

Housing & Land Delivery Board

Date	13 March 2024
Report title	West Midlands Place Partnership Update
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Report has been considered by	Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Housing & Land Delivery Board is recommended to:

- (1) **Note** the progress of developing the West Midlands Strategic Place Partnership (SPP), which includes preparation for formally signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- (2) **Provide strategic steers and endorse** the attached Business Plan which is subject to minor amendments before being presented to Housing & Land Delivery Board in March 2024 and formalised in April 2024.

1.0 Purpose

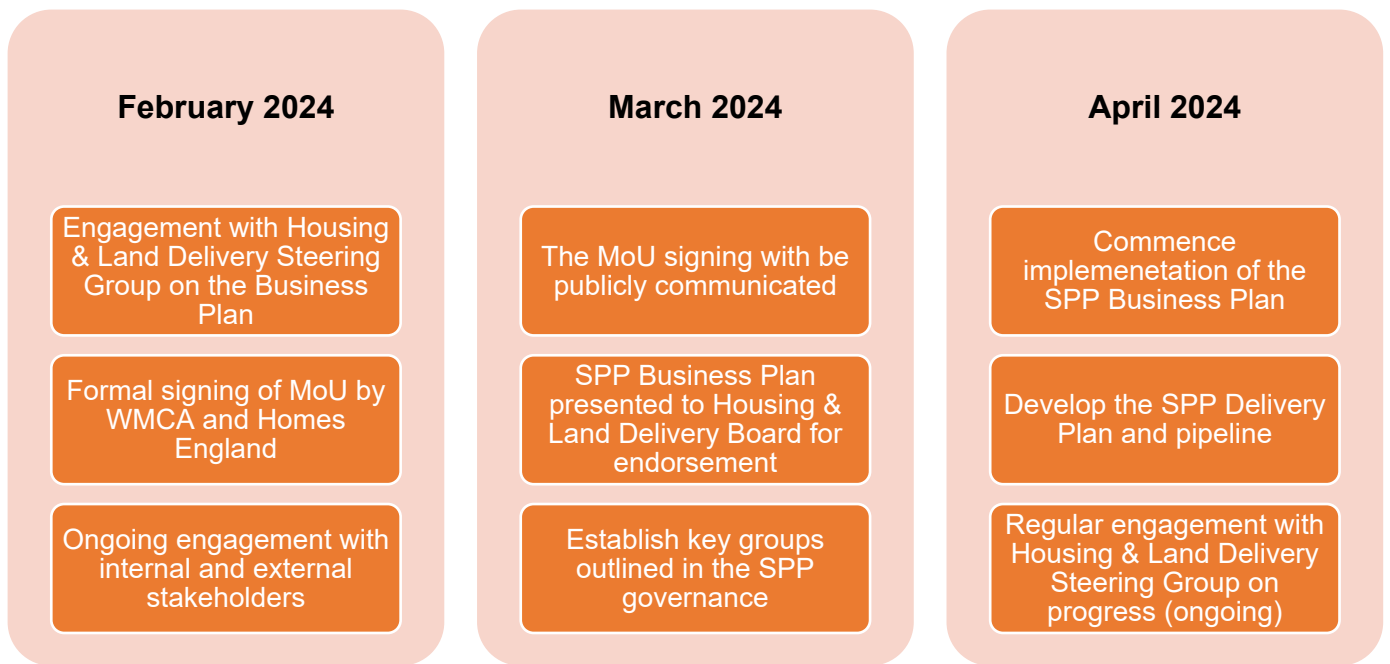
- 1.1 The purpose of this paper and supporting appendix is to update Housing & Land Delivery Board on the development of the West Midlands SPP and seek endorsement and comments from members on the supporting Business Plan in Appendix A, before it is formalised in April 2024.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal, announced in March 2023, committed to developing a Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) between West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Homes England. The SPP model has been developed by Homes England to enable greater collaboration and partnership working at a sub-regional scale, recognising those places with ambitious proposals for place-based growth and regeneration.
- 2.2 Since the last presentation at Housing & Land Delivery Board, WMCA have received approval from their Executive Board and 'Delegated Sign Off' from Executive Directors to sign the MoU, formalising the SPP between WMCA and Homes England. This milestone has followed extensive engagement which has utilised forums such as Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group and Housing and Land Delivery Board to develop the scope and plans for the SPP. The MoU will be formally signed by both parties in and publicly announced in March 2024.
- 2.3 Progress has also been made on the development of the SPP Business Plan and an updated version is attached in Appendix A. The purpose of this document is to set out how WMCA and Homes England will work together to use their funding, expertise and resources to unlock the delivery of 'difficult to deliver' and priority brownfield housing projects.

