Planning Handbook

Q3 2026

Wolverhampton

Regeneration & Investment Briefing

Funding, places and delivery.

A briefing for organisations bringing forward homes and regeneration across Wolverhampton, Bilston and Low Hill.

Wolverhampton

Inside this briefing

A practical guide to funding routes, local programmes and the organisations turning sites and neighbourhood priorities into delivery.

For organisations delivering housing and regeneration in Wolverhampton.

Wolverhampton Art Gallery

DATES AND DECISIONS TO WATCH

As at 19 September 2026	Published position
New Wolverhampton Plan	Cabinet approved the timetable on 10 June 2026; Notice of Intention due by 30 June 2026; scoping consultation summer 2026; statutory 34-month process; adoption expected 2029, shaping homes to 2045. [16,17,18]
Low Hill Pride in Place (phase two)	Named in MHCLG's phase 2 methodology note; £20m over ten years; independent Chair Chris Allen appointed 11 June 2026; Plan due to MHCLG by 30 November 2026. [11,31]
Whitmore Reans & Dunstall Hill Pride in Place	Phase resolved: phase 2 expansion. MHCLG lists Wolverhampton's neighbourhood as "Waterloo Road"; £20m over ten years; independent Chair Tom Hayden appointed 26 June 2026. Pride in Place Plan due to MHCLG by 26 February 2027. [12,43,44]
Pride in Place Impact Fund	£750,000 in 2025/26 and £750,000 in 2026/27; £400,000 committed to a Vibrant High Streets grants programme from 6 March 2026. National guidance requires commitment by 31 March 2027. [4,5,15]

Figures in this briefing cover different programmes, geographies and periods. They should not be added into a single borough investment total.

Up to £46 billion over ten years

Homes England and its subsidiary, the National Housing Bank, have up to £46 billion to deploy across England to 2036. These are the principal streams. [1]

The joint Investment Prospectus, published on 31 March 2026 ahead of the Bank's opening on 1 April, brings grant, land and finance into one framework. The Bank aims to attract more than £50 billion of additional private capital over the decade.

Stream	Amount	What it funds / who it reaches
Social and Affordable Homes Programme 2026–2036	**At least £27bn** outside London £39bn nationally, including London	Capital grant for social and affordable rent, shared ownership, supported housing and estate regeneration. Registered Providers, councils, housebuilders and community-led organisations, through continuous market engagement or strategic partnerships.
Housing and Infrastructure Capital Grant	**About £3.1bn** Homes England's share of the £5bn national pot*	Land assembly, remediation and strategic infrastructure; dedicated viability-gap support planned for later in 2026/27. Councils, developers and landowners with sites the market cannot unlock alone.
National Housing Delivery Fund Debt, equity and guarantees	**Up to £16bn**	Loans, equity and guarantees, including funding that may be devolved to mayoral authorities. Housebuilders, Registered Providers, funds and lending partners.

*The prospectus describes the agency's share as £3.1bn, subject to final confirmation. These are programme envelopes, not a ring-fenced allocation to Wolverhampton.

PROGRAMME MILESTONES

Date	Milestone
31 March / 1 April 2026	Investment Prospectus published / National Housing Bank opens
25 August 2026	First wave: £9.58bn to 33 strategic partners outside London [2]
Later in 2026/27	Dedicated viability-gap grant planned [1]
To 2036	Ten-year programme period

Land, grant and finance can be combined around the needs of a scheme.

