

West Midlands Land Commission – FAQ's

Why do we require a Land Commission?

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has developed a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) that aims to create 500,000 additional jobs and secure GVA 5% higher than the national average by 2030. The delivery of current targets for jobs and economic growth is already constrained by land supply, with the pinch being felt on land for both residential and employment uses.

The WMCA SEP is likely to prove an even greater stretch, and the West Midlands Combined Authority is concerned that the delivery of the WMCA SEP should not be constrained by a lack of developable land.

The role of the West Midlands Land Commission is to take a fresh look at matters affecting the West Midlands land supply. It will consider what measures could be initiated and undertaken to ensure an improved supply of developable land which supports the growth ambitions of business, the housing needs of residents, and the future diversification of the local economy.

The Commission intends to focus on three key areas:

- What are the challenges associated with delivering the employment land and housing targets set out in the WMCA SEP?
- What are the blockages to the delivery of developable land across the West Midlands?
- How can a sufficient supply of developable land in the West Midlands be secured?

What will the Land Commission do?

The West Midlands Land Commission is independent, and is seeking to adopt an evidential and diagnostic approach including, where appropriate, using case study material.

The Commission's geographic scope is the land covered by the three Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas: the Black Country LEP, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP.

The Commission will consider both public and private sector land holdings.

The Commission has recently conducted a wide consultation process, in particular with representatives of the LEPs and constituent and non-constituent members of the WMCA. This consultation exercise has informed the drafting of the Commission's Terms of Reference and this call for evidence.

Who is Paul Marcuse and what relevant experience does he have?

Paul Marcuse is a senior figure in the real estate industry with some 30 years' experience. Paul was previously Head of Global Real Estate at UBS Global Asset Management, and prior to that he was Chief Executive of AXA Real Estate.

Paul now has a portfolio of non-executive roles which includes chairing the Management Board of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and acting as senior advisor to a number of real estate investment management businesses. In recent years, Paul has been a trustee of the Urban Land Institute and a member of the University of Cambridge Land Economy Advisory Board.

Paul's experience makes him extremely well qualified to chair the Land Commission and the WMCA is very pleased that he has agreed to lead this important work on our behalf.

Who are the other commissioners?

Bill Oliver is the retiring Chief Executive of one of the UK's leading regeneration specialists, St. Modwen Properties Plc. He has extensive experience of developing in the West Midlands and over 30 years' experience in the property industry, having worked for residential and commercial development companies such as Alfred McAlpine, Barratt and The Rutland Group. He was a Finance Director of Dwyer Estates plc from 1994 to 2000 and joined St. Modwen in 2000 under the same post before being appointed as Managing Director in 2003 and Chief Executive in 2004. Bill is a qualified Chartered Accountant and has also been appointed as a non-executive Director of Safestore Holdings Plc with effect from 1st November 2016.

Bridget Rosewell OBE, MA, MPhil, FICE is a prominent UK economist, with a track record in advising public and private sector clients on key strategic issues. She is a founder and Senior Adviser of Volterra Partner and a non-executive director of Network Rail and of Atom Bank. She was Chief Economic Adviser to the Greater London Authority from 2002 to 2012. She has been a member of several Commissions looking at the future of public services, cities, infrastructure and local finance.

Bruce Mann is the Executive Director of the Cabinet Office's Government Property Unit. He is responsible for driving efficient utilisation of the government's land and property portfolio, releasing surplus or under-utilised estate for more productive use. In that role, he has led the Strategic Land and Property review, the results of which were announced at Budget 2014 and is overseeing the development and implementation of a new commercially-driven approach to land and property asset management across the estate, as announced in the Budget 2015. Bruce is also a member of CIPFA.

Jerome Frost is Arup's Global Planning Director and leader of Consulting in the UK, Middle East and Africa. As the former Head of Design and Regeneration for the Olympic Delivery Authority (London 2012), he is a recognised expert in planning for delivery. He specialises in economic development, urban regeneration and masterplanning. Prior to this, Jerome served as Head of the National Consultancy Unit for English Partnerships - a national centre of expertise for regeneration and development, including the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), a specialist service aimed at mitigating the issues delaying major planning applications across England.

Who will support the Land Commission in their work?

Metro Dynamics is one of the foremost consultancies specialising in city and economic growth has been retained to provide strategic support to the Land Commission. Metro Dynamics has supported the WMCA to date in developing the devolution agreement with the Government, and is working with a number of cities around the UK and internationally. Metro Dynamics will also provide the Commission secretariat.

Specific research support to the Land Commission will be provided by Bilfinger GVA. Bilfinger GVA is one of the largest commercial property advisers in the UK, offering consultancy and management services. The firm has specialist knowledge of the West Midlands market, based on nearly 200 years of experience in the region.

Will the Land Commission be making recommendations about individual properties/sites?

The Land Commission will not make any recommendations with regards to individual sites and property. Its role is to look across the West Midlands conurbation and make sure there

is a balanced supply of land for residential and commercial development to meet the needs and requirements of the growing economy.

When will the Land Commission report?

The Final Report of the Land Commission will be available in early 2017.

How can I contact the Land Commission?

Evidence and views in response to this call can be submitted via the Commission web site, or can be sent to wmcaland@metroynamics.co.uk. All submissions will be considered by the Commission.