GREATER MANCHESTER
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY FOR THE PLACES WE LIVE

Affordable living

An investigation into how the affordable homes offer could better meet the needs of people in Greater Manchester

March 2024

Contents

Chair's Foreword

Councillor Lewis Eric Nelson

Salford

Everybody in Greater Manchester deserves a place to call home but fundamentally, there is not enough housing stock for all people in Greater Manchester

We know that the cost-of-living crisis coupled with a chronic shortage of housing is causing financial hardship and distress for many. The task and finish group began our review by exploring the factors that make-up an 'affordable home'. We concluded that system defined 'affordable housing' does not always translate to what is truly affordable for residents.

We acknowledge that the monthly rent/mortgage payment figure cannot alone define 'affordable housing'. Housing costs are usually the biggest outgoing for residents, followed by energy and food; all have risen considerably in recent years. All three main outgoings determine the affordability of running a home. Therefore, our goal needs to be to enable our residents to achieve affordable living.

"We need to think differently about housing"

That means that housing built now, needs to be of a standard that guarantees comparatively low heating costs and overall energy efficiency. It means residents need to be able access community infrastructure easily and access quality food in their community without having to pay a poverty premium for convenient access. Residents also need to be supported in accessing unclaimed welfare entitlements.

The task and finish group investigated case studies and approaches that have unlocked development that is delivering impressive results across Greater Manchester. There are examples of local best practice that give us replicable blueprints and a successful approach. Reasons to be hopeful for a horizon that will see the end of the housing crisis, however, to realise that horizon, we need national government to give us the resources and tools to deliver.

This review is not a conclusive assessment of the housing landscape across Greater Manchester but sets out the findings of our task and finish group which we hope will foremost further highlight the issues relating to affordable housing and offer some helpful recommendations to address these. I want to thank all those who supported this review and the process that enabled this report to be aspirational and thoughtful about the challenges and opportunities we face. It would not have been possible without the candour and willingness of partners to participate.

Comments from Chair of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Nadim Muslim

Bolton

I am really pleased to see the findings of the task and finish group come together in this review. Providing affordable homes for all people in Greater Manchester is an ambition that I'm sure we all share, but I think what this review does well, is highlight the wider issue of 'affordable living' for which we all have a responsibility to promote.

My thanks go to all those who contributed to this review, and especially to those elected members who have driven this piece of work. I hope that it provides a real foundation for moving forward on improving the lives of residents across GM.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Group would like to extend thanks to those who directly helped support and shape this review:

- Steve Fyfe – Head of Housing Strategy, GMCA
- Helen Simpson – GM Tripartite Agreement Director
- Dave Kelly – Assistant Director of Reform, GMCA
- Elaine Morgan – Strategy Principal, Reform, GMCA
- Mary Gogarty – Principle, Housing Strategy, GMCA
- Joseph Donaghue – Strategic Lead on Homelessness, GMCA
- Lucy Woodbine – Principal Researcher, Housing & Planning, GMCA
- Helen Spencer – Executive Director of Growth, Great Places / Chair of Growth Group GM Housing Providers
- Sarah Dillon – Director of Adult Social Care, Stockport MBC
- Gemma Parlby – Group Director of Customer & Communities, Bolton at Home
- Rachel O’Connor – Development Director, Mosscare St Vincents
- Andy Green – Senior Manager, Partnerships and Business Development, Homes England
- Tom Hawley – Head of Affordable Housing Growth – North, Homes England
- Mark Robinson – Director of Economy and Place, Rochdale Council
- Kurt Partington – Head of Development, Salford Council
- Andrew Leigh – Head of Housing Strategy, Salford Council
- Councillor Ged Cooney – GM Portfolio Lead for Housing

Calendar of Meetings

- 21 September 2023: Resolution to form a Task and Finish Group at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- 20 October 2023: Initial scoping session
- 3 November 2023: Further scoping session
- 17 November 2023: Wider cost of living challenges
- 1 December 2023: Picture of housing need
- 15 December 2023: Data on affordable homes
- 5 January 2024: Supported and specialist homes
- 19 January 2024: Opportunities within the GM devolution deal
- 2 February 2024: Affordable housing case studies
- 16 February 2024: Progress session
- 4 March 2024: Consideration of draft review and discussion with GM Portfolio Lead for Housing
- 20 March 2024: Consideration by Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction, Purpose and Scope

1.1. The GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee is made up of twenty elected councillors from across Greater Manchester. At the beginning of this municipal year, they were asked to consider what issues they felt were of the most significance to residents and which issues would benefit most from a task and finish approach, where a small number of committee members could consider the issue over a number of sessions.

1.2. The issue of ensuring that people could afford a good quality home was voted as the most significant and so this review was agreed.

1.3. All members and substitutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the review, and the following ten members put themselves forward, bringing with them a mix of geographic, politics and experience from their individual backgrounds.


Councillor Shan Alexander
Stockport


Councillor Jill Axford
Trafford


Councillor Tom Besford
Rochdale


Councillor Frederick Brown Walker
Wigan


Councillor Ashley Dearnley
Rochdale


Councillor Shaun Ennis
Trafford


Councillor Colin McLaren
Oldham


Councillor Robert Morissey
Bolton


Councillor Lewis Eric Nelson (Chair)
Salford


Councillor Sameena Zaheer
Rochdale

1.4 To begin their investigations, members met with lead officers from the Combined Authority to understand the issue in its widest sense before looking to scope the review. From the beginning it was apparent that affordable housing was a small element of the wider context of affordable living and therefore the title of the review was amended to reflect this.

1.5 The group were also aware that both Stockport and Rochdale Council's Scrutiny Committees were undertaking their own reviews within this sphere, and so were keen to ensure that this review kept a strategic focus and remained within the remit of the GMCA.

1.6 Although the title had been widened to reflect the context of affordable living, members wanted the review to specifically look at the following areas -

- Current housing picture in Greater Manchester
- Local and national challenges
- The impact of the cost of living
- Current provision and forecasted demand of supported and specialist housing
- Opportunities to improve the affordable homes offer

Recommendations

1. Bold, national action for the creation of more affordable homes with greater flexibility as a region to ensure that the housing market can line up with affordability of residents in GM. Recognising that the formula for affordable living is multi-faceted and should include rent, energy, and essential food costs.
2. Move towards supporting people out of debt at every point of contact, ensuring a minimum standard of welfare advisors to support residents to access unclaimed welfare support and begin their tenancies with no deficit.
3. A GM Housing Strategy that is ambitious enough to deliver what is needed to meet the housing needs of residents in Greater Manchester, including the ambition for all new homes to be zero carbon, enabled by long term partnerships that have the ability to deliver more collaboratively.
4. Clear narrative about what we are trying to achieve collectively, whilst recognising the individual needs of each GM Local Authority, potentially through a GM shared housing allocations framework that sets a standard and consistent approach but allows for local interpretation that supports Local Authorities to manage their available housing stock.
5. Flexibility of funding and more ability to joint commission across partner agencies to ensure that supported housing is adaptable and built for future needs.
6. Levers of Places for Everyone should ensure that social and affordable homes are included in every new development.
7. Effective promotion of the support available to local residents to assist with energy bills, insulation, food provision etc in recognition of the need to see housing as just one element of affordable living.
8. Creation of a national housing minimum standard for all private rental properties in order to remove any detrimental health outcomes of poor living conditions, driven by the recognised benefits of being an accredited member

of the Good Landlord Charter.