Grant, land and finance

Which support fits a scheme depends less on its size than on what is holding it up: a funding gap, a difficult site, or the tenure of the homes to be delivered. [1]

Family	Product	Purpose	Typical user
Grant	**Social and Affordable Homes Programme**	Affordable tenures, supported housing and estate regeneration	RPs, councils, developer partners
Grant	**Housing and Infrastructure Capital Grant**	Viability gaps, infrastructure, land assembly and remediation	Councils, landowners, master developers
Land	**Homes England land**	Acquisition, enabling and disposal through sale, lease, development agreement or joint venture	Developers of all sizes
Finance	**SME Accelerator Loan**	Site finance for smaller builders establishing a track record	SME housebuilders
Finance	**Revolving credit facility**	Multi-site support alongside commercial lenders	Growing builders
Finance	**Senior and mezzanine debt**	Project funding for build to rent, later living and brownfield schemes	Developers and funds
Finance	**Corporate lending**	Balance-sheet finance for growth, including modern methods of construction	Housebuilders
Finance	**Infrastructure loans**	Long-term finance, up to 15 years, for upfront infrastructure	Developers and councils
Finance	**Low-interest RP loans**	Unlocking capital investment in social and affordable homes	Registered Providers
Finance	**Equity**	Minority investment in vehicles typically delivering more than 3,000 homes	Funds and partnerships
Finance	**Guarantees**	Bonds and loans to reduce institutional financing costs	Funds and RPs

Two grant routes in the West Midlands. Land, remediation and infrastructure support normally comes first through the Combined Authority: WMCA's devolved housing and land funds, assessed through its Single Commissioning Framework, and the £2.6bn integrated settlement it has held since April 2026. Social and Affordable Homes Programme grant remains administered by Homes England, shaped by the mayor's published strategic priorities. The National Housing Bank makes its own finance decisions while working alongside the agency.

How the regional routes fit together

The first conversation for a Wolverhampton scheme depends on the funding gap; a regional figure is not a borough award.

FIRST-WAVE SAHP ESTIMATE FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS

£409m **c.3,200 homes**

Estimated strategic-partnership spend and homes across the region in MHCLG’s regional funding breakdown of 24 August 2026; the companion Homes England release names the 33 partners and gives no totals. Neither gives a Wolverhampton allocation. [2]

Scheme requirement	Route to establish	What to resolve
Social and affordable homes	Homes England's SAHP, via strategic partnership or CME, shaped by WMCA's mayoral priorities.	Tenure, delivery partner, grant and timing. [1,21]
Land, infrastructure or abnormal costs	The council with WMCA's devolved housing and land funds via the Single Commissioning Framework.	Why the site cannot proceed; contact invest@wmca.org.uk. [3]
Additional affordable-housing support	WMCA's housing and land funds team, via the integrated settlement.	SAHP secured or progressing; explain the gap. [20]
Debt, equity or guarantees	National Housing Bank via Homes England; WMCA's funds for smaller revolving loans.	Borrower structure, funding and repayment. [1,2]

WMCA devolved funds: current position. WMCA asks for a conversation before any Expression of Interest (invest@wmca.org.uk), then assesses through its Single Commissioning Framework. Published thresholds are a minimum 20% affordable housing, demonstrable market failure, a delivery track record and indicative support of £10k–£15k a unit. Fund names and sizes on WMCA’s pages are inconsistent and several published deadlines have passed, so treat the list as indicative. [3]

Green Innovation Corridor. A Wolverhampton–Walsall corridor; the council has bid £20m for phase one. A further Development Corporation is floated, not established. [13,14,19]

REGIONAL AMBITIONS TO DESIGN FOR

Homes England’s mayoral strategic priorities for the West Midlands seek 20,000 social and affordable homes over the decade, a run-rate of 2,000 Social Rent homes a year by 2028 and roughly 60% Social Rent in SAHP bids, with four growth areas: the Birmingham and North Solihull Gateway, the Coventry Growth Arc, the Black Country Growth Corridor and the Wolverhampton–Walsall Growth Cluster. The regional Growth Plan targets 120,000 homes over the decade. These are regional ambitions across delivery routes. [21]

Who decides what

Funding, planning and delivery sit with different organisations. Identify the decision you need before choosing the first conversation.

