



West Midlands Combined Authority

Housing & Land Delivery Board

Thursday 4 November 2021 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Mike Bird (Chair)
Councillor Zahoor Ahmed
Councillor Ian Kettle

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

Participating in the meeting via Teams

Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal
Councillor Andy Mackiewicz
Sarah Middleton

City of Wolverhampton Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Black Country Local Enterprise
Partnership
Homes England
Stratford on Avon District Council
West Midlands Housing Association
Partnership
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough
Council

Jo Nugent

Item Title No.

18. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Bill Blincoe, Councillor Dormer, Councillor Hussain, Councillor Welsh and Councillor David Wright.

19. Minutes -15 September 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

20. Quarterly Report on Housing & Land Portfolio Deliverables and Progress on Housing & Land Annual Business Plan

Gareth Bradford introduced the report and also advised the Board of Government's recent budget announcement of a £1.8bn Housing Fund and the opportunity for the West Midlands to secure funding from £300m Brownfield Fund. He added that the WMCA was working with Government on the criteria for the fund and hoped the West Midlands would again obtain a significant amount of funding.

The Chair reported that he had re-iterated brownfield sites first on every occasion rather than building on green belt land and the need to bring forward brownfield sites.

Councillor Mackiewicz enquired whether Government funding for brownfield sites could be utilised for making land accessible as Solihull had a number of brownfield sites that would require funding to make them accessible for housing.

Gareth Bradford advised that he hoped Government would allow the brownfield funding criteria to be flexible as needed to utilise sites for housing.

The Chair undertook to raise the matter with Government next week.

Rob Lamond presented the report that provided a quarterly update on progress to date and the next steps in delivering the High Level Deliverables for the Housing and Land Portfolio and outlined the key highlights since the last meeting including the delivery of the Brownfield Land Fund.

Resolved:

1. That the positive progress underway to achieve the Housing and Land Portfolio's Annual Deliverable thus far in 2021 and the clear plans in place for progressing the agreed High Level Deliverables work programmes during the remainder of 2021/22 be noted;

2. That the key performance highlights set out in Section 3 of the report be noted and

3. That the positive performance and effective deployment of the WMCA's Devolved Housing and Land Funds (illustrated by the Single Commissioning Framework schemes summarised in Appendix 1 to the report) and many of these schemes are now in delivery phase having progressed through the end to end SCF process which shows the role of the WMCA in unlocking, accelerating and problem solving difficult to deliver schemes be noted.

21. Affordable Housing Programme Update

Gareth Bradford introduced the report, highlighting that affordable housing was a high priority for the WMCA and reported that the board would receive a presentation on the 'Help to Own' Scheme by Sue Summers at its next meeting.

Rob Lamond outlined the report and provided an update on progress on the Affordable Housing Programme, the Affordable Housing Delivery Vehicle and the Help to Own Scheme in Wolverhampton.

In relation to the Help to Own Scheme, the Chair reported of the need to promote and publicise the scheme more and suggested a promotional video be made that includes interviews with tenants participating in Help to Own.

Gareth Bradford advised that the Help to Own scheme has featured recently on the BBC's Midlands Today news programme which told the story of a homeless couple who had benefited from the scheme. He reported that the story had generated a significant level of interest in the scheme and undertook to share a link to video and news article with the board. He added that Rob Lamond was looking at how to roll-out the scheme across the West Midlands.

Councillor Gakhal reported that Help to Own was a fantastic scheme that was a real success in helping local people and key workers get on the property ladder.

Resolved:

1. That general progress in securing a minimum of affordable housing through the Devolved Housing and Land Funds under the WMCA's Single Commissioning Framework be noted;
2. That specific progress in the development of a full business case for the Affordable Housing Delivery Vehicle/Joint Venture proposal with housing associations be noted and
3. That progress of the Help to Own Scheme in Wolverhampton and the potential (subject to ongoing evaluation) for further Help to Own schemes across the region be noted.

22. A Public Land Charter: Progress Report

Gurdip Nagra presented a report that provided an update on progress of a Public Land Charter that is being co-developed with the Public Land Taskforce and a wide range of stakeholders from the public and private sector.

It was noted that the development of the charter is following a similar process to that of the Design Charter, the AMC Charter and the Zero Carbon Homes Charter.

Gurdip Nagra outlined the next steps for the charter and reported that various groups/boards and stakeholders would be consulted on the document before the final draft charter is submitted to this board for approval at its next meeting on 19 January 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the progress and next steps to developing and launching the charter be noted and
2. That the formation of an officer working group to co-develop the charter alongside the public land taskforce in a similar manner to the approach used successfully for the Design Charter and AMC Charter be noted.

23. Presentation: Investment Prospectus Update

The board received a presentation from Lauren Rigby-Hopkins on the development of an Investment Prospectus that is to be launched at MIPIM (an international property event) in March 2022.

Lauren Rigby-Hopkins reported that an Investment Prospectus had not been produced in 2020 due to the pandemic and outlined how the latest Prospectus would be co-developed with local authorities and partners.

It was noted that the draft Investment Prospectus would be submitted to this board prior to considered by the Investment Board.

Councillor Wilson enquired whether the Investment Prospectus would include non-constituent authorities as Nuneaton and Bedworth would be interested in being involved.

Councillor Pemberton also indicated that the Investment Prospectus was of interest to Stratford on Avon and he was keen for a meeting to be set up with WMCA Officers to discuss the matter further.

Lauren-Rigby Hopkins confirmed that non-constituent authorities could be involved with the Investment Prospectus and would look to arrange meetings at the earliest opportunity with Councillors Wilson and Pemberton.

Resolved: That the update on the Investment Prospectus be noted.

24. Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved: That in accordance with Section 100A4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

25. Appendix to Quarterly Report

The board considered a private appendix relating to the Quarterly report on Housing and Land Deliverables and progress on the Housing and Land Annual Business Plan.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

26. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 19 January 2022

The meeting ended at 10.50 am.