9. An increase in revenue funding in line with the increasing support needs of residents to reduce demand on the wider care system, but allocated to organisations who are meeting people where they are.

10. An annual GM Strategic Place Partnership event with key planning influencers (elected members and officers) to begin to break down any planning barriers to viable schemes and to hold further conversations regarding capacity and required expertise.

2. What is an affordable home?

2.1 There is no all-encompassing statutory definition of affordable housing in England which brings about some ambiguity in the way ‘affordable’ is using in relation to housing. The most commonly referred to definition is set out in Annex 2 to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)1. This is the definition used by local planning authorities when making provision within their areas and includes social rent as well as a range of intermediate rent and for sale products.

2.2 There is some criticism that the inclusion of build to rent within the NPPF definition does not help those with the greatest housing need and might reduce social and affordable rented housing delivery[2].

- Social rent – Social rents are submarket rents set through the national rent regime in England. Social rent properties may be owned by Local Authorities or Housing Associations. The definition refers to properties with rents at around 50-60% of market rents defined by Sections 68-71 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
- Affordable rent – During the October 2010 Spending Review, the coalition Government announced a new ‘intermediate rent’ tenure. Under this model known as ‘affordable rent’, social landlords offer tenancies at rents of up to 80% of market levels within the local area. The additional finance raised is available for reinvestment to develop new social housing.
- Affordable home ownership – Affordable home ownership is a product which involves buyers purchasing a share of a property (traditionally between 25% to 75%) and paying rent on the remaining share. It is intended as an intermediate option for households who would not otherwise be able to afford home ownership.

[1] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[2] Government response to the housing White Paper consultation: Fixing our broken housing market (publishing.service.gov.uk)

2.3 The Affordable Housing Commission (2020) concluded that many of these products were “clearly unaffordable to those on mid to low incomes”.

2.4 A range of affordable homes is helpful in providing options for residents, however if social housing is the most affordable model, then there needs to be further opportunities to increase this provision first and foremost.

2.5 The NPPF says that where major development includes the provision of housing, at least 10% of the housing provided should be for affordable home ownership. There is no minimum level of provision of affordable rented housing, this is for the determination of local planning authorities.

2.6 Affordable homes, however, should not just be in relation to the rental elements as this is just one cost to the resident, instead it should be seen within the wider scope of ‘affordable living’ which enables people to afford their rent, utilities, and other associated costs. The issue of security within a home should also not be overlooked, as this is a significant contributor to wellbeing and the feeling of belonging to a community.

“Housing is safety”

Cllr Jill Axford

2.7 Food poverty is another review in itself, but the link between housing and good quality food should not be overlooked. Creating communities where people have access to fresh food sources rather than just high-priced convenience food is a significant determinant of affordable living. The GM Community Fridges programme is a space that brings people together to eat, connect, learn new skills, and reduce food waste. It is a site where local people can share food, including surplus from supermarkets, local food businesses, producers, households, and gardens. Fridges are run by community groups in shared spaces such as schools, community centres and shops, their main purpose being saving fresh food from going to waste.

2.8 Ward Councillors report anecdotally that rental charges are not affordable for the majority of residents who rent their properties. It is clear from their experiences that rents have risen in line with the housing market and not with household income, and therefore some of the hardest hit are those who are working in lower paid jobs but with no access to welfare support. This is further evidenced through Greater Manchester's latest resident survey[3] which showed that 37% of mortgage holders and 44% of renters say that they find it difficult to afford their rent or mortgage payments.

2.9 The resident survey also showed that while the proportion of mortgage holders who are behind on their payments has fallen overall (4%, was 7% in July 2023), this has increased among renters (17%, was previously 13%).

2.10 Moreover, 30% of all residents are financially vulnerable with over 50% concerned about the cost of heating their homes this winter.

2.11 Greater Manchester's Big Disability survey (2022) showed how this is playing out in the lives of our residents *"I skip meals, I half every portion, I live very minimally, I never go shopping for anything other than bits of food, I pay minimum amounts off debts as I need to keep them happy so that I can order a new vacuum or washing machine in the future as I have no other means of affording/replacing needed items I am currently in rent arrears of £535 as I could not afford to pay the rent last month and got so sick of having empty cupboards and freezer. I am hungry".*

2.12 Demand for social rented housing is high as it is the most affordable option on the current market and likely to increase as the cost-of-living crisis continues. However, it is important to consider this in the scope of all the other housing options as people are struggling across all housing types, not just those who are in social housing.

[3] Microsoft PowerPoint - gm-resident-survey-report-10-dec2023.pptx (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

2.13 Benchmarked against the ONS data[4], residents of Greater Manchester are increasingly feeling the impact of the cost of living more significantly than other areas in the UK.

2.14 In 2018/19 there was a piece of work undertaken which looked at the potential for defining a GM position on an 'affordable home' however, its conclusion was that there were too many determining factors in each individual situation contributing toa rent to be affordable, i.e. income, welfare support, dependants, tax, health needs and therefore a 'one size fits all' definition was ultimately thought to be unhelpful at that time. However, this review has highlighted that without a clear definition there is a lot of ambiguity as to what is meant by an 'affordable home' and how it is applied across GM Local Authorities.

2.15 The TANZ (truly affordable net zero) task force define 'affordable' as properties that are operationally net zero with social rent which ensures that all those engaged are clear about what type of property is being referenced. GM should ensure that when defining a housing option as 'affordable' that the cost of energy and food essentials are also considered, recognising that affordable living is multi-faceted.

Greater Manchester ambitions

"2024 is the year to get serious about housing"

GM Mayor, Overview & Scrutiny Committee

2.16 The current Greater Manchester Housing Strategy[5] sets out the ambition for 50,000 affordable homes in Greater Manchester by 2038.

2.17 It further aspires for 30,000 net zero homes whose delivery is bring overseen by the TANZ (Truly Affordable Net Zero) Task Force which has brought key stakeholders together across the wider system to think collaboratively and

[4] Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain 1 to 12 November 2023.pdf
[5] https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2257/gm-housing-strategy-2019-2024.pdf

address the issue in the broadest sense in order to also be prepared for the Future Homes Standard in 2025 which will provide properties with an energy use intensity target of 35kw/m2/year to meet LETI guidance.