3.0 West Midlands SPP Programme Update

- 3.1 The programme for developing the SPP remains on track for implementation in the new financial year (2024/25), following engagement across key stakeholders. Upon implementation, the SPP will work to establish a Delivery Plan that will set out specific tasks that WMCA and Homes England will undertake to achieve the agreed Strategic Outcomes.
- 3.2 An overview of the recent programme is provided below:



4.0 The West Midlands SPP Business Plan

4.1 The principles of the West Midlands SPP are underpinned by the region's challenges, opportunities and priorities, committing both WMCA and Homes England to combine the strengths of each organisation to leverage housing delivery.

4.2 The business plan outlines how WMCA and Homes England will deliver the SPP, adding value to the region and setting key planned outcomes to monitor delivery.

4.3 The draft SPP Business Plan is divided into the following areas:

- Section 1 – provides the purpose and contents of the SPP Business Plan;
- Section 2 – sets out details of the West Midlands SPP and the agreed Strategic Objectives;
- Section 3 – reviews the challenges to housing delivery and regeneration in the West Midlands;
- Section 4 – explains how added value can be delivered by working together;
- Section 5 – details the approach to developing a joint pipeline;
- Section 6 – sets out how Homes England and the WMCA will work together;
- Section 7 - outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key parties;
- Section 8 – present the Year 1 priorities and planned outcomes; and
- Section 9 – sets out the proposed monitoring, reporting and governance arrangements.

4.4 Further details can be found in Appendix A.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 WMCA and Homes England will continue to proceed with formalising and announcing the West Midlands SPP, whilst engaging across partners to finalise the SPP Business Plan for implementation in the new financial year (2024/25). In order to achieve this programme, the following steps will be undertaken:
- Formally signing the MoU agreement and announcing the SPP in March 2024.
 - Finalising the SPP Business Plan for presentation to Housing & Land Delivery Board in March 2024.
 - Establishing key delivery and reporting groups outlined for the SPP governance structure.
 - Implementing the SPP Business Plan in April for the new financial year (2024/25).
 - Continuing to engage with Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group members on the development of a Delivery Plan and priority pipeline.
 - Updates and engagement on the implementation of the SPP Business Plan through alternative platforms, including Housing & Delivery Steering Group and Housing & Land Delivery Board.
 - Working with local authorities to build a pipeline of priority strategic sites, which can be unlocked through the SPP, both for the first year of delivery and longer-term.

6.1 Financial Implications

6.1 It is noted that the purpose of this report is:

- To update Housing & Land Delivery Board on the progress of developing the West Midlands SPP with Homes England; and
- To seek strategic steers and endorsement the supporting Business Plan before being presented to Housing & Land Delivery Board in March 2024 and formalised in April 2024

6.2 WMCA has received approval to sign the SPP MoU with Homes England, and this is due to be signed by both parties in March 2024.

6.3 Work is continuing on the development of the SPP Business Plan which sets out how WMCA and Homes England will collaborate to use their funding, expertise and resources to unlock the delivery of 'difficult to deliver' and priority brownfield housing projects.

6.4 Upon implementation, the SPP will work to establish a Delivery Plan that will set out specific tasks that WMCA and Homes England will undertake to achieve the agreed Strategic Outcomes

6.5 It is understood that each of WMCA and Homes England will use their own assets and funding simultaneously to bring forward and deliver appropriate schemes. Any relevant expenditure will be funded from existing resources.

6.6 As previously noted, it will be important to ensure that the use of WMCA funding enables WMCA to count the relevant outputs which are required for the use of this funding, in line with the Terms & Conditions of the relevant grant funding used.

6.7 Any further Financial Implications will be brought to a future Housing & Land Delivery Board Meeting.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 WMCA has the power to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Homes England and to approve the ancillary plan under Section 113(1)(a) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. This statute gives WMCA a power of competence appropriate for the carrying out of any of its functions.

7.2 The appointment of Homes England as a Strategic Partner and the entering into of the memorandum of understanding and ancillary business plan is being made as part of the WMCA strategy under both its economic development and regeneration function and its housing land and infrastructure function to principally promote and further the achievement/fulfilment of the following WMCA objectives:

- The promotion of inclusive economic growth in every corner of the West Midlands Region;
- The connection of our communities by the delivery of transport and the unlocking of housing and regeneration schemes.
- The development of the WMCA as a key regional partner

8.0 Single Assurance Framework Implications

8.2 Any funding sought from WMCA to support projects through the West Midlands SPP will be subject to the governance and due diligence processes outlined in the Single Assurance Framework.

9.0 Equalities Implications

9.1 Both parties are committed to discharging the public sector equality duty in their decision making under the SPP.

10.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

10.1 Homes England and WMCA both aim to work collaboratively with local authorities to ensure that the development around the West Midlands is accessible for all to benefit from.

11.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

11.1 This work is focused on the whole West Midlands Combined Authority area.

12.0 Other Implications

12.1 N/A

13.0 Schedule of Background Papers

- September 2023 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group

- October 2023 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group
- October 2023 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Board
- November 2023 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group
- December 2023 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group
- February 2024 – West Midlands SPP Update to Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group