

**GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY HELD  
ON 4 FEBRUARY 2021, AT 18:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor John Walsh (Chair)	Bolton
Councillor Martin Hayes	Bury
Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin	Manchester
Councillor Jill Lovecy	Manchester
Councillor Sharmina August	Salford
Councillor Charles Gibson	Stockport
Councillor Janet Mobbs	Stockport
Councillor Mike Glover	Tameside
Councillor Kevin Procter	Trafford
Councillor Amy Whyte	Trafford
Councillor Fred Walker	Wigan

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Mark Atherton	GMCA
Paul Morgan	GMCA
Kevin Lee	GMCA
Joanne Heron	GMCA
Jamie Fallon	GMCA
Jenny Hollamby	GMCA
Paul Harris	GMCA

**HPE 261/20 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor's Paul Cropper (Bury), Linda Robinson (Rochdale), Liam Billington (Tameside).

**HPE 262/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no announcements or urgent business.

**HPE 263/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED/-**

No declarations of interest were received.

**HPE 264/20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 14 JANUARY 2020**

**RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

## **HPE 265/20 MAYORAL UPDATE**

The Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor Andy Burnham provided a verbal update on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and how GM was preparing to focus on a green recovery.

The following key points were highlighted:

- The GM Vaccination Programme was progressing well, and GM was on track to meet the 15 February 2021 deadline to vaccinate priority groups 1-4, with approximately 100,000 vaccinations taking place per week.
- The Mayor and Leaders felt that a national approach should be adopted after the current lockdown, moving away from the tier system previously adopted. A more phased, methodical, and consistent approach was needed.
- The Test and Trace system had improved, with support from the GM Contract Tracing Hub, GMFRS, and GMP to contact index cases. It was emphasised that the Test and Trace system would continue to play a significant role in navigating us out of the pandemic, alongside the GM Vaccination Programme.
- A special AGMA meeting was scheduled to take place on 12 February 2021, to consider the report on Places for Everyone: A Proposed Joint Development Plan Document of Nine GM Districts.
- It was envisaged that there would continue to be a need for an emergency response to housing, and in particular a response to homelessness, throughout 2021, given that the full economic impact of the crisis was not yet known, due to the Furlough Scheme, but it was predicted to be profound.
- There were significant challenges faced in supporting GM residents through the severe economic pressure, with many currently unable to access Government funding support. It was envisaged that there were approximately 200,000 residents in GM who were unable to access support, over three million nationally.
- The comprehensive response to homelessness which had been developed over a number of years in GM, meant that GM was well positioned to effectively respond to the additional challenges posed by the pandemic. It was confirmed that 520 people would be supported by A Bed Every Night (ABEN) provision that evening, with further people also being supported by local authority provision. It was noted that the 'Everybody in Scheme' was in a perilous situation, due to the volumes of people who required support.
- Alongside the emergency homelessness response, the Housing First Pilot was making good progress, now in year two of a three year programme. It was confirmed that to date, 191 people had been placed in permanent accommodation, sustained by 90% of tenants. GM was confident that it would meet the targets set by the end of the programme, at which point cross party support would be needed to demonstrate the value to Government.
- The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme had committed to creating 500 homes for rough sleepers by June 2021, with further schemes also underway such as the Castlefield Scheme, and Ethical Lettings Agency.
- The next stage of the homelessness response was to progress to a preventative phase, supported by the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, which would be subject to public consultation later this year. The positive developments already underway were highlighted including the launch of the Young People's Prevention Pathfinder in January 2021, which would aim to support 250 young people in 2021, who were at risk of homelessness.

