

# Planning White Paper update

Planning and Housing Commission

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020



# Planning White Paper: planning for the future

## **Planning White Paper**

- Government consulted Aug-Oct 2020
- Radical new vision with proposals (24 in total) grouped under three pillars
- GMCA and the GM Local Authorities submitted responses

## **Changes to the current planning system consultation (Aug-Oct 20)**

- Updated formula for assessing Local Housing Need to meet 300k new homes annually

# Pillar 1: planning for development

## Proposals

- Simplified Local Plans based on zones for Growth, Renewal and Protected land over a minimum 10-year period
- A statutory 30-month timeframe to produce Local Plans
- Simplified development management consent regime for each zone
- ‘Binding’ Local Housing Need figure
- Local Plan development management policies moved to the NPPF
- Emphasis on engagement at the plan making stage –not planning application stage
- Five-year land supply and Duty to Cooperate requirements removed

# Pillar 1 (continued)

- A single statutory ‘sustainable development’ test to replace the existing tests of soundness
- A digital-first approach

## **GM response**

- Role of combined authorities in the new planning system is absent
- Exclusion of local communities from effective participation in significant parts to the plan-making and planning application process
- Concerns about the move towards automatic planning permissions at the Local Plan level
- How will ‘binding LHN’ be arrived at
- Welcome shorter local plan process, but time savings could come from reshaping stages of the local plan process.

# Pillar 2: planning for beautiful and sustainable places

## **Proposals**

- National and local design codes, including a new national design body
- A chief officer for design in each local authority
- Planning application ‘fast track process for beauty’

## **GM response**

- Good design critical for environmental, sustainable and inclusive outcomes, not just for appearance
- ‘Fast track for beauty’ a subjective assessment
- Increased commitment to responding to Climate Change is welcomed

# Pillar 3: planning for infrastructure and connected places

## **A new consolidated Infrastructure Levy**

- Fixed at a national or area-specific rate and levied upon occupation
- Replaces s106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy
- Greater flexibility in how the Levy is spent
- Captures changes of use through permitted development rights
- Local authorities can borrow against it to forward fund infrastructure

# Pillar 3 (continued)

## **Affordable housing**

- Aim to deliver at least the same amount as the current system
- Delivery on-site can be used to offset the Levy

## **First Homes**

- 25% of affordable housing provision to be set aside for First Homes
- First Homes exempt from the Infrastructure Levy

# Pillar 3: Greater Manchester response

- Fundamental changes are required to how viability is considered otherwise local authorities will continue to struggle to fund and deliver the planning policy outcomes required
- Concerns that a non-negotiable national/area-specific rate, based on scheme viability, would likely reduce the contributions received in GM
- Setting aside 25% of affordable housing for First Homes will reduce affordable housing delivery and exacerbate the housing crisis
- Borrowing against the Levy is welcomed, but a Levy paid on occupation could leave local authorities out of pocket and unable to deliver infrastructure alongside development

# Summary and next steps

- Radical proposals to the planning system, but short on detail
- Statement from Minister expected before Christmas
- Detailed report on responses/key messages before Easter
- MHCLG looking to move reforms 'quickly'
- Policy Sprint teams established to complete work by Jan/Feb
- Kevin Reid lead for strategic planning sprint - meeting with GM POG on 11/12
- Devolution White Paper due in 2021 is likely to outline role of combined authorities in the new planning system
- Legislation to implement reforms is planned for Autumn 2021