



Housing & Land Delivery Board

Date	15 January 2020
Report title	Inclusive Growth Corridors: Update on Delivery & Investment Plans for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walsall to Wolverhampton• West Bromwich to Dudley
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Mike Bird, Leader, Walsall MBC
Accountable Employees	Gareth Bradford, Director of Housing & Regeneration Patricia Willoughby, Head of Policy (Housing & Regeneration) (report author)
Report has been considered by	Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group Previous Housing & Land Delivery Boards since inception of the programme.

Recommendation(s):

The Housing & Land Delivery Board is asked to:

- Note current progress on the emerging Delivery & Investment Plans being prepared for the two inclusive growth corridors
- Note the programme for Delivery & Investment Plans in 2020 – namely key milestones and timescales to ensure that the plans are approved and published, in final form, before the end of Q1 2020.
- Provide comments and feedback on the emerging Delivery & Investment Plans so that they can be incorporated, as appropriate, prior to the Housing & Land Delivery Board meeting on 24 February 2020.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 WMCA, working in collaboration with its local authority partners, has embarked upon a programme of development and investment opportunities focused on a number of

inclusive growth corridors across the West Midlands. For two of these corridors, the Housing & Land Delivery Board is managing a programme of preparing a Delivery & Investment Plan. Each plan is anticipated to be finalised during Q1 2020. The Board also agreed that external specialist resources should be procured, where necessary, to assist WMCA and local councils in the production of the plans in the timescale required. The two corridors are:

- Walsall to Wolverhampton, and
- West Bromwich to Dudley

1.2 The purpose of this paper is to explain the background to, and progress on, the preparation of the Delivery & Investment Plans and to invite comments. As with the approach used successfully with the Single Commissioning Framework and Investment Prospectus, a short presentation with the very latest information on each Delivery & Investment Plan will be provided at the Board meeting.

2.0 Background

Growth Corridors and Strategic Opportunity Areas in Local Plans

2.1 There is a long history of bringing together infrastructure investment and new development opportunities in a positive way across the West Midlands. WMCA's Spatial Investment & Delivery Plan (SIDP), approved by the Housing & Land Delivery Board in February 2019, takes its lead from the adopted and emerging Local Plans of the constituent and non-constituent authorities of WMCA. On that basis, a number of 'Growth Corridors' and 'Strategic Opportunity Areas', identified in the SIDP, reflect those documents. In many cases, these major development opportunity areas cross the administrative boundaries of two or more local authorities.

The rationale for area-based programmes

2.2 The underlying rationale for a specific focus on these types of development opportunity areas is that they have the potential to bring together a concentration of public and private sector investment across a broad geography (i.e. beyond the boundaries of an individual site) often maximising the opportunities presented by major planned or committed transport investment.

2.3 The establishment of WMCA provided the opportunity to build on previous work by the local authorities and LEPs to deliver on their long-standing aspirations: delivering inclusive growth by means of a concentrated programme of activity across organisations has the potential to create truly transformational change. The principles of corridor-based working, higher design quality and unlocking new investment lies at the heart of the programme. In the inclusive growth corridors, transport investment, development opportunity (frequently on brownfield land) and untapped potential come together to provide the opportunity to create a critical mass of activity, present new opportunities for strategic investment and strengthen local communities in a holistic way.

2.4 Importantly, the corridor programme takes as its starting point accelerating and securing the delivery of development opportunities, and the land and infrastructure proposals identified in the local plans of constituent and non-constituent members. Adding to that process, it seeks to join up areas of opportunity which extend across local authority

boundaries and provide a comprehensive plan for delivery and investment to guide investment by WMCA, Homes England and the private sector.

The Walsall to Wolverhampton Corridor (W2W)

- 2.5 The Walsall to Wolverhampton Corridor (W2W) has existed in a variety of forms since the development of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (2008) and the subsequent Black Country Core Strategy (2011). The corridor has achieved welcome momentum as a result of major transport investment i.e. the re-opening of the railway line for passenger services between the two centres with proposed new stations at Willenhall and Darlaston. The Housing Deal agreed with Government in March 2018 also included a new Land Fund which would specifically target the provision of new housing in the Black Country and this too will provide additional support for the project.
- 2.6 The Black Country Core Strategy is supported by more detailed Area Action Plans and Site Allocations Documents. A review of the Plan is underway and current work is focused on the accelerated delivery of sites and opportunities, the relationship to enabling infrastructure and establishing a strong baseline of information. This has included the acquisition by WMCA of land required for the new railway station at Darlaston and work on preparing key sites for development and investment by WMCA and others within the corridor.

The West Bromwich to Dudley Corridor (WB2D)

- 2.7 The West Bromwich to Dudley Corridor is described in the SIDP as the Sandwell to Dudley Corridor. It is focused on how to maximise a range of housing and employment opportunities that will be unlocked by the Metro extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, commitments to funding having been secured through the Transforming Cities Fund. An action plan sets out ways in which the economic benefits of the extended Metro route could be maximised and the corridor group is keen to see this implemented in a manner which secures genuine inclusive growth for the citizens and business of the area. In the light of this information, and wider considerations, it is appropriate to extend the area covered by the Delivery & Investment Plan to include the full length of the Metro route between West Bromwich and Dudley town via Wednesbury.
- 2.8 The Housing Deal agreed with Government in March 2018 also included a new Land Fund which would specifically target the provision of new housing in the Black Country and this too will provide additional support for the corridor.
- 2.9 The key planning work (site identification, etc.) is contained in the Black Country Plan and a review of this Plan is in progress. Current work is focused on the accelerated delivery of sites and opportunities, and establishing a strong baseline of information. This has included work on preparing key sites for development and investment by WMCA and others within the corridor.

