



Housing & Land Delivery Board

Date	20th July 2022
Report title	Brownfield Regeneration Strategy: Discussion and Scope
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Previous reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• April 2022: Housing & Land Delivery Board• June 2022: Discussion at Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Housing & Land Delivery Board is recommended to:

- a) **Discuss and endorse** the broad scope of the Brownfield Regeneration Strategy commissioned by the Housing and Land Board in April 2022;
- b) **Note** that the purpose of a Brownfield Regeneration Strategy (Delivery and Investment) is similar to the 2022 Investment Prospectus and West Midlands Plan for Growth in providing an enabling strategic framework and robust evidence base to support, underpin and advise future policy, delivery and investment work in the region on brownfield regeneration;
- c) **Note** that, in line with the clear steers of the Board, this strategy is not a planning/land use document: it is a high level strategy supported by an understanding of key projects that will inform and guide delivery and investment in the region on brownfield sites and the case for further funding to the region;

- d) **Note** that this strategy will be discussed at a number of industry-led taskforces including public land taskforce, town centre taskforce and commercial property taskforce; and
- e) **Note** that, as with other successful strategies, charters and frameworks produced by WMCA, the brownfield regeneration strategy will be developed by WMCA and a dedicated local authority officer group nominated by the Delivery Steering Group reporting to the Board

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the suggested aim, purpose, scope of work and forward work programme for a West Midlands Brownfield Regeneration Strategy for discussion by the Housing & Land Delivery Board.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the April 2022 meeting of the Housing & Land Delivery Board, it was agreed that an **integrated brownfield regeneration strategy** should be produced to bring together the different brownfield, housing and regeneration initiatives, projects and programmes under the Housing Board (e.g. public land, town centres, etc).
- 2.2 The strategy will directly address the key challenges facing identified brownfield sites in our region including land remediation, infrastructure provision, viability, site assembly and construction costs. It will focus on the delivery of added value outcomes on sites, the opportunities for innovation and making sites attractive, investable propositions that will help to deliver Local Plan policies.
- 2.3 The strategy will directly support the '*brownfield first*' principles of WMCA, the key measures and requirements of the approved Single Commissioning Framework and accelerate the number of homes and jobs delivered in the region. The strategy will support the wider objectives of WMCA around inclusive growth and net zero, maximising development opportunities around transport nodes, town centres and corridor development/regeneration. The strategy will specifically include the key elements which the Board, and the Town Centre Taskforce, has discussed around town centre repurposing, living and reimagination, and which the Board and the Public Land Taskforce have discussed around the role of public land in achieving the Board's deliverables.
- 2.4 The production of a brownfield regeneration strategy fits with, and supports, the aims of WMCA's Corporate Objective 3.3: "*We will invest in and support housing and regeneration schemes, working closely with the private sector and local authorities to unlock and accelerate sustainable delivery.*"
- 2.3 In terms of linkages and connections with other WMCA activity, a brownfield regeneration strategy will support the principles and actions of WMCA as set out in the WMCA Corporate Plan, the Housing & Land Covid-19 Recovery Plan, the West Midlands 2022 Investment Prospectus, the Local Transport Plan, the West Midlands Plan for Growth and the 2018 Housing Deal. Increasing the pace of delivery of new homes and jobs is fundamental to bringing forward sites to meet the targets set out in

our funding agreements with HM Government including those administered through the Single Commissioning Framework.

3.0 The Approach to a Brownfield Regeneration Strategy

3.1 Under the leadership of the Housing & Land Delivery Board, and working in close collaboration with local authorities, investors, developers, local enterprise partnerships and other organisations, significant progress on brownfield regeneration and housing supply has been achieved since 2017 and the West Midlands is widely recognised by Government and industry as a national leader in thinking and delivery around brownfield regeneration. The government's support for the Brownfield Land Institute, and the success of the West Midlands in attracting substantial brownfield funds in recent national competitions, is evidence of this success. Demonstrable expertise in brownfield land remediation and sustainable construction is becoming a hallmark of the region's capabilities.

3.2 WMCA and its partner organisations have the potential to **drive brownfield regeneration to a level not yet achieved anywhere within the UK** and this will be the *key ambition underpinning the brownfield regeneration strategy*. This reputation will be built upon successes to date and proof points which we can call on including:

- **The region's ability to negotiate substantial government funding** for brownfield regeneration in areas of market failure including the Brownfield Land Fund and Housing Deal 2018, in both cases achieving awards that are higher than any other region.
- **HMG's confidence in the effectiveness of the Single Commissioning Framework (SCF)** which guides the deployment of the funds and embeds the delivery of affordable housing, Advanced Manufacturing in Construction (AMC), zero carbon principles and excellent design into site development.
- **Building a team of dedicated development professionals** to deliver brownfield sites and excellent support including commercial advisory, legal, financial and performance management expertise.
- **Partnership endorsed routemaps and charters** which set out the principles and actions needed to embed AMC, Zero Carbon, and good design into brownfield sites. The strong endorsement of the Public Land Charter at UKReiif in May 2022 demonstrates the commitment of public sector organisations to redevelop public land efficiently and effectively.
- **Robust site pipelines of potential development sites**, a continuous process delivered through constant engagement with partners including local authorities to identify sites and work collaboratively to bring these sites forward
- **The attraction of private sector investment** into the delivery of brownfield sites through investor engagement, private sector investor partnerships and the development of the Investment Prospectus 2022.
- **An increasing number of strategic partnerships** with developers and landowners, most recently with L&G who have committed £4bn of investment into the WMCA area.
- **Development of affordable housing partnerships** and innovative affordable housing delivery vehicles which maximise affordable housing delivery on site.