2.18 The other priorities for the TANZ Task Force are –

- Put forward a pipeline of land supply
- Deliver on flagship schemes
- Increase planning capacity
- Develop opportunities to increase the required skill set
- Provide economic advantages through a shared supply chain
- Support the accurate valuation of net zero properties

2.19 As part of the Devolution Trailblazer, the Government and GMCA have agreed a £150m further package for brownfield land, to support the delivery of at least 7000 homes by 2025/26. This, along with further detail in the devolution deal, provides certainty around the capital the GMCA is likely to have to support housing growth over the next 5-7 years.

2.20 It is important to have a clear understanding of the brownfield sites available for future brownfield land funding programmes, consideration should also be given to where developers can contribute to the cost of remediation of a site for their benefit.

2.21 Year one funding, announced last year, allocated £51.1m to the building of 3,900 new homes. The GMCA have engaged with Districts to identify brownfield sites that are able to start works in 2023/24. 58 schemes were ranked as the most deliverable and offering the greatest outcomes. Headlines from the proposed Year 1 allocations include:

- Over 4,300 homes will be unlocked and supported.
- 83% of schemes include affordable housing, of which 30 schemes will deliver over 50% affordable homes.
- 67% of schemes include low carbon measures (with some still to be confirmed).
- 40 will be delivered by Registered Providers, 14 by the Private Sector,

with the remainder directly delivered by Districts.

2.22 Of the 7,800 homes planned for the second and third phases of this scheme, half of almost 4,000 homes will be affordable. Seventy-nine per cent of schemes will be built to Future Homes Standard and five of the proposed schemes will aim to build homes which operate with zero or negative carbon emissions, in line with the GM Truly Affordable Net Zero Homes (TANZ) Task Force definitions. A variety of approaches to reduce carbon and energy impacts are being proposed, including using Passivhaus build techniques.

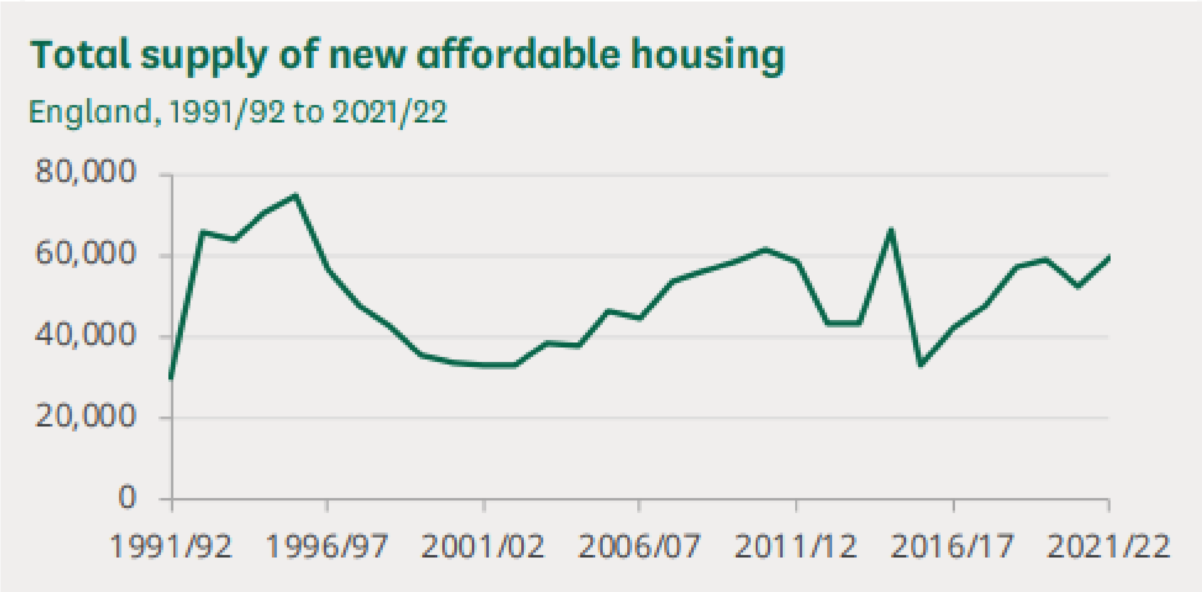
2.23 This work is all in support of the ambitions set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy (2021)[6] "We will ensure the delivery of safe, decent and affordable housing, with no one sleeping rough in Greater Manchester."

[6] https://aboutgreatermanchester.com/media/jlslgbys/greater-manchester-strategy-our-plan.pdf

3. Housing Crisis in Greater Manchester

4.1 Nationally, the new supply of affordable homes peaked in 1995/96 at around 74,500 homes before declining to a low of around 32,900 in 2002/03. Since 2015, delivery has increased year on year, reaching around 59,000 homes in 2019/20. The number of homes was slightly lower in 2020/21 potentially reflecting the overall reduction in new builds due to the covid pandemic[7].

Fig 1 – Total supply of new affordable housing in England 1991 - 2021



<u>Social rented housing supply declining</u>

4.2 Since the 1990's there have been 91,000 social homes lost in Greater Manchester through the Government's 'right to buy' scheme and transfers to Housing Providers who have since altered the tenancy agreements to affordable rental homes. There is widespread agreement that the discounts offered through the 'right to buy' scheme has been the single biggest contributor to the housing crisis.

4.3 The Levelling Up White Paper (February 2022) refers to a "significant unmet need for social housing" and contains a commitment to increase supply: *The*

[7] Tackling the under-supply of housing in England - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)

UK Government will also increase the amount of social housing available over time to provide the most affordable housing to those who need it. This will include reviewing how to support councils to deliver greater numbers of council homes, alongside Housing Associations.[8]

4.4 In line with this, Greater Manchester are pursuing the creation of more social homes and continuing to lobby for the removal of right to buy as this predominately results in properties being purchased by private landlords.

4.5 There are also no restrictions on any private landlord to keep the rents at a particular level, the property at its current size/layout or the property to a required standard.

4.6 There are currently 68,947 households in GM on the waiting list for social housing. A half of which are in the reasonable preference category (as defined by the Housing Act 1996) which applies to certain categories of applicants –

a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7 of the 1996 Act).

b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3).

c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability).