- Wider plans were being developed which would support GM's green recovery, and the Mayor confirmed that GM was preparing to showcase the thinking at the UN Climate Change Conference UK 2021 (COP), which was due to take place in Glasgow, in November 2021. GM was aiming to achieve carbon neutrality by 2038, with work already underway with Electricity North West and Cadent on the decarbonisation of energy, however, regulatory support would also be required. GM's vision would include creating thousands of good quality jobs through the ambition to retro fits properties, including both homes and businesses. It was acknowledged that currently many peoples homes did not support good health, and were not sustainable, which must be addressed.
- It was confirmed that the Transport 2040 Strategy and Five Year Delivery Plan was recently endorsed by the GMCA. The document lays the foundation for 'Our Network' setting out the ambitions to develop a 'London style integrated transport system'.
- It was confirmed that the second tranche of schemes under the Transforming Cities Funding had recently been approved which included;
  - Up to £22m for Our Bus Network including a bus transit scheme, a new travel hub at Tyldesley,
  - Up to £27.8m for Our Rail Network, including a contribution towards the Network Rail project on Greek Street in Stockport, taking control of Horwich Parkway Station, and improving the accessibility at stations such as Swinton.
- The second consultation on the GM Bus system had recently finished, with responses currently being considered, with a view to progressing to a decision in the near future.

Members raised the following questions:

- Members welcomed the update and requested further information on the plans to support the recovery in town centres, which had been severely impacted by the pandemic. It was highlighted that recently a number of major high street retailers such as Debenhams had announced their closure.

The Mayor acknowledged the significant impact on town centres and hoped that in the future jobs may be created more locally, which may increase support for local shops. The Mayor referred to the Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation and felt that this was an option which local authorities must consider, with a view to developing high quality residential centres, given that there was significant demand from investors. It was highlighted that districts were beginning to kick start their regeneration such as the plans in North Rochdale.

- A Member explored whether further funding would be available in future to support the cycling and walking ambitions?

The Mayor advised that the Government had invested substantially in cycling and walking with GM securing 125% of their funding ask to support the development of Cycling and Walking schemes within the city region. It was felt that GM's success was partly due to substantial amount of work which had been undertaken to develop a healthy pipeline of projects, noting that GM was one of the largest capital projects in the UK. The aim was that by the end of 2021 there would be 50 new kilometres of segregated cycling provision in GM, so 2021 was expected to be a big year for delivery. In addition, a GM Bike Hire Scheme was expected to be launched in early Summer 2021, initially within the City Centre, in particularly around the Oxford Road area.

- A Member requested an update on the progress of the plans to improve the GM Bus System.

The Mayor informed Members that the latest consultation on the bus network had ended in January 2021, with responses currently being considered. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had significantly impacted on the bus market, along with all other transport modes, with the system currently being heavily subsidised by Government. It was envisaged that this support would be required for a considerable amount of time, with the way people travel potentially changed permanently.

The Mayor concluded that once TfGM had considered the responses to the consultation, a set of next steps would be developed, with a view to a decision being made in the near future.

- A Member raised concerns regarding the scale of the Green Homes funding, and whether it was sufficient.

The Mayor agreed that if GM was to create thousands of new jobs, there was a need to move quickly, to demonstrate to the rest of the world that there were investable propositions in GM. It was acknowledged that the current small-scale initiatives, and funding pots was not sufficient in terms of scale. It was confirmed that GM would be showcasing its ambitions at the COP, and work was underway with the supply chain and FE sector.

- A Member queried why the Mayor did not support a return to a tiered system following national lockdown, and how the GMCA was communicating their views with Government.

It was confirmed that the tier system created division, caused confusion amongst residents, and encouraged non-essential travel. It was noted that the spike in Liverpool in December 2020 was likely to link back to people travelling to the area to access the hospitality offer. Following the latest national lockdown, it was felt that a national approach where possible should be adopted, with the opening of schools on 8 March 2021, followed by the cautious reopening of other sectors.

The challenges around self-isolation were highlighted, with a cohort of people refusing to self-isolate as they were unable to access Governments support payments, or due to concerns around job security. It was felt that this needed to be addressed urgently by Government to support the reopening of the economy. The full economic impact was currently being masked by the Furlough Scheme, with significant concerns around what will happen when the scheme concludes. The potential for further increases in homelessness was noted.

- The expected economic downturn, and potential increase in homelessness was considered, and further information was requested in terms of GM's preparedness.

