



West Midlands Combined Authority

Housing & Land Delivery Board

Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Mike Bird (Chair)
Councillor Zahoor Ahmed
Bill Blincoe
Councillor Peter Butlin
Councillor Matthew Dormer
Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal
Councillor Shabrana Hussain
Councillor Ian Kettle
Councillor Andy Mackiewicz
Sarah Middleton

Jo Nugent
Dawn Ward

Suzanne Ward
Councillor David Welsh
Councillor Richard Smith

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP
Warwickshire County Council
Redditch Borough Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Birmingham City Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Black Country Local Enterprise
Partnership
Homes England
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local
Enterprise Partnership
Environment Agency
Coventry City Council
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough
Council

Item Title No.

27. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Potter, Cllr Wilson and Kevin Rogers.

28. Nominations of Substitutes

Councillor Richard Smith was nominated as a substitute for Councillor Kristofer Wilson (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council).

29. Minutes - 4 November 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

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

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that provided a regular quarterly update on progress and next steps in delivering the Housing and Land Deliverables for the Housing and Land portfolio. The report also included draft deliverables for 2022/23 that would be submitted to the WMCA Board for approval in February 2022.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Rob Lamond, outlined the report and provided an update on the Commercial Land Fund proposal and continuing discussions with Government to seek brownfield and infrastructure funding for the region.

Resolved:

1. That the positive progress underway to achieve the Housing and Land portfolio's approved Annual Deliverables in 2021/2022 and the clear plans in place for progressing the agreed High Level Deliverables work programmes during the remainder of 2022 be noted;

2. That the key performance highlights as set out in Section 2.0 of the report be noted and

3. That the positive performance and effective deployment of WMCA's devolved housing and land funds (illustrated by the Single Commissioning Framework schemes summarised in Annex 1 to this 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 on 'difficult to deliver' schemes be noted

31. Single Commissioning Framework: Outputs and Performance Monitoring

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that summarised the history of the Single Commissioning Framework (SCF) and reported on the additional measures that are being utilised to capture data on the wider outputs, outcomes and impact of WMCA's Housing and Land Investments.

Projects Officer, Rachel-Ann Atterbury, reported that the WMCA was not looking to amend the key operating principles, scheme eligibility determinants or governance systems of applications for SCF at this stage. Instead it would be focusing on output and performance management across schemes to better align housing and land investments with the WMCA's wider organisational outputs, corporate strategy, inclusive growth framework and to provide assurance on the delivery of those outputs earlier in the SCF process.

The board received a presentation from Rachel-Ann Atterbury that set out what is being measured, details of the metrics, key parts of the process, staging, examples and next steps.

The Director of Housing and Regeneration, Gareth Bradford, reported that a level playing field would be established for everyone seeking SCF funding and the process would capture best practice across all schemes in the SCF.

The board noted the impact of market forces on property affordability, the need to retrofit homes is dependent on supply and demand and the difficulties of simultaneously achieving both green and affordable homes.

The Chair asked that the Zero Carbon Homes Standard be an agenda item at the next meeting and that the Director of Housing and Regeneration circulate the definition of Affordable Housing to the board.

Resolved:

1. That the purpose and key operating principles of the Single Commissioning Framework as agreed by the Housing and Land Delivery Board in March 2019, including the process of continuous review be noted;
2. That the Single Commissioning Framework has been subject to a number of internal audits since its inception to ensure it continues to operate efficiently and maximises value for money be noted;
3. That the move towards more robust and consistent performance reporting processes for all future schemes seeking WMCA housing and land investment, in line with the recommendations of internal audits, changes to output/outcome monitoring at corporate level and best practice in the existing pipeline be noted and
4. That the changes detailed in this paper are focused on monitoring only in line with the continual review process; it does not propose changes to the Single Commissioning Framework's key operating principles and governance systems, nor to WMCA's funding eligibility requirements be noted.

32. Public Land Charter: For Approval

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that sought endorsement of the Public Land Charter that has been co-developed with Public Land Charter Working Group and industry experts on the Public Land Taskforce.

The Strategic Delivery Advisor, Gurdip Nagra, outlined the report including its key themes and principles that could be adopted and deployed by public sector organisations across the WMCA area to improve the speed, quality and benefits derived from the disposal, management and development of public sector land assets.

It was noted that options for potential projects would be considered by the Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group and reported to a future meeting of this board for consideration.

The board agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Regeneration and the Chair to determine the final version of the Public Land Charter.