e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

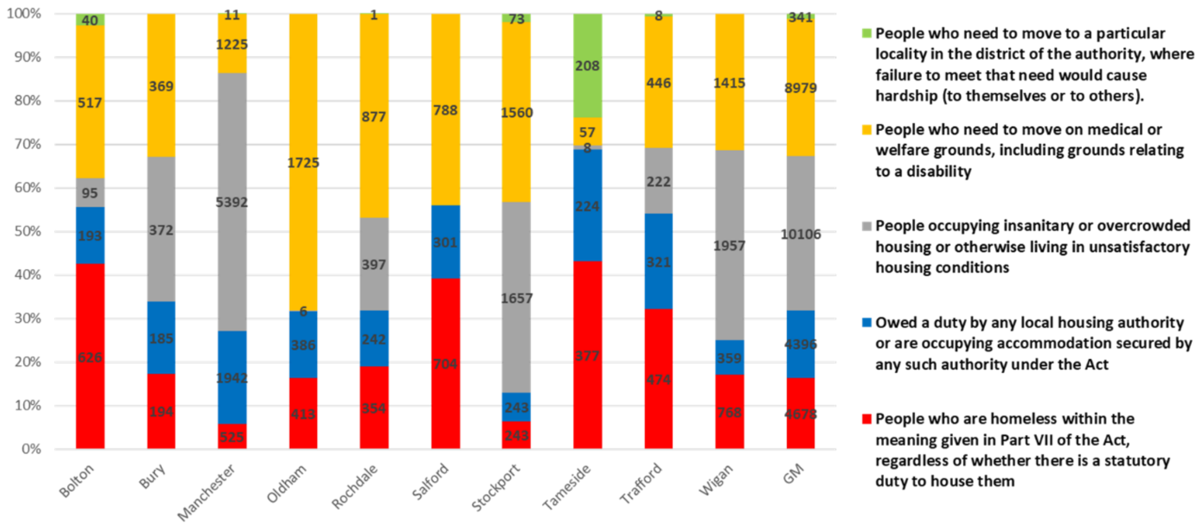
4.7 There is also the provision for Local Authorities to provide 'additional

[8] crisis_housing_supply_requirements_across_great_britain_2018.pdf

preference’ for certain groups e.g. armed forces.

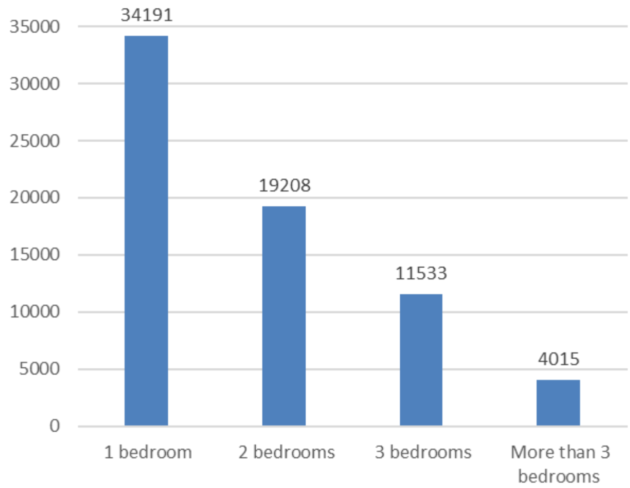
4.8 The graph below breaks down reasonable preference need in each GM authority by category, which is indicative of different communities, different demographic groups, different available properties and different needs.

Fig 2 - 2021/22 data on breakdown of housing preference category



4.9 There is a greater demand for one-bedroom homes across GM as the graph below demonstrates, highlighting further societal demands from an ageing population. However, there are households on the waiting list of all sizes, with some larger families being told its ‘unlikely’ they will ever be offered a 4–5-bedroom home, as there simply are not any available.

Fig 3 – housing demand by bedroom size



4.10 Members of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee were concerned with this statistic when reviewing this report as they reported numerous households within their communities who were experiencing overcrowding. As more families are choosing to live together to share communal costs and resources in response to the increased cost of living or due to caring responsibilities, it is important to recognise the increasing need for larger homes with multiple bedrooms and furthermore, a future possible trend of house sharing as a response to the climate crisis.

4.11 Government switched grant support from Homes England to Affordable Rent and Affordable Home Ownership products, leading to supply of new social rented homes declining to negligible levels in GM from 2013 onwards. This was reversed to some degree for the 2021-2026 Affordable Homes Programme, though until 2023, there was a restriction preventing a full grant from Homes England to build social rent properties in five of the ten GM districts.

4.12 Since then, there has been a visible increase in the development of social housing, but with each scheme taking circa 3 years to complete, there is a gap between planning approval and the final completion date. This is particularly evident in some specific property types, for example the delivery of 1–2-bedroom apartments is visibly slower than other developments. Planning delays can be seriously detrimental to the delivery of a scheme and therefore all partners should be upfront about timescales as soon as this process begins to ensure timescales can be aligned to minimise further delays.

4.13 The Commons Library publishes an interactive dashboard Local Authority Data: Housing Supply which includes data on affordable housing supply for individual local authorities, including social housing stock. This was helpful to the review when determining the current housing picture.

Greater reliance on private rented accommodation as the default option

4.14 Home ownership has been challenging to access over recent years, particularly for first time buyers, alongside the constraints on social housing due to limited supply. As a result, the private sector has benefited from an increased reliance on their stock, with more residents now housed than within the social rented sector. The 2021 census[9] recorded 20% of households in England and Wales were private renters, this was up from around 17% in 2011.

4.15 The ONS Index of Private Housing Rental Prices highlighted that private rent grew in England by 5.1% over the year to June 2023, the largest recorded increase since the series began in 2006. Overall private rents have increased by 20% since January 2015[10].

4.16 Inflation has also had a significant impact on the private rented sector as landlords who have borrowed to acquire their rental properties have increased rents in the face of increased mortgage and other costs. However, rents have also increased as a result of increased demand in high pressure areas.

4.17 The unavailability of welfare benefits to include a housing allowance for anything but rental properties further increases the demand on this sector

[9] Housing, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
[10] Index of Private Housing Rental Prices, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

and due to lack of availability, can often lead to households being forced to accept tenancies in poor quality homes. Further work should be done to encourage private landlords to accept tenants who are in receipt of benefits to widen the housing offer to all. The requirement for an upfront deposit is also a real barrier for those on housing benefits as such a lump sum can be unobtainable. Being in arrears before a contract even commences is not a positive start for a resident and can result in them curating a defensive relationship with their housing provider. A whole sector debt recovery first approach is needed to ensure the best possible start for a resident as often being in debt becomes a barrier in itself to accessing a property.

4.18 The GM Resident Survey showed that as in May 2023, 1 in 3 renters and mortgage holders (31%) saw their payments increase.

4.19 Rising rents and the end of Section 21 resulting in an increase in no fault evictions have seen an even greater level of uncertainty across the private rented sector.

4.20 This was a specific concern for members of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee who raised concerns about the inability for young people to find affordable housing, let alone be able to secure a mortgage offer in the current climate.

<u>Health and safety issues in current stock condition</u>

4.21 Modelling undertaken through Parity work for the GMCA suggests that around 23% of homes in GM (more than 280,000) are likely to contain a Category 1 health and safety hazard, compared to 15% nationally. The new consumer standards have been designed to ensure there is more regulation around the duty of care on landlords for their residents and that there are consequences for not meeting those standards.

4.22 An affordable home should be one which is warm, insulated and energy efficient. The GM Local Energy Advice Demonstrator is a scheme which informs the public through warm hub provision about advice and support provided by their Local Authority, however, this information should be made as accessible as possible to all.

4.23 Advice and support on energy and wider green issues is also being provided to residents across housing providers and ALMOs, especially tools which could assess heating loss areas and access to grants to improve insulation. It is imperative that this advice is also available via private landlords and that it is also available in non-digital forms for those who cannot access online services.

