

Recommendations for the new Mayor of the West of England

The people of the West of England will vote for a new Mayor on the 6 May. The availability and cost of housing is a key concern for many people living in the West of England. According to the recent *Future of the Region Survey* carried out by the Combined Authority in late 2020 the provision of quality homes that are affordable (relative to local incomes) is the key priority for the people of the region. Providing everyone with access to a quality home that they can afford was ranked the most important objective.

Post-election, we look forward to working with the Mayor and the Combined Authority to help deliver all types of homes. However, it is clear that there are major challenges on the horizon. To ensure that the region builds the housing it needs and supports constituents, the Home Builders Federation recommends the following:

- It is critical that the new Mayor continues with the preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy for the West of England. An up-to-date spatial plan for the city-region will coordinate land allocations for future housing supply with transport and environmental investment projects. This plan will also help attract additional government investment. Up-to-date plans will be key to increasing and accelerating housing delivery.
- HBF acknowledges the difficulty associated with accommodating the 35% housing uplift for Bristol City (the housing target for Bristol City will increase from 1,675 homes a year in the current local plan to 3,196). The Combined Authority should encourage South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset councils to accommodate an element of this increase through the identification of urban extensions and new settlements.
- The Mayor should review the effectiveness of Bristol City's affordable housing threshold mechanism and consider extending this to South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset.
- As owner-occupation remains the tenure of preference for most households, the Mayor should work with housebuilders to explore ways to support those who hope to become first-time buyers in the West of England.
- Adopt a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy to secure contributions from developments to fund transport and nature-based projects.
- Acknowledge the economic and social value of new housing development. New housing generates many significant financial and tax benefits for the national and local economy. It is also a major employer. According to research by HBF in 2018¹, housebuilding contributed £38bn in economic output to UK economy in 2017/18 including £19.2bn GVA. The home building industry makes a considerable contribution to employment, supporting around 772,000 jobs in 2018/19 (based on 225,000 net housing additions) – direct, indirect and induced employment. Through S106 contributions, the private house building industry has also become the number one provider of affordable housing in England. The Mayor and Combined Authority should commit to continue to work with and support private house builders so that the industry can continue to benefit the region.

¹ *The Economic Footprint of House Building in England and Wales: Home Builders Federation; July 2018*

About the HBF

The Home Builders Federation (HBF) is the principal representative body of the house building industry in England and Wales. Our members account for over 80% of all new housing built in England and Wales in any one year. Recent research by the Government has estimated that housebuilders have made a significant contribution to the nation's infrastructure, providing some £21 billion towards infrastructure of all types including affordable housing since 2005. Housebuilders were also responsible for delivering 52% of all the affordable homes provided in England in 2019-20.

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