

**West of England Partnership  
Planning, Housing and Communities Board  
16 July 2009**

**'SINGLE CONVERSATION' WITH HCA AND RDA: PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS**

**Recommendation**

1. That the Board note the action taken since the last meeting and the next steps, and give their views.

**Background**

2. The "Single Conversation" with the Homes & Community Agency and Regional Development Agency will support the following outcomes for the West of England:
  - The preparation of an Integrated Delivery and Investment Plan for the sub-region, in support of the Authorities' priorities for strategic infrastructure to support their plans for development at housing and employment locations.
  - Additional infrastructure investment at the Authorities' priority employment locations, to assist in steering development to these locations.
  - Investment in the delivery of affordable and supported housing.
  - Allocating overall resources across the above priority requirements.
  - The identification and exploitation of sources of investment including maximising the use of public assets; negotiating developer contributions; using cash-flow support such as the Regional Infrastructure report; using anticipated increases in non-domestic rate to finance infrastructure (Accelerated Development Zones); and, the Government's awaited proposals for Community Infrastructure Levy.
3. These workstreams will build on a variety of proposals previously considered by the Board including:
  - The RFA2 submission to the region.
  - The successful RFA2 major transport schemes proposal.
  - The emerging Council Core Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.
  - The MAA.
4. Overall, the Conversation will:
  - focus on core priorities; support delivery programmes and projects;
  - join-up the contributions of strategic delivery partners;
  - integrate actions and investment by public and private sector partners;

- 'pool' key skills and experience; share and delegate powers;
- establish strategic relationships with potential investors and developers;
- prepare business and investment proposals and plans;
- secure agreement on the co-financing of investment needs;
- agree development and delivery capacity and vehicles.

## **Action taken**

5. Since the last meeting of the Board, the following has been achieved:

- i) Indicative priority housing and employment locations for development, and the indicative sequencing and phasing to assist with assessment of infrastructure needs. These have been reviewed and confirmed with Directors of Development, based upon the emerging Core Strategies and MAA.
- ii) Roger Tym & Partners held an inception workshop to steer their consultancy assignment which comprises an assessment of:
  - Strategic Infrastructure requirements for priority development locations;
  - Potential constraints and “showstoppers” to development;
  - Estimated costs of infrastructure;
  - Gaps in funding for public infrastructure;
  - Potential sources of investment;
  - Indicative sequence and phasing of development;

The workshop was attended by mainly planning, housing and economic development staff, as well as representatives of HCA, RDA, GOSW and the Environment Agency.

- iii) The first Single Conversation Workshop received a series of presentations and propositions and reached conclusions on the following:
  - Working proposition for Sequencing & Phasing Development;
  - Arrangements for working with Roger Tym on Infrastructure Appraisal;
  - Programme Workstreams and working arrangements;
  - Outline of the scope and form of the Integrated Delivery and Investment Plan;
  - Programme Management & Governance, including ensuring work is undertaken at the appropriate level; that is, sub-regionally, bilaterally and by individual authorities;

- A draft Programme of Events & Actions.

The workshop was attended by Chief Executives, Directors and Senior Managers with responsibility for planning, housing, transport and economic development, and by senior representatives from HCA, RDA and GOSW.

- iv) Roger Tym workshop to review progress and to use findings to develop draft priorities and possible scenarios for the sequencing and phasing of development.

## **Next Steps**

6. The first draft programme of events and actions reviewed at the first Single Conversation Workshop is now being firmed up into a series of actions, accountabilities and timescales to deliver the workstreams listed at paragraph 2 above. These are focussed on the preparation of the Integrated Delivery and Investment Plan for the West of England.
7. The Programme Board will comprise the Directors of Development, Chief Executive of the Partnership, a representative of the SEEPs and representatives of HCA, RDA, Environment Agency, Highways Agency and the PCTs.
8. Regular reports will be provided to the Authorities Leaders, Chief Executives, and this Board; reports will also be made to the Joint Scrutiny Committee. Officers recognise the importance of this work and the need for close engagement of Members.
9. The work set out below is essential to planning and securing the infrastructure investment key to the quality of life and prosperity of the sub-region in the medium and long term. Officers recognise the uncertainties arising from the further delay in the publication by Government of the Regional Spatial Strategy but consider the Single Conversation remains an important priority.
10. In summary, in the period up to December 2009 the key actions are as follows:

### **July**

Single Conversation Workshop to review alternative Development Scenarios prepared by Roger Tym, prior to publishing their final report by 31<sup>st</sup> July.

Project Board of Development Directors to approve the project plan and the arrangements for the five agreed workstreams:

- i) Programme management; communication; member and provider engagement;
- ii) Sources of investment; prioritisation and allocation of investment to main workstreams;
- iii) Infrastructure requirements of the Integrated Housing & Employment Delivery & Investment Plan and alignment with Core Strategies and Local Development Schemes;
- iv) affordable and supported housing delivery and investment plan;

v) additional infrastructure investment at priority employment locations.

These workstreams will involve a combination of working individually, bilaterally and sub-regionally with and without HCA and RDA, and as necessary with infrastructure providers.

**August to September**

Council Officers prepare more explicit proposals and priorities in the light of internal preparation and the Roger Tym report, in preparation for negotiations with HCA, RDA and Environment Agency about specific investment requirements and priorities in October/November.

**Mid September**

Single Conversation meetings with infrastructure providers and with the MDs of major developers.

**October**

Single Conversation Workshop to review progress prior to negotiations about specific investment requirements and priorities with HCA, RDA & EA in October/November.

**October/November**

Negotiations about specific investment requirements and priorities with HCA, RDA & EA in October/November.

**December**

Conclude/review preparation of Integrated Delivery & Investment Plan.

Terry Wagstaff  
Chief Executive

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