> "The more we can help reduce the cost of housing, the more people have for the wider costs of living".
>
> Ged Cooney, GM Portfolio Lead for Housing

4.24 Empty properties may be seen as a potential solution to the housing crisis, but with many in disrepair there are complex and significant levels of investment needed in order to get them to a suitable living standard. A level that without any funding available, would most likely require a property to go back to the standard rental market to see a return to the developer on their investment.

4.25 Many housing developments have seen their asset improvement programmes delayed and as a result investment is now at a critical stage to retrofit, replace buildings or build brand new stock. However, it was recognised that an increase in capital costs to deliver these improvements would impact the available revenue for housing providers, resulting in less resources to support residents.

“We want to deliver the best housing for everyone in GM and we want to do it right the first time”

Cllr Fred Walker

Lack of investment into new homes

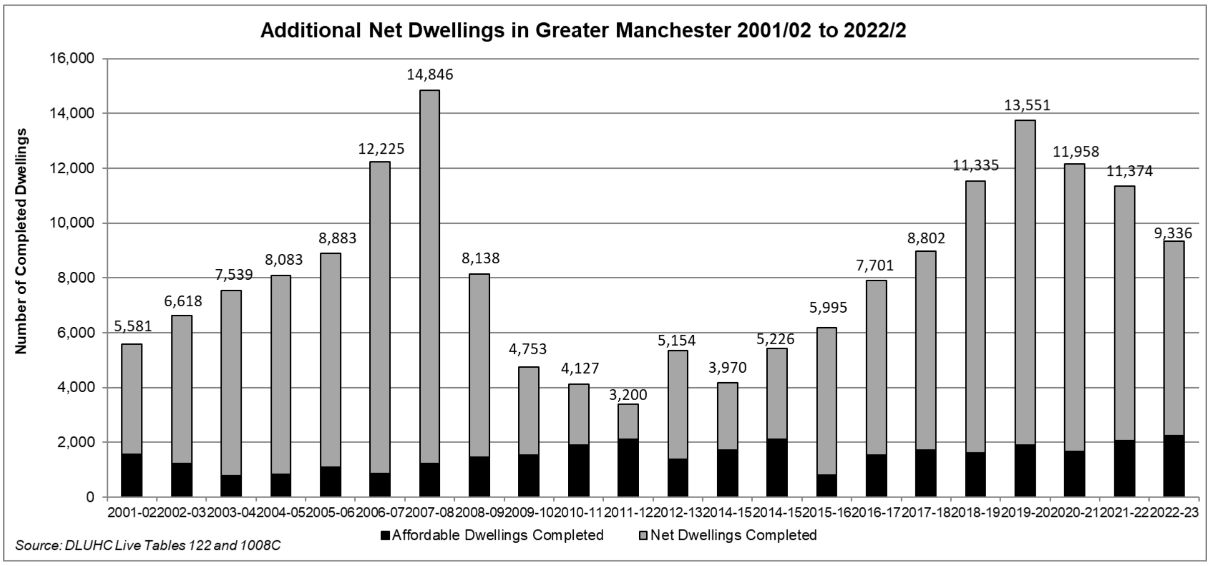
5.1 The Affordable Homes Programme provided by Homes England is the main source of Government grant tor new affordable housing delivery and currently offers a £11.5b funding programme to Housing Providers, Local Authorities and ALMOs (Arm’s Length Management Organisations). This is expected to support the delivery of 180,000 new homes over five years, split between 50% homes at a discounted rent and 50% for affordable home ownership products. In February 2023, Homes England announced social rent was a “priority for the fund”[11] meaning that social rent specific grant rates could be accessed in all parts of England.

5.2 Construction costs have also significantly increased over recent years, resulting in fewer developers being financially able to invest in building affordable housing, let alone specialised housing that requires additional adaptations. The economic challenges to this sector also include capacity limitations within the supply chain.

5.3 The diagram below shows the net number of affordable dwellings completed in comparison to the net number of dwelling completions across the last 22 years.

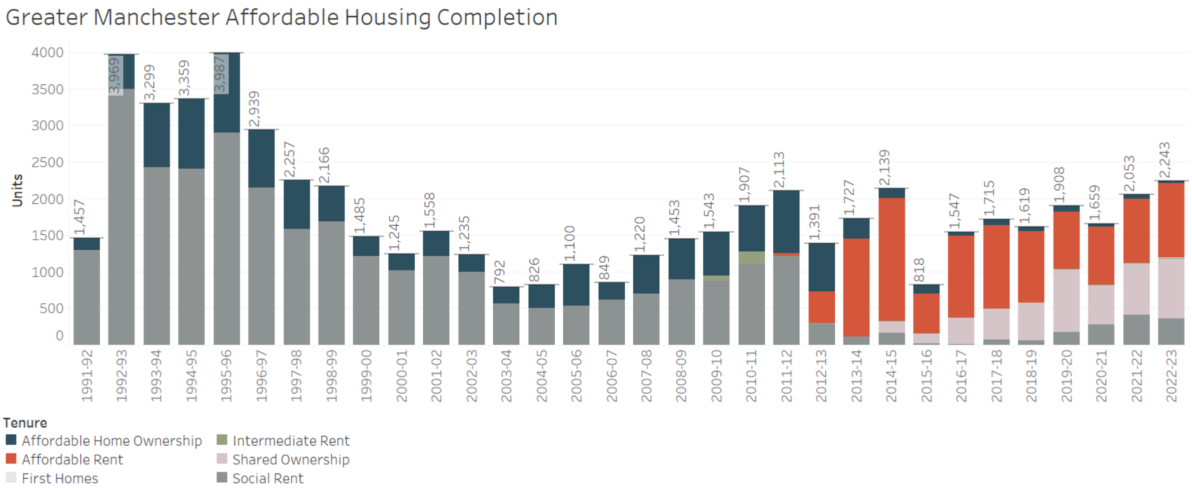
[11] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-affordable-housing-funding

