

**West of England Partnership  
Planning, Housing and Communities Board  
12 November 2009**

## **Single Conversation: Progress Report**

### **Recommendation**

1. To consider and endorse progress and next steps with the Single Conversation.

### **Preparation of Priority Investment**

2. Following earlier workshops with Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Regional Development Agency (RDA) and officer discussions, each authority has been preparing for the planned November - December negotiation of the West of England Delivery and Investment Plan.
3. The main themes proposed for investment are:
  - 3.1 Delivering sustainable places in priority areas
  - 3.2 Delivering housing for everyone
  - 3.3 Delivering economic prosperity and opportunities.
4. At this stage the preparatory work is focused on the period 2010/11 - 2020/21 on the basis that the proposals for:
  - Years 1 - 3 are 'firm'
  - Years 4 - 5 are 'soft'
  - Years 6 - 10 are 'indicative'.
5. The proposals at 3.1 and 3.3 above include only sites where it is envisaged development is only viable with public investment in one or more of the following:
  - Land assembly
  - Technical studies
  - Social economic and environmental infrastructure
  - Affordable housing.
6. The proposals at 3.2, delivering housing for everyone, seek the following investment, without overlapping with the requirements included at 3.1:
  - Building new affordable homes
  - Kick-starting the housing market
  - Supporting vulnerable people
  - Investing in private sector rented renewal.

## **Basis of selection of priorities for investment**

7. The authorities have selected priority areas for investment based on their Core Strategy work, as well as the need for public intervention.
8. Some of the priority areas selected are small and represent a tactical response to supporting the economic upturn; others are strategic proposals designed to support major developments.
9. Each authority is producing a narrative to describe the selection of strategic development areas and themes. These are being completed by:
  - A sub-regional perspective, including the objectives, proposals and actions set out in Section 6 of the Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) 'Growth in Homes and Jobs'
  - A prospectus for 'Economic Prosperity and Opportunities' in the sub-region
  - A summary of the 2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

## **Current draft proposals, negotiations and pursuing MAA objectives**

10. The summary of current first draft proposals are set out at:
  - Appendix 1 (**exempt**): Delivering sustainable places in priority areas, excluding investment levels that are incomplete
  - Appendix 2 (**exempt**): Delivering housing for everyone
  - Appendix 3 (**exempt**): Delivering economic prosperity and opportunities, excluding investment levels that are incomplete.
11. Work by the Authorities to further specify these proposals is continuing, whilst on 06 November 2009 a further meeting will take place with HCA and RDA to pursue the following outcomes:
  - A joint understanding of the sub-region's strategic ambitions and case for investment
  - A joint understanding of the investment themes and proposed location of development which requires public investment and its scale and phasing in the period 2010/11 – 2020/21
  - For each development theme, preliminary agreement with HCA and RDA on:
    - Priorities and phasing
    - Overall scale and nature of public investment
    - Future resourcing and preparation of specific studies to complement the Roger Tym Assessment, especially the viability of locations and the estimates of public investment required
  - Agreement on the focus, content and arrangements for further negotiations.
12. As well as further specifying these proposals, work remains to be done to pursue MAA objectives:

- To adopt a Joint Sub-Regional Development Trajectory in the Plan based on 5-year tranches that demonstrates a rolling, deliverable supply of housing. This will include all development to 2020/21 proposed by the authorities, whether or not it requires public investment.

(Such sequencing and phasing of development will ensure best use of infrastructure, the delivery of mixed and sustainable communities and market recovery. This will provide confidence to developers and discourage inappropriate development).

- To prepare a Joint Supplementary Planning Document to the Regional Spatial Strategy (subject to the publication of the Regional Spatial Strategy) to include it within the planning framework as a matter for consideration.

### **Continuing negotiations**

13. Further rounds of negotiation in November and December will develop the Delivery and Investment Plan. The Environment Agency, Highways Agency and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) will be part of these negotiations.
14. Increasingly the focus will be on estimating the viability of priority locations through market and economic intelligence; this will involve engaging with developers in conjunction with HCA and RDA.
15. Estimates of the overall scale of investment required, and the level and availability of public investment will determine the pace and phasing of development in the short and medium term. As well as developer contributions, public assets and investment and cash flow support, consideration will need to be given to any opportunities to pursue the proposed Accelerated Development Zones (ADZs) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

### **Final Delivery and Investment Plan**

16. The Delivery and Investment Plan needs to express clearly the:
  - Ambitions of the West of England and the strategic case for investment, including market and economic intelligence
  - Well-evidenced priority themes and explicit locations, with the phasing of the output of housing (intermediate and supported) and jobs, including those not requiring public intervention
  - Levels, sources and planning of investment.
17. This will ensure the West of England is well positioned to make the case for investment, to secure the objectives and ambitions set out in Core Strategies and the MAA, on timescales, market conditions and available investment will support.
18. An additional meeting of the Board in mid-December 2009 would assist negotiations and preparation for a report to the Partnership Board in January 2010.

## Appendices

Exempt

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