

West of England Partnership Board
11 September 2009

SINGLE CONVERSATION: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Purpose of report

1. To summarise progress.

Summary of Progress

October Negotiations

2. Work is continuing across the authorities and sub-regionally to ensure explicit priorities have been identified as the basis for Single Conversation negotiations in October on planned investment to support:
 - development of housing and employment locations (by Heads of Planning)
 - key employment sites (Heads of Economic Development)
 - affordable and supported housing (Heads of Housing Strategy).

Context provided by the MAA

3. These negotiations are in the context of the following extracts from the MAA which supports the Partnership's objective of planning and managing growth in homes and jobs to build mixed and sustainable communities:
 - Appendix A: Objectives
 - Appendix B:
 - Integrated Sub-Regional Delivery and Investment Plan
 - Actions through the Single Conversation
 - Asks of Government.
4. In summary these actions and joint commitments in the MAA seek to ensure an Integrated Delivery Investment Plan which:
 - Identifies, based on Core Strategies, the location, sequencing and phasing of housing and employment development in the sub-region
 - Secures government endorsement of a joint sub-regional development trajectory based on 5-year tranches
 - Attracts infrastructure investment to support housing and employment growth; key employment locations and affordable and supported housing
 - Discourages planning applications, which fail to maximise the use of planned infrastructure or compromises our commitment to mixed and sustainable communities and tackling climate change.

Draft Report on strategic infrastructure needs

5. Roger Tym & Partners have developed their draft report on the infrastructure requirements and deliverability of priority key development locations. Officers are

reviewing the report in order to feedback comments before it is finalised. Amongst other things the report recognises the historical infrastructure deficit, the limited viability of sites in the period up to 2015 and the need for yet more transport investment. It questions the viability of the housing numbers indicated for those key development locations delivered by 2026 in the Government's Proposed Changes to RSS. The individual strategic assessment of locations is helpful; overall the report provides a useful strategic analysis of the issues and challenges ahead.

6. Officers will ensure that the work of Roger Tym & Partners assists the development of the Joint Integrated Delivery & Investment Plan, which will be based on the emerging Core Strategies. Their work will also assist the development of these strategies.

Next steps

7. Work is now planned to:
 - assess relative priorities across the investment themes at paragraph 2 above
 - agree the scope, form and timescales for negotiations with HCA and RDA
 - seek clarity on the investment levels envisaged by HCA and RDA and on their priorities for investment as well as the form of the Joint Investment Plan
 - review the various sources of infrastructure investment and cash flow support and consider how in practice they can complement the value of any Council assets that can assist development and the investment available from HCA and RDA.
8. Officers will ensure Executive Members are well informed of future developments in this work and that their authority and approval is obtained at key junctures.

Recommendation

That members note the summary report and give their views on the matters considered.

Terry Wagstaff
Chief Executive

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives take into account what is currently viewed as the short-term challenge of the economic recession, and planning to meet the projected medium and long-term needs of the sub region. They are built on the work of the sub region and individual councils in setting direction, especially in supporting the development of Local Development Framework Core Strategies. These objectives underpin our approach to ensuring success in managing and harnessing the high levels of projected growth to increase quality of life, support the regeneration of communities and minimise environmental impact.

- To work with strategic partner organisations and government to mitigate and to overcome the impact of the current economic recession on our plans to meet the needs of existing and future residents for homes, and to continue planning to meet the projected medium and long term needs.
- To accommodate the housing needs of existing and future residents including the appropriate diversity of size, types, price and tenure, including affordable and supported housing.
- To ensure new development provides a mix of uses to support homes and jobs in sustainable communities, and to reduce the need to travel.
- To prioritise development locations which contribute to urban regeneration and intensification, whilst ensuring timely joint spatial and infrastructure planning of the required urban extensions.
- To engage stakeholders, local communities and developers in planning and delivering well designed, mixed use and sustainable new and existing communities.
- To secure the investment required in economic, social and environmental infrastructure, to match the growth in homes and jobs, and to create successful, mixed and sustainable communities with access to local services and facilities which contribute to the distinctiveness and vibrancy of places and communities.
- To ensure that all new buildings are efficient in the use of energy and water and capable of being used flexibly in their lifetimes, with the aim of addressing and reducing the effects of climate change.
- To ensure new development is designed and constructed to the highest quality in terms of appearance and sustainability to ensure it improves and enhances our natural and built environment and heritage, and minimises environmental impact and delivers successful neighbourhoods.

CONTEXT: INTEGRATED SUB-REGIONAL DELIVERY & INVESTMENT PLAN

The West of England Integrated Sub-regional Delivery & Investment Plan for the required housing and employment growth is being prepared through the 'Single Conversation' with HCA, RDA and the Environment Agency, and engagement with the development industry. The joint agreed completion date is December 2009.