3.0 Current work

- 3.1 By working together, WCA and local authorities have proved in recent years that they can collectively secure new public and private investment, especially to unlock challenging brownfield development sites. A key aim for the Delivery & Investment Plans is to help continue this work and as such the intended audience has been potential investors (public and private) which can provide the funding to transform each

town centre and deliver inclusive growth. Officials worked closely together to agree the purpose, format and content of each document at the start of the detailed work and subsequent revisions throughout the production process.

- 3.2 It was agreed that typical ingredients for the plans will include:
- Clear and succinct synthesis of evidence on infrastructure, investment, housing, skills, employment, business, etc.
 - An investment framework which articulates the vision; the investment opportunities and challenges; the alignment, ownership, phasing and prioritisation of public sector interventions to realise those opportunities; and presentation of an investment friendly proposition
 - Focus on unlocking housing and employment sites in local plans supported by local councils
 - An approach which embeds complete collaboration with the local authorities, the LEP and WMCA with no reinvention of the wheel.
 - A prospectus which sets out what already exists (i.e. local assets) packaging it appropriately together and presenting it in new ways for an investment audience
 - Clarity on delivery and planning approaches necessary to ensure timely implementation of the framework.
- 3.3 It was further agreed that the Delivery & Investment Plans would need to provide added value to the work of the local authorities and fulfil the specific purposes required. The focus of the external support, agreed with all of the local authorities, and in various Member and officer meetings of WMCA, was agreed as being the production of a framework which supports the delivery of key sites and projects, and both attracts and maximises public and private sector investment.
- 3.4 Officials agreed that external resources should be appointed to act as lead writer and editor, pulling together and analysing the work of the local authorities and WMCA, taking soundings from other consultancies who can act as critical friends and who can support and challenge status quo.
- 3.5 In its final form, the document is intended to be highly visual and comparable in quality to WMCA's Investment Prospectus. The focus between now and February is on producing a Word document and agreeing the content. This can then inform future investment documentation and portfolios for the market.
- 3.6 The audience for the document is primarily investors, developers and public sector investment boards but should also engage the wider community in terms of giving confidence that things are changing.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 We have a comprehensive work programme for each Delivery & Investment Plan. Below are highlighted some critical events and milestones relevant to both plans in the next couple of months.

Month	Milestone
Throughout January	Work by officers of each council and WMCA, with external support, on revised drafting of the Delivery & Investment Plans.
15 January	Housing & Land Delivery Board – update on progress
24 February	Final version of Delivery & Investment Plans to be agreed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board (publication date TBC shortly after)

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from the information contained in the report. Funding for future programmes will be analysed on a case by case basis and projects on which funding is sought will need to demonstrate a clear relationship with the direct outputs required by the single commissioning framework, namely:

- brownfield land remediation
- new homes delivered
- new commercial, retail or employment floorspace delivered.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 113A(1)(a) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 gives WMCA 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 WMCA. Part 3 of The West Midlands Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 confers functions corresponding to the functions of the Homes and Communities Agency has in relation to the combined area. Paragraph 10 (2) (a) of the 2017 Order confers the function of improving the supply and quality of housing to the Combined Authority, 10 (2) (b) to secure the regeneration or development of land or infrastructure in the combined area, 10 (2)(c) to support in other ways the creation, regeneration or development of communities in the combined area or their continued well-being and 10 (2)(d) confers the function of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and good design.
- 6.2 The purpose of the Delivery and Investment Plans to be prepared for each of the two growth corridors is to bring wider access to funds and to assist in acquiring assembling and disposing of land. It is to be tailored to an investor audience which will secure the funding to deliver inclusive growth in the corridors.
- 6.3 It is envisaged that external support will be sought and the focus will be on the production of a framework which supports the delivery of key sites and projects and attract and maximise public and private sector investment.
- 6.4 If the Plans are to be relied upon by third parties it is important that any representations in the Plans are accurate and may require legal input at the relevant stages and

governance structures to ensure that any co-investments including grant and/or loan funding complies with the criteria and governance systems set out in the WMCA Single Commissioning Framework or otherwise.

7.0 Equalities Implications

- 7.1 There are no immediate equalities implications in relation to this report. However, individual strategies and delivery schemes will need to take into account local area needs and local stakeholder needs to ensure the schemes benefit local residents, including harder to reach groups. To that effect equality impact assessments will need to be conducted to understand demographics, key inequality issues and how investment can help address key inequality gaps.
- 7.2 Engagement and consultation with key equality stakeholders is also crucial to ensure that the programme takes into account diverse community needs. Overall, regeneration in some of the most deprived and diverse West Midlands town centres is likely to have a positive impact on equalities but it needs to be done in a way that enables a wide range of residents (including the harder to reach groups) to benefit.

8.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

- 8.1 The proposals themselves are neutral when it comes to inclusive growth. However, implications will arise as investments are made and strategies are devised – in terms of who benefits from those investments and in who is involved in shaping and contributing to them. As such, any programmes should be devised with the responsibility to deliver inclusive growth. The Inclusive Growth Framework and burgeoning Investment Toolkit can be as a guide to shape this process.
- 8.2 Current governance arrangements are satisfactory for building a strategic picture, but the shaping and delivery of specific programmes will need to involve a wider variety of stakeholders in order to be inclusive.

9.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 9.1 This paper relates to two inclusive growth corridors: Walsall to Wolverhampton, and West Bromwich to Dudley. Neither are formally defined with hard and fast boundaries so that development opportunities can be maximised.

10.0 Other implications

- 10.1 None.

11.0. Schedule of Background Papers

- 11.1 There have been regular updates on matters relating to these two inclusive growth corridors which are being progressed in collaboration with the relevant local authorities. These reports have been considered by WMCA's Housing & Land Delivery Board and/or Investment Board.