- 3.3 Significant challenges remain including the length and complexity of site delivery; embedding wider added value outcomes such as AMC and zero carbon; the flexibility to deliver mixed use regeneration at scale; infrastructure provision; and providing the confidence for provide sector investment into sites. Furthermore there is also the importance of further integration and alignment of the different initiatives in this area.
- 3.4 Successful outcomes from a brownfield regeneration strategy are expected to include:
- **Further acceleration of development on brownfield sites**, boosting housing and employment land supply
 - **Tackling ‘difficult to deliver’ sites**
 - Support for town centre regeneration, investment and repurposing
 - **Continuing the step change in the number of homes and jobs** delivered in the region
 - **Delivering true ‘placemaking’ outcomes** that benefit the local community
 - **Unlocking and accelerating private sector investment and capital into regeneration in the region**
 - **Supporting the wider levelling up agenda** by delivering outcomes that benefit existing communities and restore their pride in place
 - **Supporting the case for a levelling up regeneration fund**
 - **Establishing the West Midlands as the UK’s centre of excellence** for brownfield land remediation and regeneration.
- 3.5 The strategy will be an essential tool for use in negotiations with HM Government on future funding and deepening devolution, demonstrating public sector commitment, private sector buy-in, and a clear programme targeting supplier growth and skills development.

4.0 The Scope of a Brownfield Regeneration Strategy

- 4.1 **The focus in this strategy should be on delivery, at pace and scale and unlocking and accelerating key opportunities. The work will take a pragmatic approach, building on what has been done before, securing clear change through incremental growth but ultimately achieving the end goals.**
- 4.2 The intention is to **produce a strategy which establishes a pathway from overall ambition and vision to delivery and investment.** We would welcome any early steers from the Housing and Land Board prior to further conversations with the Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group and the different industry-led Taskforce.
- 4.3 Components of the Brownfield Regeneration Strategy are expected to include:
- a clear overarching strategy and vision
 - supporting objectives and deliverables
 - review of the underpinning evidence and academic research, latest industry intelligence
 - a town centre focused chapter
 - a public land focused chapter
 - an ambitious Delivery Programme including key exemplar projects

- a review of the brownfield first requirements of the Single Commissioning Framework
- securing new and strengthening existing Investment Partnerships to deliver 'brownfield regeneration' aligned with the strategy
- a clear comms plan with tangible examples of success
- securing new Government funding and powers for brownfield land

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 The recommended next steps comprise:

- Synthesising WMCA's commitment to the 'brownfield first' agenda into a single strategy document, a clear statement of our aims, ambitions and expectations
- Taking steps to accelerate the delivery of brownfield sites through our various work programmes e.g. site pipeline development, funding, investor opportunities, deployment of public land, etc.

5.2 Co-development of the strategy will take place with Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group. Further engagement will take place with other stakeholders and expert industry advice will be sought from WMCA's taskforces including the Commercial Property Taskforce, the Town Centres Taskforce, Public Land Taskforce and the Future Homes Taskforce.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the Brownfield Regeneration Strategy paper. There may be, in future, financial implications arising from decisions to progress projects in delivering the strategy but any such decisions would be subject to WMCA's approved governance and assurance processes.

6.2 Any WMCA investment to deliver the Brownfield Regeneration Strategy would be governed and administered through the WMCA Single Assurance Framework and in line with the accounting and taxation policies of the WMCA and HMRC.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 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 Homes England has in relation to the combined area. Paragraph 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.

7.2 It is noted that the purpose of this paper is to highlight the recommendation by the Housing & Land Delivery Board to produce a Brownfield Regeneration Strategy to

provide a framework to guide future work of brownfield sites. The work plan outlined above is intended to enable discussions for the scope of the brownfield regeneration strategy, but this paper does not create any legal implications. Legal advice should be sought at appropriate stages on the development and implementation of the Brownfield Regeneration Strategy to ensure compliance with governance and legal requirements.

8.0 Equalities Implications

8.1 There is no equality impact in relation to this report.

9.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

9.1 This report is for information only, but the functions included support the principles of inclusive growth. The transformation of urban areas through the workstreams noted in the report will have a positive economic impact on all residents and sectors of society in the West Midlands.

10.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10.1 The recommendations of this report apply to the whole of WMCA area.

11.0 Other Implications

11.1 None.

12.0 Schedule of Background Papers

12.1 None.