



# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Housing & Land Delivery Board

Wednesday 17 January 2024 at 9.30 am

### Minutes

#### Present

Councillor Ian Courts (Chair)  
Councillor Mike Bird  
Councillor Peter Butlin  
Councillor Andy Mackiewicz  
Jo Nugent  
Councillor Richard Smith

Portfolio Lead for Housing & Land  
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council  
Warwickshire County Council  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
Homes England  
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

#### Item Title No.

#### 18. Inquorate Meeting

The Governance Services Officer reported that the meeting was inquorate, and the decisions taken at this meeting would therefore need to be ratified at the next meeting of the board on 13 March 2024.

#### 19. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jayne Francis (Birmingham), Councillor David Welsh (Coventry) and Councillor David Wright (North Warwickshire).

#### 20. Minutes - 10 October 2023

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

#### 21. Homes for the Future (Final Consideration)

The committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration summarising the work that had been undertaken under the leadership of the Housing & Land Delivery Board on Homes for the Future. The report also set out a wider range of references and estimate for cost impacts over different timeframes and summarised the work to date on the Homes for the Future Implementation Plan and Communications Strategy.

The Chair commented on how the approach taken within the strategy presented organisations with flexibility in order to achieve the standards, which he welcomed. Councillor Steve Evans commented similarly that a balanced approach was required, whilst also noting that inflation and construction industry issues posed some challenges. He stressed that it was important for current local authority projects to be impacted or delayed upon the new standards being delivered. The Chair encouraged that any issues or delays in projects because of this be raised with either himself or relevant officers. The Head of Policy did however assure members of the intention to ensure that the delivery of existing schemes or pipeline schemes was not affected, and outlined the staggered approach being taken on the introduction of the standards.

Councillor Mike Bird stressed the importance of encouraging businesses to engage more with the West Midlands to encourage them to base their operations the region. This was also echoed by the Chair and other members of the board.

Recommended:

- (1) The progress of the work to date to develop the Homes for the Future programme for the West Midlands, and wide-ranging input from the Future Homes Taskforce and local authority partners across the region amongst relevant stakeholders, be noted.
- (2) The board's comments of the final draft of the Homes for Future Strategy be noted.
- (3) Feedback provided from the Homes for Future event be noted.
- (4) The official release of the WMCA's Homes for Future proposals be endorsed.
- (5) The release of the Government's Future Homes Standard Consultation be noted.
- (6) The progress on the work to date on the Homes for the Future Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan be noted.
- (7) The WMCA's response to the Government's '*The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 Consultation: Approved Document L – Conservation of Fuel and Power and Minimisation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Volume 2: Buildings Other than Dwellings*' which considered the standard in relation to non-domestic dwellings be noted.

## **22. Plan for Growth / Employment Land Update**

The committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration on the progress relating to the alignment of work on the employment land agenda and the Plan for Growth, specifically the activity of the newly established Employment Land Working Group.

The Chair requested future information on the relationship between land availability and the viability of sites, as well as those sites not viable. He also considered that officers should seek further information on assets owned and available, whilst also stressing the importance of promoting manufacturing locally.

Councillor Mike Bird highlighted potential employment land at junction 3 of the M54, as well as the need to continually seek large sites for employment purposes. Those heavy containment site that required additional funds were to be sought from the Government through engagement. He also noted that further engagement between local authorities was required to allow for better direction on those seeking employment sites.

Councillor Steve Evans highlighted that Wolverhampton had the Brownfield Institute, which should in turn be considered the capital of advanced manufacturing for the region, and offered a visit for the committee if this was of interest. He also noted that each authority had information on industrial sites and encouraged that the WMCA added value to help with the remediation of land.

Recommended:

- (1) The work relating to the employment land agenda, specifically the activity of the working group and alignment of the West Midlands Plan for Growth, be noted.
- (2) The board's comments on how the WMCA could add value to the agenda around employment land so as to align with the priorities in the Plan for Growth be noted.

**23. Place Pilots Programme: Update**

The committee considered a report from the Interim Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration providing it with a progress update on the Place Pilots programme led by the Cabinet Office and the continued work with both the Cabinet Office and Local Government Association to scope, establish and deliver the West Midlands programme.

The Chair supported the principles contained with the report but felt that further direction from Government was required. The Head of Property & Strategic Assets commented that regular meetings with the Cabinet Office were being undertaken as well as engagement with other schemes to share learning. Councillor Mike Bird suggested that a task be undertaken to seek crownland within the region.

Recommended:

- (1) The latest work undertaken in collaboration with the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association to continue to deliver the Government's Place Pilots programme in the West Midlands be noted.
- (2) The current direction of travel with regard to delivery of the Place Pilots programme be noted and endorsed.

- (3) The potential of the programme to support regional ambitions for public land in line with WMCA's Public Land Charter be noted.
- (4) The continued engagement with the Cabinet Office and the Local Government Association to deliver the Place Pilots programme be endorsed.

**24. Affordable Housing Update**

The committee received an update from the Head of Strategy & Analysis on the engagement across the region on the Affordable Homes Programme, and information was shared on the established working groups, including representation from local authority officers, registered providers and other partners of the sector / industry bodies. It was the intention that a more in depth detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting.

Councillor Mike Bird requested that a copy of the definition of affordable housing be shared with members. The Head and Strategy & Analysis sought to provide this, but also informed members that one of the working groups implemented would be specifically focused on establishing the difference in affordability across the region.

Recommended:

The update be noted.

**25. Housing & Land Fund Update**

The Head of Strategy & Analysis provided members with a brief update on the Land Fund and the Brownfield Housing Fund and how they would be deployed against the current pipeline. Information was also shared the new fund available through the devolution deal and the negotiations and being undertaken with Government.

Recommended:

The update be noted.

**26. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am.