Fig 4 – Number of dwellings completed in GM since 2001



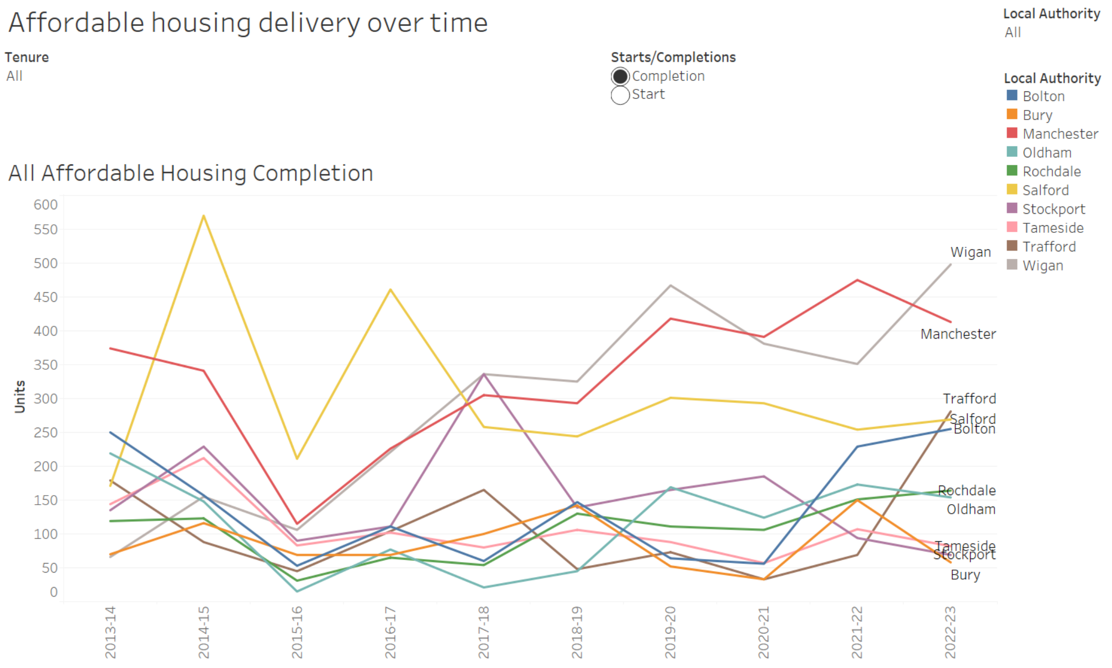
5.4 Data is actually available from 1991 (as shown in the graph below), which shows that there has been a significant decline in social housing completion predominantly from 2012.

Fig 5 – Number of affordable dwellings completed since 1991



5.5 Recent data can also be broken down by Local Authority, evidencing local patterns that have been influenced by national and other local contributing factors.

Fig 6 – Number of completed affordable dwellings by Local Authority area



5.6 For context, in Manchester the previous priority was regarding the delivery of a housing mix, whereas more recently there has been a shift towards prioritising affordable homes. In Salford there has been a long-standing commitment to affordable housing but there are less delivery partners to meet the level of need. Stockport has a different market as there are a limited number of registered providers, but this is expected to increase as the town centre redevelopment continues. In Wigan there are larger strategic sites from which Section 106 monies can be sourced and a focus on the development of brownfield sites. The impact of the number of developers, land ownership and deindustrialised legacy is a clear contributor to the peaks and troughs in affordable housing completions across each of the GM Local Authority areas.

5.7 The majority of affordable housing is provided through a combination of borrowings and funding, circa 25% of which is from Homes England grants, but the remainder is from other funds accessed by the housing providers. The table below provides detail of the funding sources by which schemes were completed in 2022-23. Section 106 funds are more successfully sought on larger scale strategic sites but can require a complex process to obtain.

Fig 7 – Affordable housing completions in 2022-23 by funding type

Greater Manchester Affordable Housing Completion funding 2022-23

Local Authority	HE Funded	Local Authority HE/GLA funded	Local Authority other funding	Other	Private Registered Provider HE/GLA funded	Private Registered Provider other funding	Right to Buy recycled receipts	s106 nil grant
Bolton					83.92%		16.08%	
Bury					75.86%			24.14%
Manchester			3.87%	0.48%	93.46%	2.18%		
Oldham					64.94%		35.06%	
Rochdale					100.00%			
Salford	1.12%	26.02%		12.64%	37.17%		21.56%	1.49%
Stockport					73.91%			26.09%
Tameside					81.71%			18.29%
Trafford					66.55%			33.45%
Wigan		21.29%	2.41%		50.00%			26.31%

% of Total Units
0.48% 1

% of Total Units broken down by Funding vs. Local Authority. Colour shows % of Total Units. The marks are labelled by % of Total Units. The data is filtered on Greater Manchester, Starts/Completions, Year and Tenure. The Greater Manchester filter keeps 10 members. The Starts/Completions filter keeps Completion. The Year filter keeps 2022-23. The Tenure filter excludes London Affordable Rent.

5.8 Moving forward, housing markets should be seen as an investment model rather than simply the development of homes as the funding gap will remain if the investment model does not evolve. This will take significant strategic maturity and a progressive national conversation in which Greater Manchester can have some influence. However, fundamentally, investment decisions about the use of public funds should be taken in the context of the long-term benefits of having an increased supply of high quality, secure, affordable homes for those who are unable to access those through market provision.

Land supply

5.9 Available land in Greater Manchester is reducing, which is often proving a barrier even when schemes are completely viable.

5.10 Without future opportunities for increasing the land supply potential, progress on the delivery of affordable homes is unlikely to be sustainable. There are only a few ‘easy sites’ remaining that are not controlled by significant landowners across GM, therefore the GMCA are prioritising grant allocations to brownfield sites that were potentially previously determined as unsuitable for development.

5.11 The potential use of compulsory purchase orders through clear Regeneration Strategies should also be considered, especially in relation to small ‘grot spot’ areas of land which could be brought together for regeneration.

5.12 The GM Brownfield Land fund has enabled GM Local Authorities to have easier access to a flexible fund with significantly less ‘red tape’ than a national funding scheme. The application process is simpler and less resource exhaustive and the chance of success is greater due to a smaller geographical area. With less bureaucracy, there is also a greater confidence in the programme to enable Local Authorities to be bolder in their ambitions, like Oldham Council for example, who recently announced[12] that they would deliver 500 new social homes over the next five years at a roundtable with key partners.

Access to housing is unequal across Greater Manchester

5.13 There are variations on the housing registers held by each Local Authority across GM due to demand, localised policies on access to the register and the way that each Local Authority records its data. For example, some LAs allow all residents to go onto the register, others only allow those who are in the reasonable preference category. Therefore, it is somewhat unhelpful to compare data at a GM level between local authorities as there is no standardisation. Where the data is most useful is locally as it can evidence where needs are greater and in relation to which demographic groups.

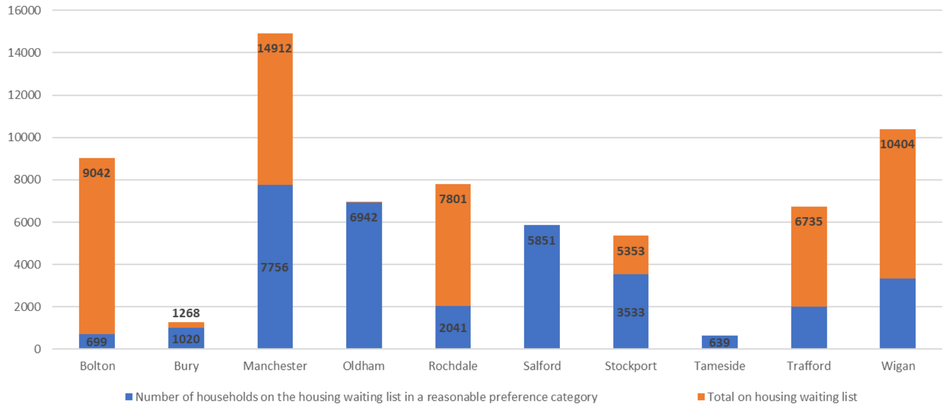
[12] Tackling the housing crisis: 500 new social homes coming to Oldham announced at Oldham Housing Roundtable event | Oldham Council

5.14 At present there are ten housing allocation policies (and specific policies for specific demographic groups) across Greater Manchester. A shared allocations framework may be helpful, although local application of their housing allocation policies is necessary to support local arrangements.

