

BRIEFING NOTE**Contract Award Report – Part I – City Living Framework****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This briefing note outlines the outcome of the recent tender for a City Living Framework, Masterplan and associated documents. The work is required to help fulfill the intent of the signed memorandum of understanding between Plymouth City Council and Homes England, to work together to drive forward up to 10,000 new homes in and around the city centre, and to deliver the objectives of the city centre regeneration and housing workstream under Team Plymouth. The work will also support proposals for Plymouth New Town, should Plymouth be selected from the list of 12 shortlisted places published September 2025. It is anticipated that Government will make the final decision on New Towns in spring 2026.

2. CITY LIVING FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. The City Centre has long been a focus for growth and regeneration in Plymouth. Successive Local Plans and masterplans, over the past two decades, have identified that Plymouth City Centre is overly reliant on retail uses and has a very low population density when compared to other top English city centres. The area is currently designated as one of three 'growth areas' in the adopted Joint Local Plan. The Local Plan recognises that while the City Centre should continue to be a regional hub for shopping, it also needs to develop a vibrant mix of other uses including culture, leisure, employment, events and festivals, and places to live.
- 2.2. Plymouth City Council has been working closely with Homes England for a number of years to drive forward regeneration and growth in the City Centre. Progress reports to Cabinet were published in March 2025 and August 2025. These reports set out a shared ambition to deliver "a new town in the city" with over 10,000 new homes in and around Plymouth City Centre, kickstarting a transformational regeneration programme. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Homes England was signed in June 2025 which paved the way for joint-working between the organisations to plan for the delivery of high-quality new homes and associated infrastructure.
- 2.3. In September 2024, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) announced £4.4bn investment over 10 years into His Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) and Babcock's Devonport Royal Dockyard to support the next phase of the Royal Navy's submarine works and the Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD). The requirement to maintain the Royal Navy's fleet in Plymouth extends beyond 2070 and therefore creates an extremely rare, long-term financial commitment to Plymouth and its wider region with projections for 25,000 additional jobs required by 2035. Babcock, Plymouth City Council and the MOD have established Team Plymouth as a partnership to ensure the vital defence outputs are delivered into the future whilst supporting the region's growth. Through working together in partnership, Team Plymouth aims to maximise the opportunities that the MOD investment can drive into local communities.
- 2.4. Team Plymouth have developed 4 key missions to demonstrate the role that the programme can play in delivering for both defence and the city. Regeneration and attraction – *"delivering an enhanced living environment with 10,000 new homes in the City Centre, creating a more vibrant and safer town centre"* is one of those missions. City Centre, Housing and Regeneration is one of six priority workstreams, aiming to address the housing shortages and high rents across the city whilst in parallel enticing relocation of skilled workforces to the area. *"In attaining investment, we seek to deliver a bold and vibrant city centre regeneration programme, including 10,000 new homes and a dynamic mix of residential, commercial, and cultural spaces that will create a city centre that is inclusive and creative"* ([Team Plymouth](#)). The City Living Framework,

Masterplan and associated documents will play a key role in delivering this workstream under Team Plymouth.

- 2.5. Further to the MoU and Team Plymouth, Plymouth was shortlisted as one of 12 locations identified by the New Towns Taskforce as having significant potential for growth under a new towns' designation. The report published September 2025 described the opportunity for *"densified development in Plymouth; evolving Britain's Ocean City and capitalising on the government's £4.4 billion investment in HMNB Devonport, Western Europe's largest naval base"* ([New Towns Taskforce Report](#)).
- 2.6. The signing of the MoU with Homes England, Team Plymouth and shortlisting in the new towns programme represents a major shift in the ambitions for the City Centre. While the area benefits from a pro-growth planning and development framework through existing masterplans and the Local Plan, new work is now required. The masterplans for the area (City Centre Masterplan and Waterfront Masterplan) were published in 2017. Much has changed in the last eight years in terms of developments completed and in the pipeline; economic conditions and property markets; consumer trends; housing needs and supply; climate change and sustainability; and the strategic relationship with Homes England. The new work will respond to this new context.
- 2.7. The report to Cabinet in August 2025 set out that the City Council and Homes England now need to commission the technical studies to set out how, where and when up to 10,000 new homes, along with a mix of other uses and physical and social infrastructure, could be delivered. The commission is for a suitably qualified and skilled multi-disciplinary consultant team. The consultant team are required to work with the City Council and Homes England to prepare a suite of technical documents, including a City Living Framework and Masterplan, to enable the accelerated delivery of transformational change and diversity of new homes under the partnership and any subsequent delivery programmes.
- 2.8. The technical studies are expected to be design-led and achieve buy-in through co-design of proposals with stakeholders and the local community. It is intended that, following a full programme of public engagement, the documents will be adopted by the City Council. The documents will be used to inform the determination of any future planning applications in the area and to help inform the preparation of the next Local Plan.
- 2.9. The scope of the commission includes a range of professional services including public and stakeholder engagement, master planning/ urban design and architecture, project and cost management, town planning/ environment and sustainability, landscape design and ecology, heritage, engineering, transport and traffic. The commission is expected to take 11 months to complete. The outputs from the commission will include:
 - 2.9.1. Thought leadership/ advocacy in support of Plymouth's New Town opportunity;
 - City Living Framework - Baseline, Issues and Options Report, Final Report, plans illustrations, 3d models and video/ animation, Sustainability Appraisal
 - City Centre Core Delivery Masterplan - Baseline, Issues and Options Report, Final Report, plans illustrations, 3d models and video/ animation, Sustainability Appraisal
 - 2.9.2. Community and Stakeholder Engagement and Social Value Strategy – Strategy Report, delivery of engagement and social value activities, Equality Impact Assessment, project branded web and communications content.
 - Access and Movement Advise – access and movement proposals for key areas/ sites, input to Transport Strategy (separate commission).
 - Infrastructure Delivery Strategy - Baseline Report, infrastructure proposals and costs, Final Strategy Report.