The Mayor commended the phenomenal work of the GMCA, community organisations, districts and other partners over the past 12 months, in knitting together the support on homelessness to put GM in strong position to meet the challenges exasperated by the pandemic. It was emphasised that demand was being closely monitored, with a number of residents still sleeping rough in GM (double figures), even given that districts had recently been offering cold weather accommodation.

It was felt the Secretary of State Robert Jenrick was personally committed to addressing the issue, and GM would be sharing the learning from the Housing First project, with a view to proposing changes to the system.

- A Member who works for the Manchester City Council Homelessness Team referred to the growing number of people affected by no recourse, and the impact on homelessness. It was noted that those affected can be deported if they are found to be homeless, so many are in hiding and will not come forward for support.

The Mayor confirmed that the Mayor's charity funds 60 beds for those affected by no recourse, however, it was acknowledged that this was not a sufficient response. The Mayor advised that this was a national issue which must be raised with Government, and agreed to liaise with City Mayor Paul Dennett who was the Portfolio Lead, with a view to mobilising a campaign on the issue.

- A Member requested further information on the advantages of the takeover of Horwich Parkway.

It was confirmed that it was a long-standing ambition in GM to take control of stations, so that they can be fully utilised for community and commercial purposes. It was highlighted that many were currently under used, uninviting, and not accessible to disabled users (up to half). The move would enable stations to be fully knitted into the community and open planning opportunities around them.

The future ambition was to gain more control of the rail network to support the introduction of tram train, noting that Government was supportive of the ambition to devolve arrangements further.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That Members comments in relation to those affected by 'no recourse to public funds' be raised with the Portfolio Lead Paul Dennett for action.

#### **HPE 266/20 GREEN HOMES GRANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY SCHEME**

Members received a presentation from Mark Atherton, Executive Director, GMCA, which provided an update on the 'Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery' scheme.

In July 2020, the Chancellor announced £2 billion of support through the Green Homes Grant (GHG) to save households money; cut carbon; and create green jobs. The GHG is comprised of up to £1.5 billion of support through energy efficiency vouchers; and up to £500m of support allocated to English Local Authority delivery partners, through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme.

It was advised that the GMCA, on behalf of local authorities was successful in receiving a £4.7m award as part of the Phase 1a of the Local Authority Delivery Scheme which aims to raise the energy efficiency of low income and low EPC rated homes (those with Band D,E,F or G) including

those living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes, delivering progress towards reducing fuel poverty, the phasing out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating and the UK's commitment to net zero by 2050. It was noted that EPC 'D' rated properties could also be included as long as they are not the focus of the bid. The Scheme was available to households with an annual income up to £30,000.

It was confirmed that a multi-faceted approach to marketing was being adopted through local news releases, Social Media, websites, and the circulation of 40,000 promotional letters and leaflets posted to targeted addresses across GM. To date, 1,501 enquiries had been received, with more than 455 households qualifying for support currently. It was noted that currently installations figures were low as expected, with a view to ramping up delivery for completion by the end of March 21.

It was confirmed that the GMCA had recently secured £5.6m share of £127m under Phase 1B, and would continue to work with Eon, with delivery from April 2021 - December 2021. Phase 2 was being co-ordinated by Local Energy North West, with £52m available for the North West. GM was eligible for a share of £17.8m, to support 1,580 homes (November 2021 – December 2022). If successful, GM would continue to work with Eon but would also work with the North West Energy Hub to develop a dynamic purchasing system, which would be available to all north west local authorities, which would give access to the scheme to a significantly higher number of smaller suppliers. In terms of economic value, it was envisaged that Phase 2, would equate to the creation of 425 new jobs within the construction trade. Unfortunately, it was envisaged that there would be less opportunity in Phases 1A and 1B, to create new jobs, with many contractors expected to upskill their current workforce.

In terms of the workforce and skills implications, Members were advised that work was underway with the GMCA Skills Team to capture the views of the market, with the intention to launch a programme on Green Skills in April 2021.