5.15 In 2018, the GMCA undertook some desktop research into housing allocation policies, including interviews with housing providers and local authorities which clarified nuances between areas. As a result, the GM steering group began to look closer at those pressures in the system which were consistent across LAs, recognising that the numbers alone do not provide the full picture regarding how the policies are applied locally.

5.16 Variation is also evident in relation to the required property size as in some Local Authorities there is a larger demand for 4–5-bedroom properties, whereas in others there is a larger demand for 1-bedroom properties.

Fig 8 – The split of reasonable preference category and non-reasonable preference category households on housing registers by Local Authority



5.17 There is currently no data available on a GM level regarding the length of waiting time on a housing register. A combination of waiting list demand and length of waiting time would be useful in evidencing the true housing needs across GM.

Welfare of tenants reducing – requiring supported living and/or assistance

5.18 There are many determinants that impact the welfare of tenants, including general health conditions, long term health conditions, alcohol & substance abuse, mental health and learning disabilities.

5.19 In recognition of this, housing is beginning to be considered in a health context and stronger links are being made between housing providers and the health system as evidenced by the recent tri-partite agreement[13].

5.20 Supported housing is a broad description of accommodation where people can receive services such as personal care, supervision, support, and advice to live there independently. Examples of supporting housing include hostels, sheltered housing, extra care, and supported living schemes. Currently there are over 32,600 supported housing units across 3,500 schemes in Greater Manchester.

5.21 Based on current understanding this is the required level of delivery of supported and specialist homes to meet needs in 2031.

SHOP@ Predictive Modelling Sheltered / Retirement Housing								
Area	Current provision	2015	2016	2020	2025	2030	2035	Shortfall 2035
Greater Manchester	31,397	24,013	24,288	26,925	32,200	35,375	39,200	7,803
Bolton	5,961	2,575	2,613	2,975	3,638	4,013	4,425	-1,536
Bury	1,425	1,813	1,850	2,088	2,550	2,775	3,063	1,638
Manchester	5,140	2,875	2,875	2,988	3,363	3,750	4,238	-903
Oldham	2,943	2,000	2,038	2,263	2,713	2,988	3,288	345
Rochdale	3,530	1,888	1,913	2,113	2,550	2,850	3,163	-368
Salford	2,595	2,025	2,038	2,175	2,538	2,738	3,050	455
Stockport	3,163	3,338	3,375	3,713	4,400	4,800	5,275	2,112
Tameside	1,939	2,075	2,113	2,400	2,950	3,250	3,650	1,711
Trafford	2,657	2,400	2,400	2,575	3,000	3,300	3,700	1,043
Wigan	2,044	3,025	3,075	3,638	4,500	4,913	5,350	3,306

[13] https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/better-homes-better-neighbourhoods-better-health/

Older People

- Requirement for a total of additional 8,500 Housing with Care units split between 4,800 social/affordable units and 3,700 leasehold units.
- Requirement for 7,800 Retirement Housing leasehold units. Overall, 1,172 less units needed for rent, therefore a total of 9,000 units for lease.

SHOP@ Predictive Modelling Housing with Care Need								
Area	Current provision	2015	2016	2020	2025	2030	2035	Shortfall 2035
Greater Manchester	2,415	6,717	6,808	7,532	9,013	9,912	10,976	8,561
Bolton	324	721	732	833	1,019	1,124	1,239	915
Bury	202	508	518	585	714	777	858	656
Manchester	537	805	805	837	942	1,050	1,187	650
Oldham	106	560	571	634	760	837	921	815
Rochdale	43	529	536	592	714	798	886	843
Salford	311	567	571	609	711	767	854	543
Stockport	386	935	945	1,040	1,232	1,344	1,477	1,091
Tameside	156	581	592	672	826	910	1,022	866
Trafford	200	672	672	721	840	924	1,036	836
Wigan	150	847	861	1,019	1,260	1,376	1,498	1,348

Learning Disability and Autism

- Requirement for a net additional 1,296 units of supported accommodation for people with a Learning Disability.
- 100 new tenancies for people being discharged from hospital settings with complex Learning Disabilities or Autism.

Mental Health Needs

- Requirement for a net additional 2,535 units of supported accommodation for people with a mental health need.

Physical Disabilities

- Approximately 8,900 wheelchair user households with unmet needs, of which approximately 2,300 will need fully wheelchair adapted properties.

5.22 50-70% of all new social housing tenancies require support, for a range of complex issues including those relating to mental health and drug and alcohol misuse. Many housing providers are required to employ support workers to address the rise in people experiencing such issues, and the increasingly common shortfalls in support provision from the broader public sector.

5.23 Developing future schemes which include supported housing should be considered as business as usual, co-produced with people with lived experience to ensure they are built to enable the potential for greater independence.

5.24 Local Authorities have a duty regarding sufficiency of care in a person's home as long as possible, resulting in a need for flexible levels of support. One of the value-for-money models is the use of care on site i.e. warden in supported housing provision, where the care can be taken directly to where it is needed.

5.25 The cost of housing people with mental health needs or learning difficulties indefinitely in hospital provision is significantly high, therefore NHS GM are working with partners on a programme that increases the opportunity for independent living. Adaptability and the ability to future proof the current housing stock is key so that Greater Manchester can be ready for changing populations and their changing needs. Members of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee further echoed this requirement, referencing a range of property type in each neighbourhood to enable people to down-size or up-size their homes whist remaining within their communities. Ensuring that people are in the most appropriate setting for their needs is crucial.

5.26 These supported living schemes are funded through a variety of models, including government subsidy, Homes England funding and support from the welfare system. Most registered providers prefer to offer a social rent model with a flexible service charge rate as this can fluctuate. The care package can be provided by the registered provider or Local Authority and are either funded via their local authority or individually. Although the funding landscape can appear complicated, it is significantly more affordable than acute care.

5.27 This complex revenue picture can sometimes be seen as more challenging by Housing Providers and developers in comparison to standard properties. However, there have been some excellent recent case studies that should be shared more widely in order to mitigate some of the apprehension about the risks of building supported housing within schemes.

5.28 The Depot in Moss Side, Manchester, is a strong example of the benefits of maximising services in one place. Across the 204 apartments within this mixed tenure site, there is a neighbourhood discharge unit, HAPPI scheme (housing our ageing population panel for innovation) and extra care provision.

