



## WMCA Board Meeting

<b>Date</b>	08 September 2017
<b>Report title</b>	WMCA Land Delivery Action Plan
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Councillor Sean Coughlan – Housing & Land
<b>Accountable Chief Executive</b>	Martin Reeves - Interim Chief Executive, West Midlands Combined Authority  email: martin.reeves@coventry.gov.uk tel: (024) 7683 3232
<b>Accountable Employee</b>	Simon Neilson - Executive Director, Economy & Environment, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council  email: simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk tel: (01922) 652004
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	WMCA Programme Board - 25 August 2017

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### The WMCA Board is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Land Delivery Action plan in appendix 2, noting that full delivery of the action plan is subject to additional resources being secured to complement the resources already contributed by the WMCA partners.
2. Approve the proposed governance structure and terms of reference in section 9.1 of the action plan.
3. Delegate the approval of the WMCA's expression of interest for the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding) bid to the Housing & Land Delivery Board.

4. Approve the action plan as the starting point for discussing a devolution deal with Government on land and housing delivery.

## **1.0 Purpose**

1.1 This report presents the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) land delivery action plan. The plan sets out how the WMCA plans to work collaboratively to accelerate the quantum and delivery pace of housing and employment space towards delivery of local plan allocations which supports the Mayor's commitment to delivering 25,000 homes in the West Midlands by 2020.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 The WMCA Board received the Land Commission's report and recommendations in February, and has been considering the Commission's findings alongside the wider context of the housing white paper, the West Midlands Mayor's manifesto commitments, and the opportunity to develop a housing deal with Government.

2.2 This is complemented by WMCA's vision to:

- Deliver a wide choice of housing and improve the quality of life for those living and working in the West Midlands; and
- Deliver employment land of national significance, including regenerating large areas of brownfield sites, to support the delivery of a West Midlands Industrial Strategy.

2.3 A major step-change in the rate of development is needed to deliver the local authorities local plans, to accommodate natural population growth and realise the West Midlands' ambitious economic vision. As it stands, the current rate of housing and employment site delivery needs to be accelerated, beyond the level individual that local authorities have been able to historically deliver.

2.4 This is not a new challenge nor a delivery issue specific to the West Midlands. The Government's Housing White Paper "Fixing our broken housing market" (February 2017) and the WMCA's Land Commission both highlight the need for a complex range of actions and interventions over the long term.

2.5 The land delivery action plan sets out how the WMCA partners plan to work collaboratively to accelerate the quantum and delivery pace of housing and employment space in the West Midlands. The activity set out in the action plan is in addition to the activity being undertaken by the local authorities in the Housing Market Areas to consider land supply. The role of the local planning authorities will not be altered through the delivery of this action plan.

## **3.0 Approach to developing the action plan**

3.1 There is a recognition that given the multiple markets operating within the West Midlands, there are common barriers which can be addressed at the WMCA scale to achieve greater impact, through a more collaborative working arrangement across the complex WMCA geography. In light of this, there has been extensive engagement with local authorities and LEAs to harness a consensus on how best to collaborate and accelerate housing and employment land delivery.

3.2 A steering group was established to oversee the development of the action plan comprising of senior officers from the constituent and non-constituent members (or their representatives), the three Local Enterprise Partnerships, Transport for West Midlands officers, and the Mayor's office.

- 3.3 Individual and group consultation meetings were held with senior officers from the constituents, the non-constituents (including the three LEPs), observer local authorities, the other authorities within the four LEP geography, the Mayor's office, the HCA, Government's Cities Unit, the WMCA Growth Company and One Public Estate Programme.
- 3.4 Views were gathered views on how housing and employment land supply could be brought forward and developed at pace and scale which has informed this action plan. The action plan sets out a collective view of both the challenges faced and the collaborative action required, recognising that all local authorities are starting from different positions. A list of engagement activity is provided in appendix 1.
- 3.5 It is recognised that this action plan is written as a public sector action plan, setting out what the WMCA partners can do differently to accelerate delivery. However the WMCA partners are committed to working with the private sector to further develop the intervention approach will be delivered through ongoing engagement with the private sector on the contents and delivery of this plan, including land owners, developers and investors.

