

West of England Partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency

**SINGLE CONVERSATION:
WEST OF ENGLAND DELIVERY AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN**

Summary



West of England Partnership

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**



SINGLE CONVERSATION: JOINT INVESTMENT AND DELIVERY PLAN

The West of England Partnership and the Homes & Communities Agency with other partners have prepared a Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan for the sub-region. The Plan sets out the priorities and themes to be addressed by public investment in support of development in the West of England over the period from 2010 to 2015. It supports the delivery of local authority Core Strategies, affordable and supported homes, and emerging prosperous, sustainable communities.

In supporting development, the Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan addresses the following challenges and opportunities:

- **Delivering growth:** The delivery of the ambitious growth proposals of the emerging Core Strategies requires considerable public investment to support development, in particular to create viable development sites in the context of the recession;
- **Affordable and supported housing:** Meeting the high levels of need for affordable and supported housing in the West of England requires private and public investment;
- **Regeneration:** Reducing the significant concentrations of disadvantaged communities in the West of England requires investment in renewal, improved local services and access, as well as social, economic and environmental interventions;
- **Creating mixed sustainable communities:** Requires the achievement of higher building standards, better design, more integrated mixed-use new development, and good access by sustainable means to town centres and employment locations;
- **Infrastructure and development viability:** Delivering further development requires investment in new infrastructure and bringing forward viable development sites that attract private investment and enable the delivery of the housing and jobs proposed in Core Strategies;

- **Delivering the spatial strategy:** Emerging Core Strategies, in pursuit of a more balanced pattern of development which is less reliant on expansion on the northern edge of Bristol, propose significant growth within the urban areas, especially in south Bristol, Bath and at Weston-super-Mare. Public investment will be needed to deliver this shift in the distribution of new development.

The Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan prioritises 'place based' investment, which meets requirements arising at 'City Centre and Major Business Locations', and provide support for 'Regeneration', and 'Improving Local Communities'. The plan also supports sub-regional thematic priorities which provide investment in affordable and supported housing in smaller locations in both suburban and rural areas.

PLACE-BASED PRIORITY LOCATIONS

City Centre and Major Business Locations'

- Bath City Riverside is of particular importance in securing early progress in delivering an expansion of the City Centre and regenerating major brownfield sites along the river corridor.
- Bristol Central Area, Temple Meads and St Philips, Stokes Croft and Dove Lane, represent key gateways to the city centre. Regeneration of these areas will therefore benefit both the City Centre and adjacent disadvantaged communities. Intensification of St Philips (north of Feeder Road) will secure a role for the area that more closely reflects its location adjacent to the city centre.
- Filton Patchway, Filton Northfield, Cribbs Causeway, Wallscourt Farm, Harry Stoke and Coldharbour Lane can potentially make a significant contribution to delivering the strategy for the North Fringe. They secure more balanced development, improved local services and support for transport investment, as well as delivering affordable housing targets.

- Securing affordable housing close to major new business development at the new Science Park in Emersons Green will make a significant contribution to improving the sustainability of local communities.

Support for Regeneration

- The regeneration of South Bristol is a regional priority. The potential scale of development in Knowle West, and building on the considerable public investment already committed in Hengrove Park and Hartcliffe Campus, will make a significant contribution to regeneration and sub-regional development targets.
- Investment at Lockleaze/Wallscourt Farm acknowledges the opportunity for substantial new development that will contribute to the regeneration and improvement of the estate.
- The up-grading of Weston-super-Mare Town Centre and the scale of development in the urban extension reflects the priority attached to the regeneration of Weston and enhancing its contribution to meeting sub-regional development targets.

Improving local communities

- Investment in Somer Valley acknowledges the need to enhance the 'self containment' of the area, secure economic re-investment and arrest further increases in travel to Bath and the wider area.
- Keynsham offers opportunities for brownfield development, investing in re-structuring the local economy following the expected closure of Cadburys, improving local facilities and supporting a significant contribution to meeting development targets.
- The scale of development proposals in Yate/Sodbury aim to increase the 'self-containment' of the towns, and secure economic re-structuring.
- Investment in Thornbury aims to support the safeguarding and enhancement of local facilities.

The preparation of the Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan

The Multi-Area Agreement for the sub-region, signed in September 2009, proposed the Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan. Preparation has been facilitated by the 'Single Conversation' that has enabled a detailed dialogue between key West of England partners, including the local authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency, the South West Regional Development Agency, the Environment Agency, Highways Agency and the development industry. This process has supported a 'joined-up' approach to determining public investment priorities across the sub-region.

The selection of investment priorities and themes reflects the local authority Core Strategies and the key challenges and opportunities. Above all, they reflect the development trajectory implied by the Core Strategies and the delivery issues arising.

A detailed process of 'prioritisation' concluded the selection of the investment priorities included in the Delivery and Infrastructure Plan. Schemes were excluded when they could not be started between 2010 and 2015, did not offer strategic benefits or, did not address market failure or inequalities. This process required detailed consideration of the nature, scope, timing and planned outputs of development, as well as requirements for public investment in infrastructure.

Next steps

The West of England Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Plan needs to be informed by further work to clarify the potential contribution of other sources of investment, including:

- The Regional Infrastructure Fund;
- The scope for further aligning Environment Agency and Highways Agency investments with the priorities of the Plan;
- South West Regional Development Agency: the current draft of the Plan does not include any SWRDA investment beyond identified commitments; further consideration will be given to the potential for such investment, especially in business sites and premises, to contribute to delivering the priorities of partners;
- Monitoring opportunities to secure the retention of business rates and thereby address infrastructure funding gaps; an application has already been made to government for Accelerated Development Zone status for Avonmouth and Severnside;
- Further examining scope for establishing a Community Infrastructure Levy for all or parts of the sub-region; and,
- Further engagement with infrastructure providers (utility companies, the Health Service and the police) to ensure timely provision, and with developers and agents to seek views on development viability and other delivery issues.

The preparation of the Plan has used working assumptions about development costs and viabilities. These assumptions will be reviewed when proposed investments are appraised as detailed submissions are made to co-financers. In addition, sub-regional operational planning and programme management arrangements are being strengthened. In turn, this may lead to the re-allocation of resources between the priorities shown by the Plan.

The Regional Funding Allocation for Transport Investment from Department for Transport remains

key both to dealing with the existing investment deficit and the requirement arising from the projected high levels of growth in homes and jobs. This investment is essential to securing effective access for communities, to providing attractive investment opportunities for business and to supporting the growth and productivity of the sub-regional economy. Continued support for its £450m RFA2 Transport Major Schemes Programme is essential in view of the high levels of growth planned and the economic contribution of the sub-region to the UK economy.

The Plan currently addresses the period to 2015. Further work is planned to extend the timescale to 2020.