

WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

19th July 2007

Report by Chief Executive

UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Context

1. This report provides an overview across all areas of Partnership activity. With new members on all the working groups it is a good time to take stock. This report has three sections, one dealing with major work in progress, one providing an update on working group activity and a final section dealing with the Partnership Office and the budget out turn for 2006/2007. Partnership activity has been reviewed over the past year and focussed on those areas with clear “added value” from sub regional co-operation.

Work in progress

Transport

2. Significant progress has been made with major transport schemes. Because of its importance transport has been made the subject of a separate agenda item and a specific presentation to the Board.

Waste Management & Planning

3. The four West of England Authorities are working in partnership to prepare a Joint Waste Management and Planning Strategy. This includes the preparation of a:
 - Joint Residual Municipal Waste Management Strategy that will set out how municipal waste should be managed;
 - Joint Waste Development Plan Document that will deal with where all waste should be managed; and
 - Procurement Strategy.
4. There is a national need to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill. Each Authority in the West of England has a programme of planned service improvements, including a waste minimisation programme, but these are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the landfill diversion targets beyond 2010.
5. At the beginning of 2007 the Authorities undertook public consultation on issues and options, and the response is currently being considered. The project is carrying out “soft market testing” with the waste industry to establish options for additional medium term diversion from landfill.

6. The next stages of the preparation of the Joint Waste Development Plan Document are set out below:

Stage	When
Consultation on the Preferred Options	Spring 2008
Submission of the document to the Secretary of State	Spring 2009
Examination	Spring 2010
Adoption	Autumn 2010

7. The next steps on the Joint Waste Strategy are to consider the final strategy and procurement funding options during Autumn 2007, leading to the process of site(s) identification and procurement during 2008.
8. In addition work is continuing to establish a robust inter-authority governance framework (following the successful model created for the transport schemes), particularly for the waste procurement project, including the recruitment of core officer teams as part of the West of England Partnership Office.

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy – Examination in Public

9. The Examination has recently finished and a separate agenda item summarises the implications for the Partnership.

New Growth Points

10. The Partnership has received confirmation of the New Growth Points funding for:
- i. Homes West land banking project (£1.1m capital)
 - ii. Green Infrastructure toolkit (£55,000 revenue)
 - iii. Sub-Regional Delivery Plan (£100,000 revenue)
11. SQW Consulting have been appointed as the consultants who will develop the Delivery Plan for the West of England. Their work has just commenced and it is planned that a draft report be produced in late November/early December and a final report by the end of the year. It is intended to involve Partnership working groups in preparation of the Plan and ways to achieve this are being assessed. A copy of the study brief is attached to this agenda item.
12. Progress with the other initiatives will be reported to the September meeting of the Board.

Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF)

13. The South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) have continued the development of this fund which will be designed to help address the timing issues in the delivery of public infrastructure to support sustainable growth (including housing development) which supports the achievement of Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy outcomes in the growth areas within the South West. Any submission for assistance from the Fund will rely upon a full business case and subsequent repayment of the investment through developer contributions.

14. The amount of capital available for the proposed public sector gap-funding scheme is now:
 - £50m from SWRDA
 - £30m from the top-slicing of the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) which would be available for investment in transport infrastructure.
15. So far the Treasury have been positive about the public sector scheme but have expressed reservations about the public/private sector option. The Department for Transport is positive about the top-slicing of the RFA to assist the delivery of transport solutions.
16. SWRDA will bring forward governance arrangements for the Regional Infrastructure Fund in the early autumn. They envisage representatives of SWRDA, SWRA, GOSW and the Environment Directors in the Region would be involved in the technical approvals necessary to release investment to individual projects. Criteria for such technical decisions and the essential content of a business plan in support of a proposal will be specified at the same time as the governance arrangements.
17. During the Autumn SWRDA aim to begin discussions with any growth area which has well-advanced development proposals where the business plan would benefit from RIF support and can demonstrate repayment through subsequent developer contributions. It is envisaged the RIF will go live in April 2008.

