

## Engagement with the Development Industry and Statutory Agencies

### Purpose

1. To report on progress in engaging with the Development Industry and our public sector partners to support the delivery of Core Strategy priorities.

### Background

2. The Partnership has a long term vision for sustainable economic growth and prosperity for all. This vision will in part be achieved through the Delivery Infrastructure and Investment Plan (DIIP) which was prepared with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and other partners through the 'Single Conversation'.
3. The Plan identifies the spatial priorities contained in the emerging Core Strategies for new jobs, homes and infrastructure which are needed to sustain economic recovery and secure long term sustainable growth. Continued joint working with the development industry, statutory agencies and communities will help improve conditions to deliver these priorities successfully. Delivery through collaboration between local authorities and developers also supports the ambitions set out in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) submission to government.

### Benefits of Joint Working

4. Constructive engagement between local authorities, statutory bodies and developers is essential to successfully delivering the priorities set out in Core Strategies. This is especially true at a time when there are so many obstacles to securing infrastructure investment and to the viability of development. The current engagement with developers aims to find additional and realistic ways of increasing trust and confidence between partners, and removing obstacles to priority development. Successful outcomes will create improved conditions for the preparation, submission and effective management of high quality applications and provide for better planned and designed places and more sustainable communities.

### Existing Local Authority Responses

5. Development Management Services in each authority have developed their practices in working closely with developers, local communities and other stakeholders. Their approach is underpinned by a range of key principles, including:
  - Shared responsibility for actions and decisions
  - Early and continuous engagement throughout the process
  - Openness, transparency and inclusiveness
  - Commitment to the process so that obstacles and potential solutions can be fully explored even though views about the final outcomes might differ
  - Robust project management

6. For large scale and complex proposals Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are in use as an effective project management tool for taking development proposals through the planning process. There are various examples of good practice.
7. To embed the principles of joint working within service functions each authority has also adopted its own charter or protocol for development management work.
8. Bath and North East Somerset Council has adopted an integrated 'Development Team' approach whereby officers from all service areas of the Council are brought together at inception to assess and give advice on major or complex planning applications. Multi-disciplinary major projects teams are now well established in each authority.
9. Bristol City Council took its approach towards partnership working a step further in 2007 when it launched its 'Planning Protocol' for major planning applications with the support of the Bristol Property Agents and GWR Business West. South Gloucestershire Council followed suit in November 2009 when it adopted its own PPA Charter.

### **Current and Future Initiatives to Promote Joint Working**

10. Earlier reports to the Board on the outcomes from the Single Conversation described engagement with the development industry (house builders and property agents) with the support of the HCA and the Statutory Agencies, and their wish for more joint work to establish a stronger basis for unblocking obstacles to development and establishing more selectively consistent practices in the West of England. Subsequent further discussions with the development industry have focussed on the need for consistent principles and practices which could be developed to further facilitate development in these especially difficult times.
11. The four Council's are also exploring options for 'future proofing' Section 106 Agreements through joint working with developers in order to maximise housing delivery whilst maintaining the quality and sustainability of developments. Research financed by South West RIEP following a bid the Councils is being undertaken by consultants who are due to report the results later in October. It is envisaged that this work will be used as the basis for developing improved tools and techniques for tackling scheme viability.
12. As reported to the last Board meeting, in order to increase the pace and quality of housing delivery in the West of England the Partnership is establishing a new and enlarged Housing Delivery Procurement Framework to replace the existing Homes West Partnership. The required timetable is attached. A drop-in session is being held on 13 September for potential partners from the Housing Development and Housing Management sectors to gain information on the aims and objectives of the proposed Panel and the Procurement process for membership.
13. Council and Partnership officers are also developing the West of England Green Infrastructure Group, to develop an understanding of the requirements, benefits, and high-level principles for a strategic network of Green Infrastructure to support sustainable development across the area. The outcomes of this joint working with Natural England and the Environment Agency will inform the preparation of a West

of England Green Infrastructure Strategy to support Core Strategies and the Joint Supplementary Planning Document and will be reported at a future Planning, Housing & Communities Board meeting.

14. The Partnership authorities are continuing to work with the Environment Agency to support the development of timely, robust Core Strategies and to collaborate on cross boundary issues such as flood risk and climate change. In time these working arrangements will be formalised into a Memorandum of Understanding.
15. To bring together this work and gain additional contributions, a 'Growth and Delivery Event' will be taking place on 13 October 2010. A programme of short presentations and practical workshops led by a variety of partners has been built into the programme. These are designed to engage the development industry in shaping up consistent approaches to unblocking the obstacles which hold up developments. The outline programme is appended. The Chair has agreed to introduce the event.
16. Approximately 330 invitations have been issued to businesses, public bodies and local authority staff. Senior people from private and public sector partners have agreed to lead the presentations and workshops. The outputs from the event will assist the work described above.

## **Recommendation**

That the Board considers the report and gives its views.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Programme for Growth and Delivery Event, 13 October 2010.

Appendix 2: Housing Delivery Panel (HDP) tender flowchart

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# West of England Partnership

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council



North  
Somerset  
COUNCIL

South Gloucestershire  
Council

## Growth and Delivery Event

BAWA, Filton, Bristol

13 October 2010

### Programme

<b>08.30am</b>	<b>Registration and Coffee</b>				
<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b> <i>Matthew Riddle, Chair Planning, Housing &amp; Communities Board</i>				
<b>9.05am</b>	<b>Planning for Growth</b> <i>Ralph Hawkins, Development Director, Barratt Homes Bristol Division</i>				
<b>9.15am</b>	<b>Partnership Working in the West of England</b> <i>Zoe Wilcox, Service Director for Planning &amp; Sustainable Development, Bristol City Council</i>				
<b>9.25am</b>	<b>Introduction to Workshops</b> <i>Ian Collinson, Head of Spatial Planning, West of England Partnership</i>				
<b>9.30am</b>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Workshop 1</b> Delivering Our Priorities  <i>Led by John Cottrell, HCA</i> </td> <td style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Workshop 2</b> Planning Charter  <i>Led by Richard Matthews, BCC</i> </td> <td style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Workshop 3</b> Effective Practices  <i>Led by Ian White, ATLAS</i> </td> <td style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white; padding: 10px; vertical-align: top;"> <b>Workshop 4</b> Business Development  <i>Led by Simon Parks, Sovereign</i> </td> </tr> </table>	<b>Workshop 1</b> Delivering Our Priorities  <i>Led by John Cottrell, HCA</i>	<b>Workshop 2</b> Planning Charter  <i>Led by Richard Matthews, BCC</i>	<b>Workshop 3</b> Effective Practices  <i>Led by Ian White, ATLAS</i>	<b>Workshop 4</b> Business Development  <i>Led by Simon Parks, Sovereign</i>
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<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Next Steps from each workshop</b>				
<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>				
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<b>1.00pm</b>	<b>Close</b>				

