

## WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

4 October 2019

### REPORT SUMMARY SHEET

#### WEST OF ENGLAND PLACEMAKING PROJECT

##### Purpose

To update the Joint Committee on the establishment of a design review service covering the West of England region and to outline a proposed work programme for the West of England Placemaking Project, including the development of a West of England Placemaking Charter and the process for appointing a West of England Placemaking Champion.

##### Summary

This report includes the following key information:

- The background to the development of this project.
- The scope of the project, covering 4 areas:
  - \* A design review service to be established in each of the 4 West of England unitary authorities under the shared banner of “Design West”.
  - \* The establishment of a Placemaking Champion role to provide an opportunity for an independent local advocate of quality placemaking.
  - \* The development of a Placemaking charter for the region – this will be an aspirational statement of intent, designed to inspire buy-in from across the built environment sector and local communities to the regional priorities for inclusive and sustainable growth.
  - \* A training and development programme to support unitary authority Members and officers in the context of the project.

##### Recommendations

Members of the Joint Committee are asked to:

1. Endorse the proposed work programme including the development of the West of England Placemaking Charter and the process for appointing a West of England Placemaking Champion, after the design review panels are up and running.
2. Approve the use of £75,000 from the Planning Delivery Fund to deliver the West of England Placemaking Project.

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**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4 OCTOBER 2019**

**REPORT TITLE: WEST OF ENGLAND PLACEMAKING PROJECT**

**DIRECTOR: DAVID CARTER, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE,  
WECA**

**AUTHOR: LAURA AMBLER, HEAD OF REGIONAL PLANNING AND  
HOUSING, WECA**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Joint Committee on the establishment of a design review service covering the West of England region
- 1.2 To outline a proposed work programme for the West of England Placemaking Project, including the development of a West of England Placemaking Charter and the process for appointing a West of England Placemaking Champion.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members of the Committee are asked to endorse the proposed work programme and the process for appointment of a West of England Placemaking Champion, after the design panels are up and running.
- 2.2 Committee are also asked to approve the use of £75,000 from the Planning Delivery Fund to deliver the West of England Placemaking Project.

### **3. Background / Issues for Consideration**

- 3.1 The failure to deliver consistently high quality new development is an issue of national significance. The West of England is not immune to the challenge of ensuring that new development meets the needs of communities (including healthy places, climate change resilience and mitigation, sustainability, affordable housing and enhancing the natural and built environment) whilst ensuring the delivery of the homes and infrastructure required for our region.
- 3.2 The emerging planning policy framework for the West of England provides the opportunity to articulate the expectations and aspirations for the quality of new development and to embed these requirements into statutory planning policy. This framework is however only one tool to achieve our aspirations to achieve high quality places, and this project incorporates a package of complementary initiatives and actions to communicate the ambition of the West of England and develop a culture of design excellence.

- 3.3 This project follows work by WECA and the four authorities to deliver the region's first Placemaking Conference in June 2019. The event communicated the ambition and expectations of the Mayors and Council Leaders for the quality of development coming forward in the sub region.

#### 4. Scope of the West of England Placemaking Project

- 4.1 The project consists of four work areas, which will be delivered over 12 months. A project review and further proposed work programme will be prepared in Autumn 2020.

##### *Design West*

- 4.2 A design review service will be established in each of the four West of England UAs, under the shared banner of 'Design West'. The service is being developed by the [Architecture Centre](#) and [Creating Excellence](#), and draws on their joint expertise and experience from running the Bristol Urban Design Forum (managed by the Architecture Centre) and the South West Design Review Panel (managed by Creating Excellence).
- 4.3 The service will be developed in consultation with each of the four West of England UAs to understand the design, development and policy priorities of each authority. It will ensure an independent and regionally consistent design review service is available across the West of England for proposed developments and infrastructure projects.

##### *West of England Placemaking Champion*

- 4.4 After the design panels are up and running, the role of Place-making Champion will be pursued. The role and scope of the West of England Placemaking Champion is set out in the draft Terms of Reference at Appendix 1 of this report. The role will respond to a significant opportunity for an independent, local advocate of quality placemaking to help integrate the various strands of quality design and complement other innovative work in this area in the West of England.
- 4.5 The role will be unpaid with an allowance for expenses, and will initially last one year, during which a detailed role and scope will be finalised. This will allow the opportunity to review its usefulness and success in achieving the overall ambition to establish a culture change in the design and delivery of places across the sub-region.
- 4.6 Expressions of Interest will be invited from potential candidates with significant standing from the built environment professions, and the post will be advertised through appropriate channels. Submissions will be considered against set criteria, and a recommendations / shortlist of candidates will be provided to Joint Committee and Planning & Housing Board. Following feedback from Members of the Planning & Housing Board, Leaders and Mayors, a decision on the appointment will be made by Joint Committee.
- 4.7 The criteria for selection of an appropriate candidate will include:
- Knowledge of the West of England development and policy context
  - A specialism / area of expertise which reflects the priorities of our region
  - Past or current experience of design-related advocacy
  - Ability to build relationships with senior leaders and politicians and advocate on behalf the region

- Ability to influence and inspire the development industry
- Track record of delivering highly regarded development schemes (particularly within the West of England)
- The terms of reference for the appointment will ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are avoided.

