



## Housing & Land Delivery Board

<b>Date</b>	15 January 2020
<b>Report title</b>	Town Centres Programme: Update on Delivery & Investment Plans for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bilston</li><li>• Bordesley Green</li><li>• Dudley</li><li>• Walsall</li><li>• West Bromwich</li></ul>
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<b>Accountable Employees</b>	Gareth Bradford, Director of Housing & Regeneration Patricia Willoughby, Head of Policy (Housing & Regeneration) (report author)
<b>Report has been considered by:</b>	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 five 'first wave' town centres
- Note the programme for Delivery & Investment Plans in 2020 – namely the key milestones and timescales to ensure that the plans are approved 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 and business partners, has embarked upon a programme of town centre regeneration and revitalisation. For an identified set of pilot town centres (wave 1), the Housing & Land Delivery Board is managing a programme of preparing Delivery & Investment Plans. 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 the production of the plans in the timescale required.
- 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 on each Delivery & Investment Plan will be provided at the Board meeting.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 WMCA's Town Centres Programme was launched in October 2018 and is now proceeding at pace. Five town centres were chosen as a 'first wave' of centres and to act as pilots for the future:
- Bilston (City of Wolverhampton Council)
  - Bordesley Green (Birmingham City Council)
  - St Matthew's Quarter, Walsall (Walsall Council)
  - St Thomas' Quarter, Dudley (Dudley Council)
  - West Bromwich East (Sandwell Council)
- 2.2 Although the focus was initially on those parts of the town centres listed above, it was agreed at the meeting of the Housing & Land Delivery Board on 4 November 2019 that future work on Dudley, Walsall and West Bromwich should cover the whole of these town centres not just part. As a result, the Delivery & Investment Plans are being prepared in this way.
- 2.3 Delivery & Investment Plans are part of the overall Town Centres Programme managed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board. This programme includes:
- The work of the Regional Town Centres Task Force who have helped shape Delivery & Investment Plans and the interventions planned for each centre (see below) bringing their expert thoughts, expertise and ideas to the table.
  - Delivering a series of 'major interventions' which are critical to the transformation of each centre and form key pillars of the Delivery & Investment Plans (e.g. land acquisition, demolition, site preparation works – essentially major capital investment projects). Good progress is being made across the centres on these major acquisitions and investments (e.g. Bull Street, Sandwell).
  - Delivering a programme of 'early impact/soft interventions' - essentially projects which can be delivered more quickly which will help to increase footfall, support the overall regeneration process and demonstrate that change is starting to happen. An indicative list of projects was agreed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board in September 2019 together with a process for working jointly between WMCA and

local councils (and project sponsors) on necessary due diligence, delivery timetables and project definition. Projects are being developed with guidance from the Regional Town Centres Task Force and the town centre working group with delivery planned throughout 2020

- A Town Centres Toolkit is being developed to support the overall programme of interventions.

2.4 As part of the Town Centres Programme, each local authority produced a draft 'Delivery & Investment Plan' for its town centre at an early stage in the process. These plans have provided the basis for the current plans and enabled shared approaches and learning across the five centres.

2.5 A strong recommendation from the Regional Town Centres Task Force was that the Delivery & Investment Plans needed to excite investor interest by setting out a compelling vision and supporting evidence to justify public and private sector investment decisions. The Task Force recommended that the Plans should be capable of justifying public and private sector investment decisions, especially where there are challenging project Budget-Cost Ratios.

2.6 Housing & Land Delivery Board agreed that the Delivery & Investment Plans must bring additionality to what already exists in terms of local plans, master plans, area action plans, the regional investment prospectus, etc. In particular, they should helpfully support schemes (especially those identified by each council as local regeneration priorities) to progress successfully through WMCA's Single Commissioning Framework/private sector investment boards.

### **3.0 Current work**

3.1 By working together WMCA and local authorities have proved in recent years they can collectively secure new public and private investment, especially to unlock challenging brownfield development sites. A key aim for the Delivery and 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 the Delivery & Investment Plans would:

- Provide a framework for delivery and funding interventions in town centres that can showcase tangible, visible change
- Set out the components that each town centre needs to survive and thrive
- Explain who is going to deliver each of the components and why
- Highlight the quick and efficient process that the private sector can access should they wish to develop or invest in the town centre (e.g. planning, procurement)
- Ensure a holistic approach is taken with community engagement, and
- Present compelling and exciting investment propositions on which investors can focus, appreciating the risk and reward equation and public sector enablement in action.

3.3 It was also agreed that typical ingredients of each plan would 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 and prioritisation of public sector interventions to realise those opportunities; and presentation of an investment friendly proposition
- A 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
- 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.

3.4 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 acting as critical friends to 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.

#### 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 all the 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 for the Delivery & Investment Plans
15 <sup>th</sup> January	Housing and Land Board update on progress
4 February	Meeting of Regional Town Centres Task Force at which draft Delivery & Investment Plans will be considered.
24 February	Final version of Delivery and Investment Plans to be agreed by the Housing & Land Delivery Board (publication date TBC shortly after)

4.2 Other work which is currently being progressed at this stage includes:

- A review of the membership of the Regional Town Centres Task Force to ensure that it has sufficient capacity and a full range of skills to address the issues that are being highlighted as a result of work to date.
- Provision of a dedicated secretariat for the Task Force
- Programme management support for the Town Centres programme to ensure that the ambition of the Delivery & Investment Plans is translated into delivery on the ground

- Review of procedural arrangements for funding of projects so that decisions can be made quickly in full compliance with all statutory requirements.

## **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 paper sets out the background to and progress on the preparation of the Delivery & Investment Plans. It is stated that work on the Plans is linked to other streams of work in the Town Centres Programme and that the purpose of the Plans is to excite investor interest and provide a framework for the delivery and funding of interventions in the town centres that can show tangible visible change in the town centre.

6.3 The paper envisages procurement of external specialist resources to assist WMCA and local Councils in the production of the Plans in the timescales required. 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

## **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 the five 'first wave' town centres of Bilston (City of Wolverhampton Council), Bordesley Green (Birmingham City Council), Dudley (Dudley Council), Walsall (Walsall Council) and West Bromwich (Sandwell Council).

## **10.0 Other implications**

10.1 None.

## **11.0. Schedule of Background Papers**

11.1 There have been regular reports and updates on matters relating to WMCA's Town Centres Programme, which is being progressed in collaboration with the relevant local authorities, since the inception of the Programme in October 2018. These reports have been considered by WMCA's Housing & Land Delivery Board and Investment Board.