector had been engaged with. The Head of Strategy & Analysis confirmed that the definition would be provided to members ahead of the next meeting. He also confirmed that developers, organisations and relevant individuals within the sector had been consulted with, along with the need to engage with local authorities to gather localised information and determine their obstacles and how they could be mitigated.

Suzanne Ward highlighted the need to ensure that this strategy addressed climate change in terms of future homes build. Councillor Mike Bird also highlighted the positiveness of the Help to Own Scheme in Wolverhampton and the need to encourage developers to participate in similar schemes.

Following discussions amongst members, it was agreed that a future report would be submitted to the board looking at Shared Ownership as part of the Affordable Homes Programme as well as a review of the Help to Own Scheme.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress following the announcement of the Deeper Devolution Deal in March 2023, specifically on the joint working of the Homes England and WMCA teams relating to the Affordable Homes Programme and the emerging Affordable Homes Supply Strategy be noted.
- (2) It be noted that the ongoing engagement with local authorities and other partners was ongoing, with engagement from Delivery Steering Group meetings and other necessary links into relevant stakeholders.

#### **16. Homes for Future: Draft Strategy**

The committee considered a report from the Interim Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration summarising the work that had been undertaken on Homes for the Future, and the work to date on the implementation plan and communications strategy, including the launch event. Members were invited to make any final comments on the content of the strategy document.

The Chair sought clarity as to whether members of the board would be able to comment on any further draft and when the strategy would seek endorsement. The Interim Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration informed the board the report sought members final comments before being brought back to approval at a future meeting. The Programme Support Officer also informed members that they had seen several drafts of this strategy and informed members of the potential cost implications of the proposed technical standards.

Resolved:

- (1) The progress of the work to date to develop the Homes for Future programme for the West Midlands, with wide-ranging input from the Future Homes Taskforce and local authority partners across the region and other relevant stakeholders, be noted.
- (2) Comments on the final draft of the Homes for Future Strategy be noted.
- (3) The amendments to the report on costs prepared by Cast Consultancy be noted.

#### **17. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.25am.