

Agenda Item 2

The West of England Partnership

Planning and Housing Executive Members Briefing

19 February 2009
at BAWA, Filton Bristol

Present

Cllr Charles Gerrish, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Vic Pritchard, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Mark Bradshaw, Bristol City Council
Cllr Judith Price, Bristol City Council
Cllr Elfan Ap Rees, North Somerset Council
Cllr Brian Allinson, South Gloucestershire Council
Cllr Matthew Riddle, South Gloucestershire Council

In attendance

Peter Dawson, B&NES
Graham Sabourne, B&NES
Abbe Hayward, Bristol City Council
Sarah O'Driscoll, Bristol City Council
Stuart Palmer, North Somerset
Karuna Tharmananthar, North Somerset
Jon Shaw, South Gloucestershire
Terry Wagstaff, West of England Partnership
Laura Grady, West of England Partnership
Tim Lansley, West of England Partnership

Item 1 Apologies

1.1 Barbara Maksymiw, South Gloucestershire Council

Item 2 Notes of last meeting

2.1 Cllr Gerrish advised that the letter requesting financial support for home adaptations for the disabled had been sent to the Government. He advised that the letter should also be sent to local MPs. For this purpose, other Executive Members would be provided with copies of the letter for signing and forwarding to the local MPs.

2.2 TW advised that the listing of transport schemes shown by the advice of the region to government about RFA2 would be circulated.

Item 3 Growth Points

3.1 TW reminded members that the Government had withheld funding from Growth Points over concerns about lack of joint working across the sub-region. He advised that an action plan had been submitted to the government by the Partnership to address these concerns. The government response to the action plan and a decision on the release of funds was expected in March. He also advised that the Action Plan proposed that a range of studies that would facilitate the co-ordination of Core Strategies, that it highlighted the Priority Key Development Sites of the sub-region and the sequencing and pattern of development, and the intention to strengthen the Partnership Office.

3.2 Cllr Bradshaw stated that the funding was needed in order to meet the growth agenda. Cllr Allinson stated that the joint funding of the Partnership Office needed to be increased.

3.3 TW stressed the importance of securing clarity about development timelines to attracting government funding. Reference was made to the 'Single Conversation' with government, the prospect of a workshop to discuss the initiative, concluding in the autumn with agreement on a Joint Investment Plan.

Item 4 MAA

4.1 TW outlined the key components and concerns of the MAA- planning and managing growth, improving access and reducing congestion, improving skills and reducing worklessness, attracting and growing business investment. He emphasised the importance of specificity about our priorities and linking development proposals with infrastructure requirements. Reference was made to the need to demonstrate the capacity to prioritise at the sub-regional level and hence the capability of sub-regional governance arrangements.

4.2 The need to bring forward Greenfield sites ahead of brownfield and at the same time, the delays likely to arise in bringing forward brownfield sites was highlighted. Reference was also made to the risk of greenfield sites coming forward through the appeals process and hence the need to plan for Greenfield development as well as the importance of preventing further development not supported by infrastructure investment. In this respect, reference was made to the advantages of focusing on major sites to the perceptions of the market. Concerns were expressed about the risk of an over-supply of housing and the dangers of being too rigid about the sequence and phasing of development. Reference was also made to the inclusion of affordable housing in the MAA.

Item 5 SHMA

5.1 LG provided an up-date on progress and emerging key messages. She highlighted the considerable scale of need and emphasised that the SHMA will provide the 'evidence base' for the Core Strategies.

5.2 Cllr Ap Rees expressed concern that lower cost housing at WSM is attracting commuters from Bristol. Affordable housing should be provided for local communities and key workers.

5.3 LG advised that the Housing Market Partnership would be 'signing-of' the SHMA. The Partnership includes a representative of the housebuilding/development industry.

5.4 JS requested that a 'compliance matrix' should be completed on the completion of the study setting out the support of the consultants for the content of the document. LG advised that a 'compliance matrix' will be prepared by the Project Manager.

5.5 JS raised the issue that there was an expectation that the report would include zonal tenure split information, which he suggested was needed to support planning appeals. LG advised that the zonal tenure split data produced by the housing needs model used by the study may not be robust, if this could not be rectified by the consultant it had been agreed by the Project Team that it would not be included in the final report. LG advised that the outcomes of the study should be used as general evidence to be interpreted and used alongside other information in drafting the Core Strategies.

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