

MINUTES OF THE GM HOUSING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2022 AT THE TOOTAL BUILDINGS - BROADHURST HOUSE, 56 OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 6EU

PRESENT:

Bolton	Councillor John Walsh (Chair)
Manchester	Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin
Oldham	Councillor Barbara Brownridge
Oldham	Councillor Sam Al Hamdani
Rochdale	Councillor Ashley Dearnley
Stockport	Councillor Colin MacAlister
Stockport	Councillor Janet Mobbs
Tameside	Councillor Mike Glover
Tameside	Councillor Liam Billington
Wigan	Councillor Fred Walker

IN ATTENDANCE:

Greater Manchester Mayor	Andy Burnham
GMCA	Anne Morgan
GMCA	Mark Atherton
GMCA	Joanne Heron
GMCA	Ninoshka Martins

HP&E 21/29 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Martin Hayes (Bury), Linda Robinson (Rochdale), Akilah Akinola (Trafford), Kevin Procter (Trafford) and Stuart Dickman (Salford).

HP&E 21/30 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The GM Mayor joined the meeting and advised members on the situation around the introduction of the Clean Air Zone. It was reported that Government had issued a legal directive in March 2020 that required the 10 GM local authorities to address the problem around the lack of clean air by introducing a Category C Charging Clean Air Zone - which principally addresses commercial vehicles including HGVs, buses, coaches,

<u>BOLTON</u>	<u>MANCHESTER</u>	<u>ROCHDALE</u>	<u>STOCKPORT</u>	<u>TRAFFORD</u>
<u>BURY</u>	<u>OLDHAM</u>	<u>SALFORD</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>WIGAN</u>

minibuses, vans, taxis, and private hire vehicles that do not meet prescribed national standards for NO2 emissions.

Members sought to understand the reason behind the introduction of a GM wide Clean Air Zone. The committee was advised that NO2 emissions had been dangerously high across all 10 GM local authorities hence the introduction of a GM wide Clean Air Zone.

Concerns were raised around the issues faced by business to retrofit/upgrade their vehicles. It was reported that a £120m compensation scheme had been agreed between GM and the government to support the transition to cleaner vehicles. However, due to supply chain issues and inflation there were fundamental concerns that global and national factors would impact the ability of local businesses and individuals to upgrade their vehicles and it would be likely that the funding allotted to support the transition would be insufficient. Members were advised that further discussions had been planned with leaders to agree a way forward.

A member sought to understand the reason for private cars to be exempted from payment for entering the Clean Air Zone. It was reported that the current GM Clean Air Plan had been prepared with Government to achieve legal NO2 limit values in the shortest possible time and therefore had been targeted at the most polluting vehicles.

Concerning the Strategic Road Network (SRN), sections of the A628/A57 in Tameside, it was reported that further discussions were underway to establish the most appropriate solution for the charging mechanism to be applied.

It was acknowledged that the purpose of the scheme was solely to reduce air pollution and therefore it was suggested that the income from the scheme be reinvested into the hardship fund. However, it was noted that this was a decision for the 10 local authorities to consider.

RESOLVED/-

That the update be noted.

HP&E 21/31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declaration of interests were received.

HP&E 21/32 THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 09 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 09 December 2021 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Housing, Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 09 December 2021 be approved.

HP&E 21/33 GM RETROFIT ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2024

Consideration was given to a report that sought members approval on the GM Retrofit Action Plan, that had been commissioned by the Mayoral Retrofit Task Force. The discussion was further supplemented with a presentation that provided an overview of plans to deliver on the 2038 carbon neutral target.

The Mayoral Retrofit Task Force had highlighted the following three notable challenges to meet the targeted average of 61,000 homes retrofitted per year:

- Insufficient skilled operatives required to retrofit homes, public buildings, and businesses
- Lack of innovative funding models and solutions to support GM residents that were willing to complete retrofit measures to their homes
- A local, quality assured offer which would both inform and demystify retrofit

The following comments were made:

Concerns were raised regarding the restrictions around the scope of delivery of various government schemes and the lack of capacity in the supply chain to meet customer demand. Members were advised that work was underway to identify/develop suitable schemes for willing payers to finance the retrofit activity for their own homes. It was highlighted that not all homes would be needed to be retrofitted and that homeowners would also have the option of installing an Air Source Heat Pump into suitable properties. The Government's £5,000 Boiler Upgrade Scheme grants would, from April 2022, support this market to develop and would also attract individuals who are willing to pay for such technology.

It was acknowledged that retrofit generally does not require new trades, it was noted that it would create an opportunity to upskill and retrain existing tradespeople within the construction sector to meet the expected demand. As part of developing the workforce, further work had been planned by promoting retrofitting jobs and by working with higher education facilities to deliver more relevant training and qualifications.

Members highlighted that several residents in GM were living in fuel poverty and therefore sought to understand what had been planned to address this issue. It was reported that through the Green Homes Grant work was underway to support residents to renovate fuel-poor homes. Further plans were underway to reduce energy demand by improving the fabric of the home with the view to offer substantial economic benefits to the people living there.

Concerns were raised around the lack of low carbon options available through boiler suppliers and the damaging impact this would have on the market for future demand. It was acknowledged that there was a need to develop a strong pipeline of suppliers and to create awareness on the type of technology available to homeowners.

Further concerns were raised around the cost of retrofitting including the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps. It was highlighted that the recently announced Boiler Upgrade Scheme would likely incentivise residents to take up on the low carbon offer as the scheme offered a one-off £5,000 grant for eligible homeowners. It was also noted that

launch of the scheme would drive awareness resulting in an increase in market demand which would likely drive down costs.

It was noted that the scale of the environmental challenge meant action was needed across all buildings in GM and that there was a need to sequence interventions and target sectors/individuals who have already recognised the urgency of retrofitting. Doing this would create the necessary demand to stimulate the provision of skills and would enable financial products and services. Members were advised that all new GM homes would be designed to be net zero carbon to achieve the 2038 Carbon Neutral target.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the GM Retrofit Action Plan and its contents be noted.
2. That GM Retrofit Action Plan included under Annex 1, be agreed.

HP&E 21/34 PLACES FOR EVERYONE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation that provided an update following the close of the consultation on the Places for Everyone Publication Plan.

The following comments were made:

Members were advised that work was underway to evaluate the responses received and to identify any new emerging issues. Following which the next step would be to submit the plan to the Secretary of State who would appoint a panel of inspectors to carry out an independent examination to decide whether the plan was sound and accordingly make any recommendation to the 9 districts.

As responses to the online consultation were lower as compared to previous years, a member sought to understand whether this would affect the validity of the plan. Members were advised that all legal requirements as set out in the revised legislation to carry out online consultations had been met and therefore did not affect the validity of the plan. Additionally, further work had been done with community groups to capture any comments from residents who were unable to respond to the online consultation.

RESOLVED/-

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

HP&E 21/35 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Consideration was given to a report that provided an overview of the latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions (Appendix A) to identify areas of focus for the committee.

RESOLVED/-

That the latest Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

HP&E 21/36 WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022

Consideration was a report that provided a summary of the items that would be considered by the Committee during the 2021-2022 municipal year.

RESOLVED/-

That the Work Programme be noted.

HP&E 21/28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 1 February 2022; 10:30 am