*West of England Placemaking Charter*

4.8 The West of England Placemaking Charter will be developed over the next 12 months with consultant support. The Charter will be an aspirational statement of intent and commitment and will be used by the Mayors and Leaders to inspire buy in from across the built environment sector and from local communities to the sub-region’s priorities for inclusive and sustainable growth. A tender process will ensure the appointment of an appropriate consultant to support stakeholder engagement, design and development of the charter, including supporting WECA and the authorities in testing and reviewing content. A route map to the Charter is outlined below.

Sept – Nov 2019	Dec 19 – Feb 2020	March – May 2020	June – Aug 2020
Officer review of best practice Advertise and appoint consultancy support	Draft charter based on WofE agreed priorities Member and stakeholder engagement, feedback and testing	Second draft Stakeholder and public engagement, feedback and testing Finalise / sign-off	Engagement events to gain sign up Launch and promotion

*Training and Development*

4.9 This work stream provides an opportunity to support UA Members and officers (including WECA officers) through a training and development programme to be delivered across the West of England. The proposed training programme will include sessions on the role of design in the planning process and themed workshops which respond to the challenges and priorities of the West of England.

*Other opportunities*

4.10 This workstream will also allow WECA and the UAs to respond proactively to opportunities which support the aims of the project.

**5. Governance arrangements**

- 5.1 The project will be delivered by a team of officers from WECA and the four authorities, working with external stakeholders as appropriate.
- 5.2 Day to day oversight of the work programme will be through Heads of Planning, and key decisions will go through Directors and CEOs. Regular information updates will be provided to Planning & Housing Board for them to make recommendations to the Joint Committee.
- 5.3 Joint Committee will approve the West of England Placemaking Charter and the appointment of the West of England Placemaking Champion.

## 6. Consultation

- 6.1 Delivery of the project outcomes will require engagement with stakeholders, which will be delivered through the development of the West of England Placemaking Charter.

## 7. Other Options Considered

- 7.1 No other options have been considered in the development of this project. A 'do nothing' approach is possible, but this work is seen to complement the existing and emerging planning policy aspirations of the West of England.

## 8. Risk Management/Assessment

- 8.1 The proposed project seeks to reduce risks associated with poor quality new development by articulating and embedding the policy ambitions of the West of England.
- 8.2 Risks associated with project will be related to individual work areas, which may include stakeholder engagement, role and remit of the Placemaking Champion, and quality delivery of project outputs. Risks and associated mitigations will be monitored through the project management processes.

## 9. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 9.1 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 9.2 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
  - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 9.3 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 9.4 Obligations under the Equalities Act will inform stakeholder engagement and

consultation processes undertaken throughout this project.

## 10. Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate

10.1 WECA submitted a successful application to MHCLG's Planning Delivery Fund in partnership with the four West of England authorities, which was awarded in February 2018. The bid included a £75,000 allocation to improve the quality of new development. It is proposed the funds are used to deliver the work programme outlined above.

10.2 The funding and delivery of Design West within Unitary Authority areas will be agreed between each UA and Design West.

Advice given by: Malcolm Coe Director of Investment and Corporate Services

## 11. Legal Implications

11.1 There are no specific legal implications arising as a result of this report.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services

## 12. Land/Property Implications

12.1 There are no land/property implications associated with this report.

## 13. Human Resources Implications

13.1 A project team of Planning and Urban Design officers from WECA and the four UAs has been established to deliver this work programme, with WECA leading on project management from within existing team resource.

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of HR.

## 14. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Terms of Reference for the West of England Placemaking Champion

### West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EW; email: [democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

**WEST OF ENGLAND PLACEMAKING CHAMPION**

**(Draft) Terms of Reference**

**1. Overview**

The West of England Placemaking Champion will act as an independent advocate for quality placemaking across the West of England. The role will act as the figurehead of WECA and the UA's ambition to achieve a culture change in the design and delivery of quality places, and make high quality placemaking the norm across the West of England. This is initially proposed as a one year appointment, during which the appointed Champion will establish its detailed role and scope, and propose a future work programme to lead and advocate.

**2. Purpose**

- To establish the future detailed role and scope of a West of England Placemaking Champion, expected to include;
  - advocate and promote the need for and benefits of quality placemaking in the West of England,
  - act as an objective 'critical friend' to WECA and the UAs,
  - report on best practice placemaking from around the UK and abroad and advise on its applicability to the West of England context,
  - support the drafting and promotion of the West of England Placemaking Charter.

**3. How will this be done?**

- Advocacy; by promoting best practice across the sub-region including the drafting and communication around the Placemaking Charter,
- Engagement; liaising with WECA and the Unitary Authorities, through Design West, participating in the training and engagement programme that forms part of the wider Placemaking project, and taking part in engagement and consultation events to understand community satisfaction/ support,
- Learning & feedback; disseminating best practice from elsewhere (the UK and abroad) to the UAs and WECA through Design West, and to the private sector through planned engagement and training events,
- Guidance; working with the West of England Placemaking project team to set the direction of travel to achieve the ambition for high quality placemaking across the West of England,
- Breaking down barriers; as an independent advocate working across-sectors, across-disciplines, and across-boundaries,
- Championing; promoting & involving local talent



#### **4. Governance**

The role will liaise with the Project team and report to Housing and Planning Board at milestones to be agreed. The role will not be paid and will therefore remain independent from the UAs and WECA. Reasonable expenses will be provided by WECA and the authorities with prior agreement.

#### **5. How long will the role last?**

The role will initially be a one-year appointment. At the end of the first year it will be reviewed by the Project Team and Housing and Planning Board to consider how successful it has been against the above terms of reference, and whether there is merit in re-appointing or extending the role to continue the work programme.