01

Homes England / National Housing Bank

Final SAHP funding and contractual decisions; direct funder of the £19.7m Social and Affordable Housing Programme pilot. [1,39]

02

West Midlands Combined Authority

Regional priorities, tenure mix; devolved housing and land funds; Social Housing Accelerator Fund; integrated settlement; Spatial Development Strategy. [3,20,26]

03

City of Wolverhampton Council / Wolverhampton Homes

Local housing need, planning authority, council land; accountable body for Pride in Place and the Impact Fund. Wolverhampton Homes manages council stock, lettings and estate regeneration such as Heath Town. [10,18,26,28]

04

Three Neighbourhood Boards

Bilston, Low Hill, and Whitmore Reans & Dunstall Hill shape and sign off their Pride in Place plans; council and national programme rules still apply. [10,11,12]

05

Development partners under contract

English Cities Fund (Muse / Homes England / Legal & General) at Smithgate; Wavensmere Homes at Canalside South. Existing appointments, not open opportunities. [22,23]

PUBLIC ROUTES FOR THE NEXT CONVERSATION

Enquiry	Public route
National grant / finance	enquiries@homesengland.gov.uk [1]
WMCA investment pre-application	invest@wmca.org.uk [3]
Wolverhampton regeneration / inward investment	Invest Wolverhampton [25]
Council general / housing / planning policy	wolverhampton.gov.uk/contact-us · wolverhampton.gov.uk/housing · planning policies [17,18,26]
Wolverhampton Homes (tenants)	Wednesfield Housing Office, Alfred Squire Road, Wednesfield WV11 1XU · contact us [28]
Pride in Place, Bilston / procurement	TownsFund@wolverhampton.gov.uk [10] · corporate.procurement@wolverhampton.gov.uk [29]

A useful first enquiry names the site, landowner, proposed use, delivery lead, funding gap and next decision. Attach a concise programme and explain what the requested intervention changes.

A route for smaller providers

A first-wave strategic allocation is one route into delivery. Continuous Market Engagement also gives eligible organisations a direct route to Homes England.

Continuous Market Engagement

Open for individual schemes and portfolios, while funding remains available. Designed to accommodate smaller partners, new entrants and complex projects. [19]

Strategic partnerships

Programme-level allocations support delivery at scale. The initial bidding round closed on 15 April 2026; future rounds will be announced. [18]

Route	Practical fit and requirements
CME general	A direct scheme bid. Establish eligible tenure, costs, delivery readiness and grant need with Homes England. [18,19]
CME portfolio	Discuss the pipeline before bidding. Initial portfolios normally deliver 300–500 homes; named sites should start by 31 March 2028 and complete by 31 March 2032. [19]
Delivery partnership	An eligible RP or council can work with a strategic partner under the programme’s delivery-partner rules. Owning the funded homes is a different role from supplying construction services. [18,20]

BEFORE A GRANT APPLICATION

Organisations need Homes England Investment Partner qualification to receive grant. New partners can apply for that status alongside the funding application. Programme qualification and regulatory registration are separate steps. [19]

The bid should show how it meets local housing need and regional priorities. The West Midlands seeks roughly 60% Social Rent through SAHP, plus Stepping Stone accommodation, M4(3) wheelchair-accessible homes and estate regeneration. [21] Wolverhampton's city centre planning guidance requires 25% affordable housing on developments of 15 or more homes; the borough-wide affordable-housing percentage in the adopted Local Plan is not confirmed. [38]

HOW TO PREPARE THE DISCUSSION

Bring a site schedule, proposed tenure mix, cost plan, planning position, delivery programme and confirmation of the intended landlord. Explain what is ready now and which dependencies still need resolving.

Places and programmes

Smithgate, Canalside South, Heath Town and the city-centre framework sit at different stages of delivery. Establish the live phase and the organisation commissioning it before approaching a scheme.

Chapel Ash · The independent shopping street west of the city centre ring road.