- Delivery Strategy – Property Market Assessment Report, options costings and appraisals, Final Delivery Strategy Report.

3. PROCUREMENT PROCESS

- 3.1. The procurement process for the City Living Framework began with the Cabinet Decision in August 2025 to “*approve acceptance of funding and the commencement of procurement for the necessary technical studies and masterplans and delegate award of contract to the Strategic Director for Growth*” ([4639 – Defence Partnership and City Centre Programme Update](#)).
- 3.2. This decision enabled Plymouth City Council to secure and receive initial revenue grant funding awards from Homes England and MHCLG and to commence the process. The Homes England ‘Development and Regeneration Technical Services (DaRTS) Framework 2023-2027 - Lot 1: End-to-end technical and professional services’ was selected as an appropriate procurement route. The framework was selected because of the complex and multi-disciplinary nature of the project and its close alignment with the purpose of the framework, time pressure on secured funding and the need to expedite the procurement process as efficiently as possible, and quality assurance of framework suppliers.
- 3.3. In accordance with the Framework guidance, a three-stage process was undertaken. Expression of Interest (EoI) was conducted June/ July 2025. The processes invited all Lot 1 suppliers to submit an EoI in respect of the tender opportunity. 12 suppliers submitted an EoI. A Sifting Brief was issued to the 12 suppliers August 2025. 7 suppliers submitted a response to the sifting brief. Evaluation of the returns was conducted September 2025 and 5 suppliers were Invited to Tender (ITT) October 2025. The ITT set out the full requirements for the commission and returns were focused on four quality questions (80%) and price (20%) as below:

No.	Question	Weighting
1	Terms and Conditions Acceptance	Pass/ Fail
2	Resourcing (reaffirming team resources from sifting stage – not scored)	N/A
3	Leadership	20%
4	Methodology & Placemaking	30%
5	Proposals & Deliverables	20%
6	Social Value	10%
7	Price	20%

- 3.4. Responses were evaluated in three stages. Question 3 leadership was evaluated first and clarification interviews were conducted in person on 11th and 12th November 2025 to aid assessment of this question. Following interviews, the remainder of the ITT question responses were evaluated and moderated. Finally the tender price was evaluated. The outcome of the evaluation processes is set out in the confidential Part II Procurement Decision Record report. WSP UK Ltd were the successful supplier.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

- 4.1. The total contract value is £919,687.09. This comprises £799,727.90 fixed fee tender return plus 15% contingency budget at £119,959.19. Contingency is included to allow additional work as required in respect of the emerging New Towns opportunity and will only be used with the written consent of Plymouth City Council.

- 4.2. Revenue grant funding for the project has been secured from Homes England and MHCLG revenue grant budgets for this financial year 2025/26. The total grant funding secured to date is £540,000. The projected contract spend this financial year is £379,354.45.
- 4.3. Plymouth City Council are working with partners Homes England, MHCLG and Team Plymouth to secure additional revenue funding for the remaining £374,687.09 of the total contract value. This funding will be sought from 2025/26 and 2026/27 revenue grant budgets.
- 4.4. Until such time that additional funding is secured, the contract creates a budget pressure to Plymouth City Council of between £254,727.90 to £374,687.09 for the year 2026/27. Additional grant funding is not guaranteed and this decision does therefore present a financial risk to Plymouth City Council.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. It is recommended that the contract be awarded to the highest scoring tenderer for the City Living Framework, Masterplan and associated documents in accordance with the project briefs, tender returns and contract documents – WSP UK Ltd.
- 5.2. This award is subject to the outcome of any challenge made during the mandatory standstill period.