Members raised the following questions:

- A Member felt that the stop, start approach to funding, was hindering progress on the agenda. Further information was requested in relation to the arrangements in place to ensure that the existing workforce would be up skilled.

It was acknowledged that longer term funding mechanisms was needed to encourage businesses to invest in their workforce. It was advised that the challenges were understood by the BAES Minister, and technical colleagues, but the challenges faced by the Treasury in responding to current crisis was acknowledged. It was felt that Local Authorities were best placed to deliver the schemes, as opposed to the significant investment in a national scheme adopted by Government.

Members were advised that the Growth Company were supporting the supply chain to gain the required accreditation, so that they can bid into the scheme, which would also drive the quality of staff. Opportunities to link the supply chain with FE providers was being explored.

- A Member requested further information on the eligibility criteria and the income cap up to £30,000. Has a single and couples cap been explored?

The restrictive nature of the eligibility criteria was acknowledged, however, it was confirmed that the eligibility criteria was set by Government.

- A Member referred to information in the press regarding the national scheme and the challenges experienced by contractors around payment.

There was concern that the feedback about the national scheme could impact on the local Scheme, and work was underway with districts, and residents to encourage uptake.

- How much would an air source heat pump cost for a three bedroom house?

It was confirmed that there were a number of primary measures which could be selected, with very few requiring the installation of a heat pump. It was advised that the only way to drive down the cost of heat pumps was to increase the number purchased, and Government was hoping to rapidly increase uptake from 40,000 heat pumps per year, to 600,000 to drive down cost.

- The Chair welcomed the update and requested a further update in the future as appropriate. Members were advised to submit any suggestions in relation to marketing to officers.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That a further update be submitted for consideration by the Committee as appropriate.

#### **HPE 267/20 BIOWASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Paul Morgan, Head of Commercial Services, GMCA, provided an overview of the report which set out the steps required to develop a strategy to manage kerbside collected biowaste from across the conurbation, in light of the potential service changes arising from the implementation of the English Resources and Waste Strategy.

To prepare for the changes, which included the requirement to collect food waste separately to garden waste on a weekly basis, the GMCA had commissioned research to assess the implications of this proposal on waste and collection and treatment across GM. The initial findings anticipated a 36% increase in collections vehicles, with dry anaerobic digestion proving most effective in terms of carbon savings.

It was envisaged that the new requirements would see costs increase significantly, however, the Government was committed to meeting the costs through the Burdens Budget. Defra was also comfortable with allowing an 8 year transition period, to enable the current contracts to play out, and decisions to be made in terms of next steps.

It was confirmed that in order to develop the strategy, GMCA must understand Government's position on food and garden waste collections, which would not become clear until late 2021, which did not allow sufficient time to make changes within the lifetime of the current non-Suez biowaste contracts.

In this case, Members were advised that approval was being sought to enable the procurement process for the biowaste treatment packages to progress under the existing framework, as soon as possible, to provide additional time to implement the Biowaste Strategy, and secure market capacity for a period when demand may increase significantly. The process was expected to commence in mid-February 2021, with tender responses anticipated in March 2021, with a view to making contract awards in late March 2021.

Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member requested further information in relation to the rationale for weekly collections.

It was confirmed that Government was seeking to implement weekly food waste collections as it was shown to capture more material by the Waste and Resources Action Programme. It was felt that this analysis was flawed and required further investigation in order to understand the full picture and whether this was the best approach.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

That the update be noted.

#### **HPE 259/20 WORK PROGRAMME**

Joanne Heron, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, introduced the Work Programme for consideration, and it was agreed that the work programme would be updated to reflect the discussions at the meeting. Any Member suggestions should be submitted to Officers for inclusion.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the Work Programme be noted.
2. That the Work Programme be updated to reflect the discussions at the meeting.

#### **HPE 260/20 REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS**

#### **RESOLVED/-**

That the Register of Key Decisions be noted.

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 11 March 2021 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams Live.