Smithgate

up to 1,070 homes in the masterplan, 331 under construction

English Cities Fund (Muse / Homes England / Legal & General) and the council had detailed phase-one plans approved March 2025, alongside an outline application for the masterplan. Phase one is an £83m, 331-home build-to-rent and affordable scheme, three six-storey blocks, under construction (two cranes, early 2026), due 2028. [22]

A further "City Centre West" phase (241 build-to-rent flats, 90 affordable) is reported; treat as a further phase, not a confirmed add to the 1,070 figure — unverified. [24]

Canalside South

533 homes, £150m, under construction

Wavensmere Homes' £150m regeneration of the former British Steel site and Crane Foundry, derelict since 2009. 533 energy-efficient houses and apartments, including 378 family houses; construction started early 2025, first 30 homes ready by January 2026, 60 expected by end of 2026, whole scheme due mid-2030. [23]

Half of the 378 family houses sold off-plan; 131 plots bought by Kennedy Wilson for rental homes. [23]

Heath Town Estate

over 100 further council homes across five sites

Wolverhampton Homes and contractor Keon Homes are delivering 32 one- and two-bedroom apartments on the former Duke of York pub site, part of a programme aiming for more than 100 new council homes across five sites. [26,27]

The wider estate refurbishment is a separate £4.8m contract due to complete in 2027; do not add the two figures together. [26,27]

Our Future City Centre Plan

a framework, not a scheme

Cabinet approved this long-term city centre regeneration blueprint following a consultation that closed 14 August 2026. It identifies 33 potential development sites and a potential 6,750 homes, of which around 4,600 are targeted for completion by 2042. [37]

Many sites are already under way or consented, including Smithgate and Canalside South above; this housing figure should not be added to named scheme totals.

Three neighbourhoods, three clocks

Wolverhampton has three Pride in Place places, one in each national cohort, each on its own clock: Bilston (phase 1), Low Hill (phase 2) and Whitmore Reans and Dunstall Hill (phase 2 expansion, MHCLG: "Waterloo Road"). Never sum the three £20m awards. [31,43,45]

Bilston · one of Wolverhampton's three Pride in Place neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood	Published position / next conversation
Bilston (phase 1)	Inherited from the 2023 Long Term Plan for Towns. £20m over ten years; one of the 75 phase 1 places, already in year 1 of delivery with no plan deadline. [45] Board (Chair Josie Kelly) approved the ten-year vision and four-year investment plan on 9 February 2026: High Street clean-up, green space, community centre investment and the return of the Bilston Carnival. [10]
Low Hill (phase two)	£20m over ten years. Confirmed against MHCLG's phase 2 methodology note: "Wolverhampton | 1 | Low Hill". Independent Chair Chris Allen appointed 11 June 2026; MP Sureena Brackenridge a supporting member. Board formation and Plan co-design are next; national guidance sets a 30 November 2026 deadline. [11,31]
Whitmore Reans and Dunstall Hill (phase 2 expansion)	£20m over ten years. Phase now resolved: MHCLG's phase 2 expansion methodology note (20 March 2026) gives Wolverhampton one neighbourhood, named "Waterloo Road" — the MSOA name for the council's Whitmore Reans and Dunstall Hill programme. Independent Chair Tom Hayden appointed 26 June 2026; MP Warinder Juss a supporting member. Plan due to MHCLG by 26 February 2027. [12,30,32,43,44]

BRING A PROJECT THAT CAN BE DELIVERED

Need, ownership and consent

Explain who benefits and how the proposal responds to residents. Identify land control, a delivery lead, consents and dependencies.

Capital and continuing costs

Set out works, development costs and contingency, then identify the asset owner, operating budget and maintenance responsibility.