Gypsies and travellers' accommodation

18. There is a legal requirement on councils to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and to prepare a strategy to meet these needs. In the West of England the four Authorities have been working together on a Needs Assessment that will inform housing and planning strategies.
19. The Needs Assessment information will also contribute to a Partial Review of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), dealing specifically with Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The Partial Review is being prepared by the Regional Assembly, whose role is to check and, where necessary, modify projected pitch requirements from a regional perspective. The RSS will specify pitch numbers for the area of each local planning authority.
20. The West of England Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which has assessed the need for permanent and transit sites in each council area, is nearing completion. The survey stage was finished at the end of June and indicative pitch numbers needed up to 2011 were made available at the beginning of July. The Final Report will be completed by mid August 2007.
21. The Regional Assembly, as Regional Planning Body, was requested to approve a draft policy and pitch distribution on 13 July 2007. Consultation is expected to take place between the end of July and mid September. An Examination in Public would follow, with the intention of publishing the revised Regional Spatial Strategy Gypsy and Travellers Policy during spring 2008.

22. The next stage is for each council to identify sites in their area to meet the numbers specified in the RSS.

Local Intelligence Network

23. Consideration continues to be given to opportunities for enhancing the information service provided by WEPO to partners and the wider community. This includes the development of an on-line map-based tool to analyse and disseminate data for the West of England. This will be published on the Intelligence West website over the next few months. In addition, the scope for enhancing the role the Partnership Office in providing an information support service to the emerging Employment and Skills Board is being assessed.
24. Information has been supplied in response to a high number of requests from a wide range of organisations. The Intelligence West website has been maintained and updated. This includes a set of 'Key Statistics' for spring 2007.

Sub-regional research

25. Support is provided to the planning, research and monitoring officers of the unitary authorities through the Joint Planning Data Group and to the South West Regional Assembly. Recently this support has included help with developing and supplying indicators for the statutory Annual Monitoring Reports, co-ordinating sub-regional consultation responses to issues arising with the 2011 Census and providing advice on demographic, housing and employment land issues. It also includes working with the South West Regional Assembly to develop regional monitoring indicators.
26. The Partnership Office has published a Housing Monitoring report and an Annual Economic Review and is involved with the development of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the West of England Housing Market Area. Work has commenced on a review of sub-regional business sites and their capacity to meet future requirements, as part of the delivery of the draft Sub-Regional Economic Strategy.

Inward investment

27. A major part of the initial focus for the new team has been the transfer and review of the property and enquiry database and website previously housed at Bristol City Council. The review has focused on both its short and long term development. Opinions and comments have been invited from a range of organisations including:
 - All four local authorities
 - Property agents and the Bristol Property Agents Association
 - Enquirers using the database for on-line searches
 - Partners and key stakeholders.
28. Changes are being made to the existing site (www.investwest.org) in the short term and will feed into the wider development of the WEP site, expected to supersede these improvements. The 'evolutive' database, which holds information both on properties and enquiries, is being reviewed. The aim is to improve functionality and information sharing between partners, to enhance intelligence about investment opportunities and trends.

29. The team is responding to queries referred by South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) and other sources. These have included:
- Australian 'white collar' company seeking information for a potential office as part of a bid for government funding
 - Spanish environmental technology company seeking managed office and industrial space
 - Irish manufacturing company looking for office and distribution
 - UK internet company seeking contact centre salary and skills information
 - Overseas-owned mechanical and electrical engineering company investigating feasibility options for opening an office in the South West
 - A range of West of England based companies looking for start-up or re-location properties.
30. Recently the team has been developing marketing and advertising materials. Activities to date have included:
- Placing a small advert for the property search and inward investment service in the *British/American Business Directory*
 - Funding and content input into *Investors Guide to the UK* publication
 - Input into exhibits at the Bordeaux Fete de Fleuve and Paris Airshow.

Working group activity

Employment & Skills Group

31. Meeting skills and employment requirements is a priority within the West of England Economic Strategy.
32. Previous reports to the Partnership have described the work of 'West at Work', a project financed by the Learning & Skills Council and SWRDA and also involving senior managers from all four councils, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and Business West. Its purpose has been to meet the people and skills requirements of major development sites and key sectors and to collate labour market intelligence. More recently the project made an unsuccessful bid for 'city consortium' status to secure some short-term resources and local flexibility to tackle worklessness more effectively.
33. The main focus and achievement, of West at Work has been the development of a 'recruit and train' programme to meet the needs of the £550million Cabot Circus retail development in Bristol. The learning from this work will benefit the Southgate Development in Bath and the different skills and employment needs of other future major development sites in the sub-region.
34. In the light of concerns about the pace and scope of West at Work, and the conclusions of the national Leitch study into meeting future skills and employment requirements, partners have reconsidered how best to ensure the sub-region builds the required strategic and delivery capacity.
35. Further work by senior managers drawn from the partner organisations to West at Work has identified five broad work-streams:

- an effective, sector by sector approach to meeting employers' skills training requirements, including linking employers to specialist provision tailored to the needs of their sectors and enhancing support to aid inward investment ;
 - a joined-up approach to the engagement, training and support of disadvantaged adults into employment, in the 11 deprived wards in the sub region, by the local authorities, community organisations, Jobcentre Plus, colleges and training providers.
 - a joined-up approach to ensuring Children's Services and Connexions are well-informed about employers' current and future employment requirements and to encouraging business leaders commitment to involvement in 14-19 learning, particularly for young people not in employment, education or training;
 - a standardised 'recruit and training' offer to meet the needs of employers investing and locating in the sub region's major development sites, including ensuring opportunities for disadvantaged adults and young people are maximised
 - supporting the above, a shared and improved body of economic, employment and skills intelligence, including key housing and regeneration projects and employment trends.
36. As part of developing and delivering this strategic, joined-up approach to employment and skills matters senior managers from the partner organisations have established an operational programme board supported initially by a project manager appointed with West at Work resources.
37. The essential work in joining up the activities of the partner organisations to ensure more effective collaboration is underway. Once this is completed and the programme is progressing the operational board will examine effective ways of engaging directly with employers. The board will produce regular reports to the West of England Partnership and to Local Strategic Partnerships.
38. The Science City project is also advancing, one of only six such cities in the country. Involving universities, SWRDA, local authorities and partners, a work programme is being generated and a manager recruited to develop and to provide a focus for the work. As this develops further reports will be provided.
39. The Sub-Regional Economic Strategy is in final drafting, together with its accompanying delivery plan. This will be considered at the next meeting of the Group in early September. Work is just beginning on a sub-regional review of employment land, a task also identified as being important at the recent RSS examination in public.

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group

40. Consultation on *People, Places and Spaces* is elsewhere on the agenda. The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Group officers are meeting the day before the board and a verbal update can be given at the meeting.

41. Following preparation of the sub-regional Tourism Development Plan an implementation group has been created, involving the four local authorities, to take the proposals forward.
42. The aim of the 2012 “Team West of England”, which is the title of the sub-regional group involving all four local authorities together with partners, is to:
 - maximise the opportunities afforded by the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and
 - generate long term benefits for all communities, sporting and cultural organisations and business works in partnership.
43. The initiative has been successful in its bid to host the 2008 UK School Games, to be held between August 28th and 31st. Around 2,000 elite athletes will compete in 8 sports, across four days of competition with a number of disability sports integrated with able-bodied competition. A community sports programme will also be built in to include modern activities such as BMX, mountain biking, street luge and climbing. The event will also be integrated with the existing annual cultural festivals held in Bristol & Bath.
44. A number of facilities in the West of England submitted a bid for inclusion in London 2012's Guide to UK Sporting Facilities. This guide will assist the National Committees in selecting venues at which their athletes can train and prepare for competition in the run-up to the Games. Bristol facilities submitted a consortium bid with respective organisations keen to work in partnership to secure entry in the guide and increase chances of attracting a visiting country.
45. Chairman of the Kenya Olympic Committee Dr. Kip Keino has confirmed Bristol as Kenya's base for its pre-Games Training Camp in 2012. Dr. Keino visited the city on February 2nd to sign a collaboration agreement between Bristol and Kenya. The agreement, supported by the city's professional and amateur sporting bodies, Business West, Destination Bristol, Bristol City Council and the education sector, is the basis of Bristol's partnership with Kenya and embraces a wide range of educational, business, cultural and sporting links.

Housing Group

46. Following the presentation and agreement of the Housing Development Plan through the West of England Partnership, the group has been progressing planned action, and the following are highlighted:
 - **Housing Corporation Protocol**
A protocol is being developed between the Housing Corporation (soon to incorporate some Department of Communities and Local Government responsibilities and English Partnerships in the forthcoming Communities England) and the four unitary authorities. This will include a number of targets to clarify what is needed from the agencies, and equally what local authorities can provide. There are only 40 such protocols to be developed nationwide, and these are in areas of strategic or geographic importance to government. This may be helpful in the forthcoming bid round for investment in the sub-region.