Resolved:

1. That the Public Land Charter as set out in draft and attached to the report as Appendix A (final version to be circulated to the board following the meeting in readiness for publication) be endorsed;
2. That the proposal to formally launch the Public Land Charter in early 2022 be agreed;
3. That a pilot project be identified via the Delivery Steering Group to test how the principles of the Public Land Charter could be applied in practice and showcase what could be delivered be agreed;
4. That the excellent support from local authority officers on the Public Land Charter Working Group and industry experts on the Public Land Taskforce in formulating the charter be noted and
5. That authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Land to agree the final version of the charter.

33. Affordable Housing Programme: Update

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that provided an update on the WMCA's Affordable Housing Programme and ongoing collaborations with regional partners.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Rob Lamond highlighted key areas within the report and undertook to circulate the definition of Affordable Housing that was approved in 2020. The Strategic Planning Manager also updated the board on the progress of the Affordable Housing Delivery Vehicle including the next steps for business case approval.

Resolved:

1. That progress in the development of a full business case for the Affordable Housing Delivery Vehicle proposal and pilot schemes for approval in Spring 2022 be noted and
2. That the ongoing collaboration between housing associations, the National Housing Federation, Homes England, the WMCA and local authorities to develop a strategic approach to investment, delivery and innovation in the supply of affordable homes across the region be noted.

34. Help to Own: Update On Progress

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that provided an update on the Help to Own Scheme, a new affordable housing product including the initial findings from a high-level review of the pilot scheme at The Marches, a 100 unit development in Wolverhampton.

Graham Russell, Amion, presented the findings from the review which demonstrated strong demand for the Help to Own product, provided households with a new route to get onto the housing ladder, passed the first risk huddles and established governance structures and documentation for the concept which could be replicated for Help to Own schemes.

Sam Miller and Sue Summers (West Midlands Development Capital) also outlined the key features of the Help to Own Scheme and how it could be rolled-out to other local authority areas to meet local housing needs.

Councillor Gakhil commented that the scheme had been a fantastic success in Wolverhampton and considered that the WMCA should be shouting its success more widely, as previously highlighted by the Chair.

In relation to an enquiry from Councillor Welsh as to how the Help to Own scheme could be balanced with other social housing options, the Director of Housing and Regeneration reported that the region needs a mix of affordable housing products that meets local housing needs and local planning policy requirements. He advised that the WMCA would support local authorities to provide the housing product that meets its needs which would be different/varied in each local authority area.

The Chair asked that the WMCA write to all local authorities to inform them that the Help to Own scheme qualifies for affordable housing.

Resolved:

1. That the positive findings of a review undertaken by WMCA into Help to Own which provides strong evidence to support the case for a wider roll-out beyond the pilot project, consistent with the WMCA's approach to housing and regeneration and the Housing and Land Delivery Board's 2021/22 Deliverables be welcomed and endorsed (NB this is not an investment decision and any future funding would need to be subject to receipt of an appropriate application and appraisal);
2. That the initial findings of a review of Help to Own as summarised in Section 3.7 of the report be noted;
3. That further detailed reporting on progress of the pilot would be available in February 2022 be noted and
4. That understanding the progress of Help to Own forms an important part of the board's remit in relation to affordable housing and Housing and Regeneration deliverables be noted.

35. West Midlands Investment Prospectus 2022

The board considered a report of the Director of Housing and Regeneration that provided an overview and update on the engagement and delivery of the West Midlands Investment Prospectus 2022.

The report outlined the structure of the Investment Prospectus document, project programme and key dates and the next steps.

Resolved:

1. That the positive progress and substantial engagement to date on the West Midlands Investment Prospectus 2022 project be noted and

2. That this is one of the key deliverables for the Housing and Land Delivery Board in 2021/22 which as in previous years, plays an important role in attracting private sector investment and Government interest to the region be noted.

36. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved:

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

37. Appendix to Quarterly Report

The board considered a private appendix related to the Quarterly Report on the Housing and Land Portfolio Deliverables and Progress on the Housing and Land Annual Business Plan.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Rob Lamond provided an update on schemes progressing through the Single Commissioning Framework.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

38. Presentation: Investment Prospectus

Further to consideration of the West Midlands Investment Prospectus report, the board received a supporting presentation from Graham Russell, Amion on the latest draft of the Investment Prospectus.

The Chair asked that the Prospectus summarises the region's outputs and achievements in a couple of pages and also include more photographs of the region's successes such as the developments at Longbridge and Urban Splash.

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

39. Date of Next meeting - 2 March 2022

The meeting ended at 11.45 am.