Boards must have at least eight members, at least 51% local. Phase 2 areas received £150,000 revenue in 2025/26, £135,000 revenue plus £117,604 capital in 2026/27, and £1.36m in 2027/28 once the Plan is approved. Contacts: page 6. [31,32]

Different pots, different decisions

Wolverhampton's Levelling Up Fund award, the council's HRA housing programme, the Brownfield Land Release Fund, the three neighbourhood Pride in Place plans and the borough-wide Impact Fund operate at different scales and on different timetables.

£20m

Levelling Up Fund: Wolverhampton was one of the first two places named to benefit from the programme, alongside a new government departmental headquarters in the city centre, announced January 2022. [33]

Component	What the figure includes
£20m	Levelling Up Fund award, announced January 2022; one of the first two places named nationally. [33]

Funding note: this is a single national award recorded here for context; it should not be added to the Pride in Place, Impact Fund, Brownfield Land Release Fund or council HRA figures below.

COUNCIL HOUSING SUPPLY PROGRAMME

Commitment	Published position
£107m over five years	City of Wolverhampton Council's HRA housing investment programme, 2026/27–2030/31, targeting around 500 new council homes; blended with £9m and £19.7m Homes England grants, the £6.1m WMCA Accelerator award and a £7.5m government Heat Network Efficiency Scheme grant. Do not add these blended lines to the £107m headline separately. [26]
£1.4m	Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF2) secured by the council to remediate the former Loxdale Primary School, Bilston, and the Stowheath Day Training Centre, East Park, paving the way for sale to development partners for up to 150 homes by modern methods of construction. [34]

The council's HRA programme, BLRF2, the £19.7m SAHP pilot and the £6.1m WMCA Accelerator award are different pots on different timetables; several fund the same sites, so none should be summed into a single total.

WOLVERHAMPTON PRIDE IN PLACE IMPACT FUND

£1.5m

£750,000 in 2025/26 and £750,000 in 2026/27. [4,5]

£400,000 committed to a Vibrant High Streets grants programme (max £5,000 per business, 20% match, applications from 6 March 2026) across the city centre, Bilston and Wednesfield high streets. [15]

National guidance requires commitment by 31 March 2027; uncommitted sums must be returned. This is not extra funding for the three neighbourhood Pride in Place programmes.

Homes, partners and local need

The current Wolverhampton Local Plan targets 9,330 new homes over 2024–2042 and was submitted for examination in 2026. The new Wolverhampton Plan, timetabled by Cabinet on 10 June 2026, runs to adoption in 2029, shaping homes to 2045. [16,17,18]

Wolverhampton 21 Locks · The canal corridor beside the Canalside South site.

Partner / example	Documented local delivery
English Cities Fund (Muse / Homes England / Legal & General) / Smithgate	Masterplan up to 1,070 homes; phase one 331 homes, £83m, under construction, due 2028. [22]
Wavensmere Homes / Canalside South	533 homes, £150m, first occupied January 2026, due mid-2030; 131 plots bought by Kennedy Wilson for rental homes. [23]
City of Wolverhampton Council / Wolverhampton Homes / New Park Village	188 new council homes replacing 205 older properties; first phase complete. [26]
City of Wolverhampton Council / Wolverhampton Homes / Keon Homes, Heath Town	32 one- and two-bedroom apartments on the former Duke of York pub site; part of a 100-plus-home, five-site second phase. [26,27]
Housing associations bidding into the SAHP pilot	Homes England-funded £19.7m pilot; 11 sites, c.200 affordable homes, council-built then transferred by bid. [39]

These are examples of local activity, not a complete provider list, procurement shortlist or evidence of a new SAHP award.

FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET TEAMS

Agree tenure, accessible homes and support needs before fixing the unit mix. Bring the operator into the appraisal: nominations, management, service charges and whole-life maintenance. Keep new-supply budgets separate from existing-stock investment.

From scheme assembly to appointment

The national programme supports delivery through councils, Registered Providers and developers. The local supply chain enters through their projects, procurement routes and contractor packages.