- **Choice Based Lettings (Homes Choice West)**
The group is exploring the potential for efficiencies and opportunities for joint procurement to reduce duplication and to seek the best solution for local people.
- **Affordability – Home Ownership**
Research commissioned by the Housing Group into the affordability of shared ownership and intermediate housing schemes has recently reported. It has some recommendations for policy and practice, as current shared ownership models are unaffordable for many people (£19 -£30K pa income level) in the sub- region. The research is being discussed with the Housing Corporation and with GOSW.
- **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**
Work is starting on the SHMA for the West of England. The Strategic Housing Market is larger than the sub-region and includes Mendip and West Wiltshire councils. The assessment will include an update of the housing market assessment originally completed in 2004 and the housing needs assessment in 2005. A project brief and work programme are currently being prepared.
- **Private Housing**
Joint work is ongoing, specifically a highly successful joint landlords' Expo was held in mid May. Numbers were substantially up on last year and this is now regarded as the premier event of its type in the country. Wessex Reinvestment Trust, sponsored by the WoE authorities and others, is developing a range of new loan products for private landlords, for home adaptations and faith loans.

Rural strategy group

47. A first draft of the revised Rural Strategy (the previous strategy was written in 2003) has been circulated to members of the group. It is expected that this will be consulted on more widely after a discussion at the next group meeting in July.
48. The Rural Renaissance programme continues with its own board and reporting arrangements. Criteria for appraising projects have been clarified in recent months.

West of England Partnership Office (WEPO)

49. The budget out turn for 2006/2007 is attached. This was very much a transitional year, with the move from the former Joint Transport team and JSPTU to the new Office. Costs for the year have therefore included redundancy costs which have been treated as "one off" costs dealt with in the one year.
50. The detailed budget for 2007/2008 is being finalised and a number of changes are being incorporated:
 - In the Policy and Intelligence team two senior staff have resigned and they are being replaced by more junior research assistants, giving a better balance to the skills of the team and better opportunities for existing staff.
 - Changes to the administration team are currently the subject of consultation.
 - A possible move to a new office is being investigated.
 - Recruitment to the new waste teams is also being progressed and will have implications for overall office costings.

51. The budget for 2007/2008 will be reported to the September Board when it is anticipated that the issues listed above will have been further resolved.

Summary Breakdown between teams of WEPO 2006/2007

Total Cost of The West of England Partnership	973,138
Less SWRDA Contributions	-71,500
Net Costs	<u><u>901,638</u></u>

Contributions per Authority:

	Share	Secondments	Broadband/RRI	Net
B&NES	225,409	0	0	225,409
Bristol	225,409	-16,124	0	209,286
North Somerset	225,409	-66,000	-13,000	146,409
South Gloucestershire	225,409	-40,822	-13,000	171,587
	<u>901,638</u>	<u>-122,946</u>	<u>-26,000</u>	<u>752,692</u>

Contributions per Team per Authority:

	B&NES	Bristol	North Somerset	S.Glos
Policy/Research	131,192	115,069	65,192	90,370
Transport	55,141	55,141	55,141	55,141
Inward Investment	39,075	39,075	26,075	26,075
	<u>225,409</u>	<u>209,285</u>	<u>146,409</u>	<u>171,587</u>

Amounts paid to date per Authority:

	B&NES	Bristol	North Somerset	S.Glos
Policy/Research	131,195	40,000	40,000	40,000
Transport	55,141	0	0	0
Inward Investment	39,075	40,000	27,000	27,000
Inward Investment - receipts in advance	0	-925	-925	-925
Sub Total	<u>225,411</u>	<u>79,075</u>	<u>66,075</u>	<u>66,075</u>
Balance Due - Debtors Listing	-2	130,210	80,334	105,512
Totals	<u>225,409</u>	<u>209,285</u>	<u>146,409</u>	<u>171,587</u>

Breakdown per balance per Authority:

	B&NES	Bristol	North Somerset	S.Glos
Policy/Research	-3	75,069	25,192	50,370
Transport	0	55,141	55,141	55,141
Inward Investment	0	0	0	0
Totals	<u>-2</u>	<u>130,210</u>	<u>80,334</u>	<u>105,512</u>

The West of England Partnership

SUB-REGIONAL DELIVERY PLAN

Brief for Consultants

Purpose of Study / Anticipated Outputs

1. This consultancy study is designed to produce a long term delivery plan to guide the sustainable growth of the West of England, covering the four unitary authorities – Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.
2. The delivery plan will cover in detail all major development proposals (summarised below in paragraph 15) and essential infrastructure requirements to 2026. It will be a live and dynamic plan which will be capable of being readily updated, refined and manipulated in future years – for example, as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is adopted and rolled forward, as Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) are produced and as other relevant plans and projects are brought forward. In addition, it will provide the basis for coherent and consistent monitoring (in support of the implementation of the RSS). It will also need to be in a format capable of being available via the internet to partners, possibly linked to GIS, and of being refined and updated as the development gets underway. Consultants will be asked to consider how this can best be achieved.
3. The plan will consider all future infrastructure requirements in terms of what is required, its timing, costings and identified funding sources (such as Section 106, tariffs, Regional Infrastructure Fund). It will need to consider the alignment of funding and identify risks connected with this, together with actions which could mitigate these risks and potential contingency arrangements. An initial assessment of infrastructure requirements was undertaken in 2006 for the sub-region and provides a sound basis for this work.

4. The plan will need to consider requirements for the enhanced capacity and skills which will be needed in order to implement the growth agenda in a controlled and ordered manner. This area of work will include the need for professional teams and identification of skill requirements (eg project management, development and regeneration specialists). It will also be necessary to assess the market for such skills in the West of England and how capacity could be enhanced where this is required.
5. This aspect of the study will need to assess the possible focussed delivery vehicles and the role that they might play in ensuring a high quality of sustainable implementation. It would be essential for consultants to demonstrate up-to-date knowledge of comparable initiatives elsewhere in the UK and of the lessons to learn for the West of England. It will be crucial that any delivery vehicles have appropriate political support from within the unitary authorities and, given the wide ranging character of the sub-region, it is likely that more than one type of delivery vehicle will be possible.
6. It is considered critical that all relevant organisations and agencies are fully involved in the preparation of the delivery plan, particularly in relation to the way key issues are addressed, and that the plan includes proposals for ensuring their continued involvement. These will include the four unitary authorities; regional organisations (GOSW, Regional Assembly, SWRDA); national agencies (including English Partnerships, Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Housing Corporation, Natural England); other public bodies such as universities, colleges, health service and the MoD; key private sector interests such as the port, airport and major companies together with representative bodies such as Business West.
7. Consultants will be asked to consider how the overall strategic delivery and monitoring should be achieved once the delivery plan has been agreed, eg through a Growth Board or other structure which would involve all the relevant agencies.
8. In summary specific objectives are:
 - To show development information both geographically and thematically, eg in relation to the economy
 - To provide a prospectus for securing resources, as it will need to highlight the evidence showing the need for the resources – or show how that evidence will be acquired within the timescales
 - To ensure that the timetable for infrastructure, housing, schools, employment, health, leisure facilities and other growth elements is co-ordinated and appropriate

- To ensure that all related funding is tied in to this timetable and identify risks and amelioratory measures which could be taken, with potential contingency arrangements
- To ensure that the West of England has the appropriate capacity and skills for high quality implementation
- To ensure that implementation is sustainable
- To ensure that other processes, eg public consultation and environmental assessments, are included
- To provide options for local delivery vehicles
- To provide options for future co-ordination at the strategic level.

