

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2021

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mayor Paul Dennett	GM Portfolio Holder – Chair
Councillor Suzanne Richards	Manchester City Council
Councillor Hannah Roberts	Oldham Council
Councillor David Mellor	Stockport Council
Councillor Ged Cooney	Tameside Council
Jane Healey Brown	Arup
Matthew Harrison	Great Places Housing Association

ADVISORS/OTHER ATTENDEES

Helen Telfer	Environment Agency
Derek Richardson	Greater Manchester Ecology Unit
Roy Hymas	Natural England
Steph Everett	Homes England
Carl Moore	Homes England
Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin	Manchester City Council

SUPPORT OFFICERS

Steve Annette	GMCA Governance Team
Lee Teasdale	GMCA Governance Team
Molly Bishop	GMCA Homelessness Lead
Steve Fyfe	GMCA Planning & Housing Team
David Hodcroft	GMCA Planning & Housing Team
Jill Holden	GMCA Planning & Housing Team
Aisling McCourt	GMCA Planning & Housing Team
Anne Morgan	GMCA Planning & Housing Team
Steve Rumbelow	GM Housing, Homelessness, and Infrastructure Lead Chief Executive

01/21 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Alan Quine, Tony Cummings, Bury Council, Toby Hewitt, Bolton Council, Derek Antrobus, Salford City Council, James Wright, Trafford Council, Councillor Linda Robinson, Rochdale Council, Terry Halliwell, Wigan Council, Toby Hewitt, Bolton Council and Bernadette Elder, Inspiring Communities.

02/21 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

03/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 11 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2021 were presented for consideration.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2021 be approved.

04/21 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Jill Holden, GMCA presented an update on flood and water management that outlined progress and developments since the previous meeting.

She reported that a National Strategy had now been published that embedded a new approach to climate resilience, and whilst this had been widely acclaimed and welcomed it would necessarily involve additional burdens for local authorities both in terms of staffing and capacity resources to scope and deliver climate resilience projects, and this would in turn require innovative approaches to financing options going forward. Jill then outlined changes made to governance arrangements that brokered stronger connections with the Planning and Housing Committee and the Regional Coastal Committee, providing crucial service delivery and political connectivity, and she indicated that the impact of these changes would be reviewed

after twelve months. She stressed the importance of making maximum use of available resources and of encouraging funding from external sources in order to supplement mainstream financing streams. Of a national pot of £5.2bn to support 2000 projects designed to protect 336,000 vulnerable homes by 2027, Greater Manchester's share supported 100 projects to provide protection to just 10,000 of the 60,000 homes currently identified to be 'at risk'. The Commission was also advised of work to develop bi-lateral collaborative working with United Utilities and other key partners with the intention that a joint development framework could be established as early as mid-2021.

Members outlined the important role of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and the work of local members serving on the RFCC in securing funding for Greater Manchester projects through that body, and Jill was thanked for the support that she gave to those members in making and sustaining the GM case for its resource share through that body.

RESOLVED/-

That the report and the progress being made at many levels be welcomed, and especially the development of integrated approaches to address the often difficult and intractable tensions that exist between the 'built' and 'green' environment and the need for resilience in the development of water management in the city region.

05/21 GM HOUSING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy, GMCA provided members with an update on the GM Housing Strategy Implementation Plan. He reported that whilst the top-level ambitions of the Plan remained unchanged perhaps not unexpectedly progress in taking forward some elements had been adversely affected by Covid, and individual projects would inevitably be delayed. He flagged up issues in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping, reminding members that bids had been put to CLG in the Autumn but that decisions on these had not been announced until January, and that the March 2021 delivery on these projects would not therefore be fully achievable. Similarly, the Good Landlord Scheme would need to be re-focussed and re-prioritised in the aftermath of Covid, and the diversion of other resources had

set back progress in relation to vulnerable households which would need to be re-set. In relation to the Retrofit agenda, the opportunity had been taken to refine data in relation to the existing housing stock that would better inform future resource allocation decision making.

Members focussed on measures to deal with fuel poverty and the need to retrofit an average of 61,000 properties to meet 2040 projected targets, and whether this was being effectively monitored so there could be a realistic measurement of progress on that journey. Steve indicated that the necessary rate of progress towards reaching these targets was not being achieved at the present time and that monitoring of progress needed to become more sophisticated to accurately capture the scale of activity by private owners and landlords. Members also sought more information about new models of housing delivery and greater use of devolved powers from MDCs in terms of the creation of investable propositions and creative models of delivery, and whether these were existing powers or new powers. It was considered that the focus at present was on the greater use of current powers, but it was anticipated that the Government's forward legislative programme would herald more change and innovation in the sector and the door was therefore potentially ajar for the consideration of requests for additional local powers if a case of proven need could be made.

Some concerns were expressed about the extent to which modular homes and modern methods of construction were deliverable, and whether the scale of local employment generation would be achieved that local communities were looking for. These concerns were recognised by officers, but it was considered that there remained a sufficient range of opportunities both for housing provision and the generation of employment both in terms of construction; in the building component supply chain and in terms of local college involvement in skills generation and training.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be noted and the contribution made in debate be welcomed.

Laura Blakey, Investment Director, GMCA provided members with an update on the current and forecast commitments of the GM Housing Investment Loans Fund. The Fund was now in its sixth year and on target to create 10,000 new homes with investment of £181m by 31 March 2021.

Members welcomed the report and officers were asked whether discussions were taking place with Government to continue the success of the Fund beyond its current lifespan, and officers that Fund 2 was currently being discussed.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be noted and the success achieved so far be welcomed, especially the support being given to small and medium enterprises within the construction industry and the way that equity investments were leveraging in much valued resources to deliver on the bigger housing picture be welcomed.

07/21 'A BED EVERY NIGHT' - EVALUATION UPDATE

Molly Bishop, Homelessness Strategic Lead, GMCA provided members with an update on the development of the A Bed Every Night service across Greater Manchester, specifically how it will operate and be funded through 2021/22.

The programme had played an important role in securing huge reductions in rough sleeping even before recent Covid interventions and had been successful in terms of shifting mindsets towards homelessness and rough sleeping. The report detailed the investment necessary to continue the service, including seeking direct support from Government as well as existing funding streams and the ways that services would be commissioned going forward.

RESOLVED/

To welcome the report and the success of the scheme and that a further update will come back to the GMCA once the MHCLG funding position is agreed with an update on the evaluation summary.

08/21 PLACES FOR EVERYONE UPDATE

Anne Morgan, Head of Planning Strategy, GMCA provided members with a update on the Joint Development Plan of nine authorities, highlighting the process, rationale for the joint plan of the nine, progress and role of the joint committee to take that forward, future working arrangements and cooperation with Stockport and the next steps.

RESOLVED/-

That the update be noted.

9/21 NATIONAL POLICY UPDATE

The Commission noted an overview of the key headlines for the sector from the Budget 2021.

10/21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To be confirmed.