Stage	Lead organisations	Specialist input
01 · Site and viability	Council estates, Wolverhampton Homes, landowner, developer, RP, funders	Land and planning advice, valuation, surveys and abnormal-cost assessment
02 · Enabling	Council, ECF, developer, Homes England / WMCA	Ground investigation, remediation, ecology, civils and utilities
03 · Funding and agreement	RP, developer, public funder, lender	Legal, cost advice, programme and development finance
04 · Design and consent	Client team, architect, planning authority	Architecture, engineering, arboriculture and technical coordination
05 · Construction	Main contractor and client delivery team	Groundworks, structure, roofing, M&E, scaffolding and site services
06 · Handover and operation	RP asset team, council or other operator	Commissioning, landscaping, compliance and maintenance

FINDING THE ACTUAL ROUTE TO WORK

Unlike the North West's single Chest portal, the West Midlands has no one regional portal. City of Wolverhampton Council is the outlier among the seven WMCA councils: it uses ProContract (Proactis / Due North), not the In-tend system used by the other six. Live opportunities are listed at wolverhampton.gov.uk/business/opportunities/tenders, with a published procurement pipeline at wolverhampton.gov.uk/business/opportunities/procurement-pipeline, refreshed annually and covering contracts expected to be re-procured or newly tendered within the next three years. General procurement enquiries: corporate.procurement@wolverhampton.gov.uk. [29]

All councils, including Wolverhampton, publish above-threshold notices to Find a Tender, the single national place for higher-value work under the Procurement Act 2023 regime; below-threshold notices appear on Contracts Finder and on the council's own ProContract listings. [29,40]

At Smithgate the delivery partner (ECF) and at Canalside South the developer (Wavensmere) are already appointed; supply-chain work on those schemes flows through those partners, not through a council tender. A funding announcement does not itself create an open invitation to tender.

A funding announcement does not itself create an open invitation to tender. Confirm whether work is being commissioned directly, through a framework or by a main contractor.

Build the workforce into the plan

Construction skills, training capacity and local employment should be considered while the scheme and its contracts are being assembled.

CONSTRUCTION SKILLS AT DUDLEY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Dudley College of Technology is the West Midlands' designated Construction Technical Excellence College, one of ten in England, named 12 August 2025, with a region-wide remit covering all seven WMCA boroughs including Wolverhampton. [41,42]

University of Wolverhampton, Springfield Campus is a separate, complementary asset: a £120m redevelopment of the former Springfield Brewery into a specialist construction and built-environment campus, with a "holodeck" visualisation facility and the National Brownfield Institute, on the Green Innovation Corridor. [13,36]

01 · Forecast
Trades, numbers and start dates

02 · Agree
Training, supervision and delivery partners

03 · Evidence
Starts, qualifications and sustained work

A PRACTICAL WORKFORCE BRIEF FOR A LIVE SCHEME

Agree early	What to record
Demand and timing	Map likely labour needs to the programme: enabling works, structure, services, finishes and handover.
Employer and supervision	Name the employing organisation, site supervisor and training partner. Allow time for recruitment and induction.
Learning and progression	Identify the relevant qualification, practical experience and route into continuing work.
Evidence of delivery	Agree how starts, completions, qualifications and employment outcomes will be recorded by the contract owner.

Suggested briefing checklist for clients and contractors. Agree the actual commitments through the scheme’s procurement and contract process.

CONNECT TRAINING WITH COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Agree employer routes with Dudley College and the University alongside the workforce plan, with outcomes evidenced through the council's procurement process. City of Wolverhampton College is also press-reported as recognised in the same technical excellence round; not verified against a DfE list. [29,35]

Dudley College employer enquiries: 01384 363 000 · dudleycol.ac.uk/employers
University of Wolverhampton, Springfield Campus: wlv.ac.uk/springfield-campus

Evidence and source notes

Research checked on 19 September 2026. Numbered references link to primary sources; public enquiry routes are on page 6.

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