Context

9. The West of England is a very active sub-region with over 1 million residents and 500,000 jobs. Economically it is relatively successful although areas of severe deprivation continue to exist. Housing and employment growth are expected to continue.
10. As might be expected there are a large number of existing strategies, policies and plans – some in place and others in varying stages of preparation. The delivery plan will be expected to provide an overview of the plan “landscape” identifying where there are dependencies, gaps, overlaps and where additional action is required.
11. The four unitary authorities are working together under the aegis of the West of England Partnership, a voluntary partnership supported by the West of England Partnership Office (WEPO) which has staff working on transport planning, spatial planning, waste, economic development, research and intelligence. The Partnership has agreed a Vision for the future of the sub-region and now sees delivery as its top priority.
12. In October 2006 the West of England was announced as one of 29 New Growth Points by DCLG. Pilot funding was provisionally granted for a capital bid by Homes West for land banking to provide social housing, and for two revenue proposals – a Green Infrastructure “Toolkit” and this current delivery plan. Details of the announcement are attached.
13. The RSS is in draft form and will be the subject of an Examination in Public starting on 17th April 2007. The draft RSS proposes 92,500 new homes in the period to 2026 although this total may rise with the latest household projections.
14. SWRDA has produced the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) which is being translated to the sub-regional level by WEP by means of a Sub-

Regional Economic Strategy, currently in draft form. SWRDA is actively engaged on a number of projects in the sub-region, notably the Science Park, Locking Parklands, and Bristol Arena.

15. Considerable progress has been made in terms of transport planning with a Joint Local Transport Plan prepared by the four unitary authorities, the Greater Bristol Strategic Transport Study providing a longer term context, and a series of major schemes funded by means of the Regional Funding Allocation and Transport Innovation Fund. The first of these schemes – the Greater Bristol Bus Network - has progressed to final business case submission with a start on the ground anticipated in Autumn 2007.
16. The unitary authorities are currently making progress with the preparation of LDFs as well as a range of related work such as housing and employment land studies. In North Somerset major progress has been made with the Weston Area Action Plan; in Bristol the C21 initiative is focussing work on the regeneration of South Bristol; and in Bath considerable progress is being made with Bath Western Riverside and with a Bath Vision.
17. Preliminary work has been carried out by the utilities. Initial meetings have been held with Wessex Water, Bristol Water and Western Power and these will form an input to the plan. There has also been work by Bristol and South Gloucestershire in relation to Severnside and North Somerset in relation to potential flood risk, which could contribute to a possible future sub-regional Strategic Flooding Risk Assessment.
18. In summary the delivery plan will pull together this wide range of initiatives and projects into a comprehensive and cohesive plan covering at least the following:
 - Major development sites, urban extensions, regeneration schemes and strategic employment sites
 - Transport proposals
 - Utilities – water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telecoms. Renewable energy
 - Waste proposals
 - Education and developments connected with the universities, eg Science City
 - Health and social care
 - Community, sport and leisure, and culture
 - Green infrastructure, which will include the outputs of the Green Infrastructure Tool.

This study will, however, only cover the delivery of the strategic elements, as the rest will be dependant on the fine grain of the development proposals as they evolve.

19. The delivery plan will cover future requirements and plans – what is being planned? When are developments expected to be implemented? Who is responsible? What are the costs and the funding sources? What is current progress? What are the likely risks? Long term management and maintenance issues will need to be considered.

Governance

20. The West of England Partnership is a voluntary partnership consisting of the 4 unitary authorities, government agency, voluntary sector and business representatives. The overall responsibility for overseeing the production of the delivery plan will rest with the Partnership Board, with Bath and North East Somerset Council as accountable body. The work will be steered by a group drawn from the West of England Partnership Office. In addition to the contact between the consultants and partners, partner councils and agencies will be involved in the initial workshop and through the September conference outlined below.
21. The Partnership will consider different ways of sharing risk within different projects; for example, waste facility procurement through a local authority controlled company.
22. It is anticipated that project management will be established by the West of England office, and include a steering group.

Study Process

23. We are inviting three consultants to tender for the study. All firms that make tender bids will be interviewed.
24. It is proposed that the first month of the study will involve talking to partners and identifying relevant strategies and plans in order to scope the project.
25. We intend to hold workshops focusing on aspects relating to the delivery plan at the West of England Partnership's conference Delivering the Vision on Friday 21 September.
26. Tenders are required in written and electronic format (five written copies) to cover interpretation of the brief, proposed methodology, and work schedule. CVs of staff and breakdown of costs.

Proposed timetable

Finalised brief agreed with GOSW	Week beginning 14 May
Request for tenders out	Week beginning 21 May
Deadline for receipt of tenders	Friday 15 June
Interviews and selection of consultants	Monday 25 June
Progress report to WEP Conference	Friday 21 September
Preparation of draft report	October/mid November
Refinement of draft report	Mid November/December
Final report	Monday 31 December