

MINUTES OF THE GM HOUSING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY 07 OCTOBER 2021 AT FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, MANCHESTER M2 5NS

PRESENT:

Bolton	Councillor John Walsh (Chair)
Bury	Councillor Martin Hayes
Oldham	Councillor Barbara Brownridge
Oldham	Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani
Rochdale	Councillor Linda Robinson
Stockport	Councillor Colin MacAlister
Stockport	Councillor Janet Mobbs
Tameside	Councillor Mike Glover
Trafford	Councillor Kevin Procter
Wigan	Councillor Fred Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Anne Morgan
GMCA	Amy Foots
GMCA	Joanne Heron
GMCA	Ninoshka Martins
TfGM	Steve Warner
TfGM	Simon Warburton

HP&E 21/13 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mandie Shilton-Godwin (Manchester), Martin Hayes (Bury), Liam Billington (Tameside), Akilah Akinola (Trafford) and Stuart Dickman (Salford).

HP&E 21/14 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair's announcements or urgent business.

HP&E 21/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declaration of interests were received.

HP&E 21/16 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 September were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Housing, Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee be approved; subject to Councillor Linda Robinson being added to the list of members present at the meeting.

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Consideration was given to a presentation that provided an update on the work to date and on the progress made in the refreshing of the Greater Manchester Strategy Refresh.

The last Greater Manchester Strategy, agreed in 2017, ran for three years. It was due to be refreshed in 2020, but the Covid pandemic and delays to local elections meant that it was delayed for a year. Over the last year the 'One Year Living with Covid Plan' had provided a bridge to this year's refresh, assessing the impacts of Covid and co-ordinating responses. and to seek views on the development of the draft document.

The following comments were made:

Members sought to understand how the strategy would be monitored. In response, it was stated that the strategy would be accompanied by a Delivery Plan that would seek to capture specific programmes of activity which would be delivered in partnership over the next three-years in support of the shared outcomes and commitments in the Strategy.

The inequalities in certain Districts were highlighted and it was recognised that the strategy needed to consider the issues faced by residents with the view to build-up GM as a whole. The new strategy would also seek to provide specific place interventions and systemwide priorities to ensure the attainment of GM's collective ambitions.

A member queried whether the strategy addressed the issue around homelessness particularly across boundaries including non-GM authorities. Members were advised that a wide range of activities have been taken forward to end homelessness in GM and that work was underway to agree a common approach to reduction and management of rough sleeping across boundaries.

It was highlighted that it was crucial for communities to be engaged on this piece and that needed to be clearly articulate the benefits for residents. The comments were welcomed, and members were advised that the strategy had been developed with several panels to ensure all parts of GM were well represented.

Further work was underway to develop the draft strategy, performance measures and extensive engagement on the headline approach and agreement on the outcomes and commitments within the strategy. Members were advised that a final draft of the refreshed strategy would be presented to the GMCA for views and adoption at their meeting on 29th October and the accompanying Delivery Plan would be developed during November and brought to a future meeting of the overview & scrutiny committee.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update on the development of the draft refreshed GM Strategy be noted.

2. That the Delivery Plan that sits alongside the strategy would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

HP&E 21/18 BUS FRANCHISING & BSIP UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the plans to implement Bus Reform within Greater Manchester and a summary of the plan to franchise the bus network in Greater Manchester alongside the Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which is due to be published at the end of October 2021.

The report set out the level of Greater Manchester's ambitions for improving the overall offer to bus customers, plans to deliver this ambition and what was needed from others to deliver this ambition.

The following comments were made:

Several older buses through their emissions had been contributing to GM's increasing carbon footprint, a member therefore queried how this issue would be addressed. Through BSIP GM would be able to specify the entire franchising package.

Members were advised that there were plans to introduce a high quality zero emission fleet of buses retrofitted with technology and equipment to enhance overall customer experience.

Concerns were raised around the affordability of fares. Members were advised that the approach adopted was to present a Levelling Up deal to Government that would seek to deliver a London-style transport network with affordable London-level fares.

A member sought to understand how costs would be met if fares were subsidised. In response, it was stated that the success of the plan was highly dependent on Government funding therefore considerable amount of work had been done to put forward a compelling case with a clear pipeline of delivery schemes to Government.

It was noted that affordable fares would attract more people back onto buses and as more residents take up on public transport, there would be an increase in demand for services which would in return increase revenue.

The integration of the transport system was crucial to attract and encourage residents to take up on public transport. It was highlighted that reliability and safety also needed to be addressed. Members were advised that customer experience had been taken into account when developing the plan and that BSIP would allow GM to bid for additional resources to support the travel safe partnership.

Buses needed to provide accessible services to all communities in Greater Manchester to allow everyone to access opportunities, particularly for those who didn't have access to a car. Members were advised that through BSIP, GM would be able to stabilise and strengthen services and routes to ensure that all GM residents would be able to access the bus network.

In relation to the Judicial Review held on May 2021 in respect of Bus Franchising, the committee were advised that a Court decision was still pending.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the current position in respect of Bus Franchising in Greater Manchester be noted.
2. That the level of ambition and proposals being put forward as part of Greater Manchester's Bus Service Improvement Plan which would be presented to GMCA on the 29 October and submitted to Government shortly thereafter be endorsed.

HP&E 21/19 PLACES FOR EVERYONE CONSULTATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the progress of Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021.

Following consultation on the Publication Plan, the draft joint DPD and the representations made during the Publication stage would be sent to the Secretary of State. A post-consultation report would be prepared and submitted, with the Plan, to the Secretary of State for Examination in early 2022.

The current timetable for preparation of the PfE 2021 plan was as follows:

- Publication Plan (Regulation 19) – period for representations August – October 2021
- Submission (Regulation 22) – January 2022
- Examination- 2022/23
- Adoption - 2023

The following comments were made:

A member sought to understand the process involved should a significant objection arise. In response, it was stated that if any major new issues pertaining to compliance or soundness would arise at the Publication Consultation stage there would need to be further approvals taken by each of the nine districts and, if necessary, consultation prior to any submission of the plan.

The committee were advised that a considerable amount of spatial analysis had been undertaken to understand response patterns from previous consultations and that residents were accordingly engaged during the consultation of Places for Everyone plan.

RESOLVED/-

That the update on the progress of Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021 be noted.