#### **4.0 Action plan**

- 4.1 The action plan in appendix 2, sets out the short, medium and longer term collective actions that it is proposed are taken to achieve a step change in delivery pace. The Board are asked at this stage to agree that these are the right actions, but implementation in full will be dependent on additional resources being secured.
- 4.2 The areas where collective action is most likely to contribute to accelerating delivery are focused on four key themes which address many delivery issues that have been identified in the consultation meetings, commissioned technical reports and/or raised in the Land Commission's recommendations. Some actions also aim to build on the good practice and innovation that is being delivered across the partners. The four action areas are:
- a) Plan for development and growth for the West Midlands Industrial Strategy
  - b) Pipeline development and prioritisation
  - c) Investment sites
  - d) Delivery interventions – funding and delivery models
- 4.3 The detailed actions are covered in sections 5 to 8 of the action plan in appendix 2. It is proposed that this action plan is used as the starting point for discussions with Government on the development of a Housing Deal for the West Midlands.

## **5.0 Wider WMCA Implications**

- 5.1 The geographies over which land and housing issues are considered, planned and delivered vary depending on the market characteristics and delivery challenges experienced. Whilst the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan is based on a 3 LEP geography the WMCA non constituent membership covers a 4th LEP, the Marches including Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Council, and work relating to the supply and delivery of land needs to recognise the importance of this geography, the interdependencies and opportunities to deliver the WMC's economic vision. There are also wider housing market areas and functional economic areas (based on commuting and supply chain linkages) which reflect how the market operates. There are also differences within these geographies that will require different approaches and solutions, and work relating to the supply and delivery of land needs to recognise the importance and interdependencies of areas and markets which are within, outside and adjacent to, the WMCA.
- 5.2 This complexity has implications for how WMCA local authority partners collaborate, which are considered in section 10 of the action plan.

## **6.0 Governance**

- 6.1 A governance proposal for the Housing & Land portfolio led by Cllr Sean Coughlan is detailed in section 9.1 of the action plan.
- 6.2 It is proposed that a Housing & Land Delivery Board is established to drive and oversee activity required to accelerated delivery of housing and employment space.
- 6.3 The Board will be chaired by the WMCA Land Portfolio Leader, Cllr Sean Coughlan and membership will comprise of the Mayor and portfolio lead member representation from each of the constituent members and the non-constituent members as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership Board member representation, Homes and Communities Agency national Board member, and West Midlands Housing Association Partnership.
- 6.4 From time to time and when relevant to the Board agenda, representatives from non-member authorities, other agencies and the private sector may be invited to attend Board meetings.
- 6.5 The work programme for the Board will initially be to deliver the action plan in appendix 2. It is proposed that the first meeting takes place towards the end of September in order to review and approve the WMCA's expression of interest to the Housing Infrastructure Fund before the deadline on 28 September.
- 6.6 The Board will be supported by the Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group of senior officers which is already established (as stated in paragraph 3.2).

## **7.0 Resources**

- 7.1 As highlighted in the action plan and in the Government's Housing White Paper, achieving a step change in housing and employment space delivery is a major long term challenge not just in the West Midlands.
- 7.2 Whilst the action plan sets out how the WMCA partners will work together to achieve an acceleration of delivery at an ambitious scale, a step change in delivery needs to be supported by a step change in resource dedicated to driving delivery.

- 7.3 The current resource constraints within the local authorities and the WMCA should not therefore be underestimated.
- 7.4 Whilst the WMCA is investing in a new Director of Housing and Regeneration to deliver this plan, local authority resources have continued to diminish at a time when significant additional resource is required to address the housing delivery challenge.
- 7.5 Existing resources will be used, through greater alignment of approach and activity, to deliver a number of the agreed actions. The action plan does however recognise the need to attract additional resources to support implementation of actions that are key to accelerating delivery, and also sets out how WMCA will secure the additional resources needed (for example, housing devolution deal, strategic bid to Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund, greater leverage of private sector investment).

## **8.0 Financial implications**

- 8.1 Full delivery of the action plan is subject to additional resources being secured to complement the resources already contributed by the WMCA partners. Further work will be undertaken by the Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group to identify the required budget to deliver this action plan.
- 8.2 Salary budget for the new Housing & Regeneration Director has been approved by WMCA Board.

## **9.0 Legal implications**

- 9.1 The WMCA does not have any statutory planning powers. The role and powers of the local planning authorities will not be altered through the delivery of this action plan.
- 9.2 The proposed Housing & Land Delivery Board is not a decision making body, but will make recommendations to the WMCA Board as appropriate.

## **10.0 Equalities implications**

- 10.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. Equalities Impact Assessments will be undertaken at the appropriate stages of the projects and strategy development actions contained within the action plan.

## **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 11.1 Agenda item 2.1 WMCA Board meeting 17 February 2017, The West Midlands Land Commission
- 11.2 Agenda item 19. WMCA Board meeting 23 June 2017, Land Commission progress update report

## **12.0 Appendices**

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Engagement during the development of the action plan
- 12.2 Appendix 2 – WMCA Land Delivery Action Plan