

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LAND AND ASSETS PANEL
HELD ON FRIDAY, 5 JANUARY 2018 AT COMMITTEE ROOM A,
WELLINGTON HOUSE, LEEDS**

Present:

Councillor Tim Swift (Chair)
Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe
Amir Hussein
Councillor Denise Jeffrey
Andrew Latchmore
Councillor Peter McBride
Rob Pearson

Calderdale Council
Bradford Council
Yeme Architects
Wakefield Council
Shulmans
Kirklees Council
Homes and Communities Agency

In attendance:

Naz Parkar
Ben Still
Judith Furlonger
Rob Hignett
Khaled Berroum

Kirklees Council
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
West Yorkshire Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Roger Marsh and Sharon Squires.

2. Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests

None were declared.

3. Exempt information - Exclusion of the press and public

There were no exclusions of the press and public at the meeting.

4. Minutes of the meeting of the Land and Assets Panel held on 13 October 2017

Resolved: That the minutes of the Land and Assets Panel held on 13 October 2017 be approved.

5. HCA Update on Funding and Role

The Panel was given a verbal update by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) on its funding and role as the transition to 'Homes England' reaches the final stage.

Assessment for Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bids is expected to be completed and announced by the end of January 2018. Priority is being given to the earliest deliverable bids which can be sufficiently progressed by March 2018. Projects are categorised three ways: those which (1) can be delivered soonest, (2) need more due diligence and (3) are not ready at this time.

The Agency's main focus is to reach the government's target of 300,000 homes a year from the current figure of 217,000 and to ensure that public land is used well.

Greater improvement is needed to reach affordable homes target. The HCA has adopted a flexible method to better determine where to affect outcomes, for instance, lowering land value to help housing associations buy land to make development more viable.

The HCA is seeking to market its support, services and funding streams more widely to connect with more big developers who have the resources and capacity to deliver large projects.

Members raised concerns that the 300,000 target is too ambitious without more funding and powers such as 'rescinding' planning permission, and that the new proposed methodology calculating Objectively Assessed Need gives more favourable numbers to the south than the north. There is some concern in the private sector that lower targets will lower investor confidence which will lower deliverability outcomes.

The Panel was informed that the new methodology to calculate Objectively Assessed Need is still in consultation and the government is due to respond. Members were advised to gain the confidence of policymakers with a clear, ambitious message about work being done to reach the target, to counter the historical focus on southern regions where numerical targets are easier to satisfy, in addition to proposing what further targets could be achieved if they had particular infrastructure, funds, and planning powers.

Members raised examples of developers citing 'unexpected' viability issues as a means of leverage to avoid affordable home agreements after planning permission had already been granted. The Panel discussed possible solutions including adopting wider use of Planning Performance Agreements where viability, design and affordable housing are discussed and agreed early in the planning process.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update be noted.

- (ii) That a written report from the Homes and Communities Agency be a standing item at future meetings.

6. One Public Estate (OPE) Group Update – Phase 6

The Panel was presented with a report updating them on Phase 6 of the One Public Estate (OPE) Group. Since the report was written, it is understood that West Yorkshire Combined Authority has been allocated £160,000, but specific details are not yet known. Bids to the Land Release Fund are still being evaluated and it was confirmed that they had not yet reached the HCA for assessment at this time.

Resolved: That the details of the Phase 6 funding submission from the partnership and the interim announcement from One Public Estate be noted.

7. Leeds City Region Redundant Mills – Feasibility and Investment Framework

The Panel was presented with a report on the commission to undertake a feasibility and investment framework for underused and redundant mills in West Yorkshire. It was emphasised that the project was initially envisioned as a scoping report only. If any additional resource is required, further assessments and recommendations would need to be made to the Combined Authority.

Members noted that the report should be seen as an early stage in a wider project to inform a more targeted approach to seek solutions to bring redundant mill buildings back into use. The Panel asked that officers bring a draft prioritisation criteria to the next Panel meeting along with the final report, and three proposed delivery / intervention models to the meeting after that after feedback.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report and initial actions for consideration detailed in paragraph 2.6, in light of the resource implications, be noted.
- (ii) That the final report be tabled at the next Land and Assets Panel on 20 April 2018.
- (iii) That a draft prioritisation criteria be submitted for discussion to the next Land and Assets Panel on 20 April 2018.
- (iv) That three proposed delivery / intervention models be submitted for discussion at a future Land and Assets Panel meeting.

8. Business Planning & Budget 2018/19

The Panel was presented with a report advising them of the work underway on business planning and budgeting for 2018/19 and the key elements for the draft three year financial strategy.

The Panel noted that there was only one mention of housing throughout the document and this lack of prominence does not take into account how housing has recently risen as a political and national priority. Members advised that the Combined Authority must express more clearly how infrastructure projects and economic regeneration affects and unlocks housing, for instance, areas within walking distance of transport hubs. Recalling earlier discussion around the need for local authorities to clearly signify and prove to the government that housing is a deliverable priority, members suggested a greater strategic, narrative discipline on this point should be a priority.

Members also noted that there was little distinction made between LEP and Combined Authority funding sources and expenditure, despite there being more than one LEP covering the Leeds City Region geography, and that the public wanted more clarity. It was clarified that although there is a geographical element to some revenue and expenditure, as an example, the Transport Levy raised from West Yorkshire authorities can only be spent in those districts. Members advised that this geographical distinction should be made clearer in the documents and budget reports.

Resolved:

- (i) That the work underway on the medium term financial strategy, business planning and budget for 2018/19 be noted.
- (ii) That Panel's feedback and comments be noted.

9. Any Other Business

Uniform spatial planning system

It was reported that the private sector is keen to see a more consistent, uniform approach to spatial planning and systems across districts. Members were informed that although there are joint projects around geographical data, sharing good practise and mutual consultation on local plans, there are no plans for a formal uniform system at a regional level at this time.

Offsite Manufacturing

Members asked about offsite manufacturing and whether the Panel can expect to discuss it in the future. It was reported that offsite manufacturing is largely coming from Manchester and members suggested this sector could be a part of the local economy, instead of importing. Members were informed that officers may consider Leeds City Region based offsite manufacturing offers in the future.

Malaysian and Chinese Investors

It was reported that there has been an increase in interest from Chinese and Malaysian investors in the regional economy and there is opportunity to reform processes to attract more investment from Asia.

Planning Delivery Fund submission

The Planning Delivery Fund was announced on 4 December 2017 and the deadline for Expressions of Interest (EOI) is 11 January 2018. The Combined Authority intends to submit a potential bid for around £500,000 to the Planning Delivery Fund, focusing on joint working, design quality, and innovation.

Due to the short turnaround, the proposed process for the bid is that a bid will be put together in coordination with the Land and Assets Panel Chair (Cllr Tim Swift, Calderdale) and the Chief Executive Lead on Housing and Regeneration (Jacqui Gedman, Kirklees), before approval by the Combined Authority Managing Director, Ben Still.

Resolved: That the proposed process for a bid to the Planning Delivery Fund be endorsed.

10. **Date of next meeting – 20 April 2018, Committee Room A, Wellington House, Leeds**