The Plan will sequence and phase the delivery of the required housing and employment and necessary infrastructure across the sub-region. It will support the development and delivery of Core Strategies to timetable and by local authority area.

This Plan would be concluded once the government has replied to the authorities' response to the Draft RSS and the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes by publishing the RSS, and once the outcome is known of any challenge by the authorities to the Government's changes to RSS.

It will support the Economic Upturn by taking into account the priorities and needs of the development industry, especially the need to invest appropriately and up-front in infrastructure and provide a mix of development locations.

The Plan will be underpinned by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and the outcome of the studies on infrastructure and employment. It will ensure the development of mixed and sustainable communities, including a sufficient supply of affordable and supported housing based on the recent conclusion of the Sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Through this strategy the Sub-Region wishes to discourage inappropriate development, which fails to maximise the use of planned infrastructure or compromises our commitment to mixed and sustainable communities and tackling climate change.

The Sub-Region will adopt a sub-regional SPD to incorporate the Integrated Sub-regional Delivery & Investment Plan, resolving the practical issue of maintaining its alignment with emerging Core Strategies.

ACTIONS:

Through strong partnership working with HCA and RDA using the Single Conversation

Conclude Core Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, ensuring they are informed by the sub-regional studies on infrastructure, employment, and plan the phasing of investment in infrastructure and delivery. The timetable for their preparation is set out in Section 6.

Conclude a high-level integrated delivery and investment plan that aligns Core Strategies and LDFs, and informs the MAA delivery plans.

Determine the location, sequencing and phasing of development in housing and employment by taking into account the following factors:

- Infrastructure needs and investment streams;

- technical and environmental considerations and obstacles;
- the impact and implications of the Economic Recession;
- market conditions and engagement with the HCA, SWRDA, EA, Utilities and the development industry; and
- Council/sub-regional priorities confirmed in the context of the RSS finally confirmed in the way described in 'context' at page 8 above.

Conclude strategic area investment frameworks - Joint Investment Plans - to identify, programme and deliver key strategic sites and portfolios of smaller sites, that enable the Councils, RDA, HCA and the private sector to determine the scale and nature of investment. Delivery plans will follow the production of those frameworks and include:

- targets for an increase in the provision of affordable and sub-market housing;
- support the Homes West sub-regional delivery vehicle;
- ensure the roll out of Extra Care provision and additional supported housing, reconciling the conflict between low cost units and the high cost of Extra Care;
- providing support to assist in the development of gypsy and traveller sites to meet RSS and LDF requirements.

Agree strategic development standards and policies, including level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, to ensure that developers deliver mixed and sustainable communities. This will be factored into the strategic area investment frameworks (Joint Investment Plans) and will include early action to engage utilities in mapping opportunities for CHP plant and waste/sewage into energy facilities to reduce costs and deliver carbon reductions.

Partners to identify site development stalled by recession and promote investment in

- selected developments in partnership with developers and RSLs;
- site and business infrastructure in priority locations;
- site assembly.

Simplified checks and controls, and more flexibility in the use of resources, based on agreed arrangements with the Agencies for business planning and the approval, programming and management of resources:

- using common appraisal systems (based on the HM Treasury Green Book);
- re-profiling the sequencing of individual projects, as necessary;
- streamlined and integrated performance management arrangements.

ASKS OF GOVERNMENT

CLG endorse the approach to the preparation of the Integrated Delivery & Investment Plan by the West of England authorities, HCA & RDA, with a joint agreed completion date of December 2009, particularly its:

- Support to the delivery of well-evidenced, timely and deliverable Core Strategies. The timetable for their preparation is set out in the MAA.

- Contribution to implementing economic, social and environmental infrastructure to maximise the delivery of growth and the development of mixed and sustainable communities;
- Contribution to working with the development industry both to assist the market recovery and to provide confidence to investors in the Sub-Region;
- Provision of a well-evidenced Plan for the sequencing and phasing of development in the sub-region which benefits from the Single Conversation, including engagement of the development industry

CLG also endorse the adoption of a Joint Sub-Regional Development Trajectory in the Plan based on 5-year tranches which demonstrates a rolling, deliverable supply of housing as set out in PPS3. The sequencing and phasing will assist best use of infrastructure, the delivery of mixed & sustainable communities and market recovery; this will provide confidence to developers and discourage inappropriate development.

The authorities will embody the Integrated Delivery & Investment Plan in a Joint Supplementary Planning Document to the Regional Spatial Strategy, to include it within the planning framework as a material consideration in making planning decisions.

CLG confirm that targets NI 154 and NI 155 will be re-negotiated to reflect the evidence of the impact of the Economic Recession.

CLG/HCA acknowledge that the West of England in its response to Government will promote the award of Housing Planning Delivery Grant based on linking allocations to the scale of growth being planned and progress against Development Plan Document Milestones in updated Local Development Schemes.