5.29 Dalbeattie Court and Constable Street are also examples of schemes which have been designed right for future need that provide 30 1 bed apartments and 5 2 bed bungalows for people with learning disabilities. Their flexibility of design has allowed Dalbeattie Court to be used for some time as a hospital discharge facility.

Risk of homelessness and rough sleeping remains as treating symptoms rather than cause

5.30 At the extremes, the housing crisis manifests in homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) introduces a range of prevention duties for Local Authorities alongside the original rehousing duty under the Housing Act 1996 –

- A duty to **prevent** homelessness; taking "reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available" under section 4. This requires a personalised housing plan to be put in place for people at risk, with the Local Authority being under an obligation to help for 56 days unless the applicant deliberately and unreasonably refuses to cooperate.
- A duty to provide **relief**: taking "reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure that suitable accommodation that becomes available". Where people are homeless, there is a duty to provide a personalised plan based on priority need but requiring that action still be taken in every case.

5.31 Greater Manchester saw 5,423 households assessed as owed either a Prevention or Relief homelessness duty between October – December 2022. 55% of households who were owed a duty were based in just 3 local authorities, Manchester (29%), Salford (14%) and Wigan (12%).

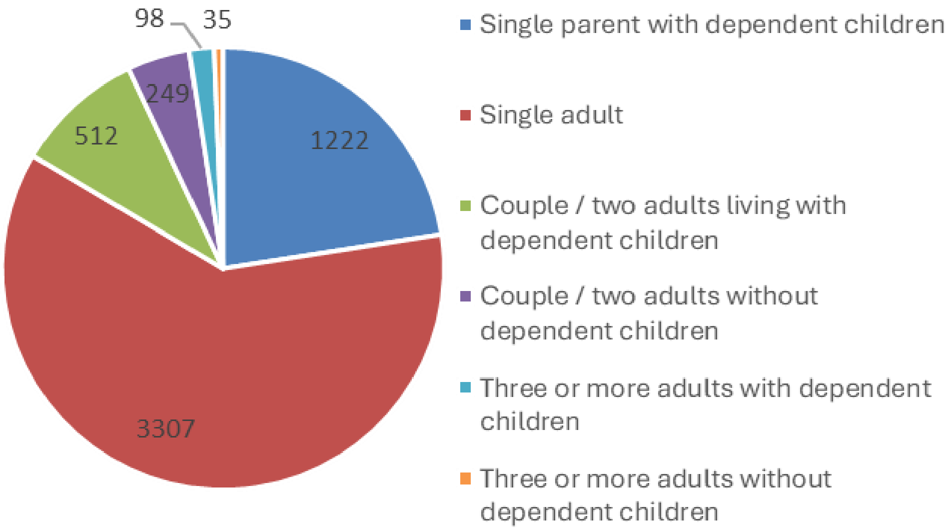
5.32 Of those that were owed a duty 1,639 were homeless or threatened with homelessness due to ‘Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate’, 1,196 were homeless or threatened with homelessness due to the ‘End of an assured shorthold tenancy’, and 713 were homeless or threatened with homelessness due to ‘Domestic Abuse’.

5.33 As of the most recently available published data (Jan-March 2023), across GM the further impact of the winter period was evident with 2,617 prevention duties being owed: the highest level on record, and 26% higher than the most recent equivalent pre-pandemic period.

5.34 Furthermore, 3,603 relief duties were owed, the highest level on record, and 27% higher than the most recent equivalent pre-pandemic period.

5.35 However, a large amount of homelessness is less visible and often not recorded. It can take the form of people taking shelter in the homes of friends and family or living for extended periods of time in temporary accommodation.

Fig 9 – Total number of households in temporary accommodation (December 2022)



5.36 On the 31st of December 2022, there were 5,134 households in temporary accommodation across Greater Manchester. The total number of children accommodated in temporary accommodation was 6,174, from 2,977 households.

5.37 Of those accommodated in temporary accommodation, 774 households were in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, these households included 205 children.

5.38 Of those in temporary accommodation 1,331 households were accommodated in temporary accommodation outside of the Local Authority district in which they made their homelessness application, with Manchester placing the majority (87%) of these.

5.39 Although an expensive solution, the increased and overuse of temporary housing was evident due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and other external factors that are contributing to the rising risk of homelessness. Due to national policies, the need to prepare for the cohort widening is evident if the causes cannot be addressed quickly enough.

Skills mix and expertise within the future workforce

5.40 There are significant capacity issues within Local Authorities and Housing Providers to deliver new housing due to reduced workforce and lack of future skills investment. This is especially evident when seeking out the relevant skills sets for building net zero homes as these new methods are yet to be considered as standard. Often developers are learning these skills as they deliver the sites and then once the scheme comes to an end they move back to standard construction methods, potentially losing the skill set that they have just acquired. Consideration should also be given as to how these skills can be passed on to other contractors in order to see modern methods of construction being used as standard.

5.41 The latest GM devolution trailblazer deal recognises this wider sector skills gap and looks to build on the programmes currently being delivered by local education providers through the 'Skills Bootcamp – Green Technology' programme to enable the designing new accreditations, qualifications, and courses to meet green skills needs. Development of new green tech areas like Electric Vehicles, Low Carbon Heating, still outpace the skills system. Employer involvement in the process is critical – requirements need turning these into industry accepted accreditations, embedding within qualifications, then developed/delivered as courses. From 2024-25, in recognition of their trailblazer status, the government commits to then further increasing this flexibility for GMCA to spend up to 100% of the available budget to develop bootcamps that meet local labour market and skills needs in any sector.

5.42 This is also evident in the shortage of debt and welfare advisory provision across Greater Manchester. Although these services are predominately provided through Local Authorities, the GMCA have a supportive role to play to especially address any disparities. There has been some work undertaken with the GM Welfare Rights Advisors Group (made up of Welfare Rights Leads from LAs and facilitated by the GM Law Centre) to give visibility to the capacity and capability challenges across the sector which is planned to be shared with GM political leaders in due course.

Changes to national policies

Rental rules

5.43 The Tenancy reform: Renters (Reform) Bill aims to bring significant changes to rental rules, enhancing security for both tenants and landlords. It has not yet been approved by Parliament; however, its proposals include the removal of section 21, which allows landlords to evict tenants without a specific reason. By doing so, it would provide tenants with greater security, enabling them to put down roots in their community. Landlords would still have the confidence to regain their property when necessary, using other elements of the Bill.

Planning guidance

5.44 The housing schemes currently on site have had their planning approved several years ago and are therefore more unlikely to include any affordable homes. Any change to national planning guidance will only be seen after a number of years once the schemes that are subsequently approved are being delivered.

5.45 Therefore, it is important to recognise that the any planning reform will take time to deliver but more importantly that whatever is determined at a national level must work for Greater Manchester. As proposals emerge it is vital that GM lobby for simplicity as there are already numerous demands on the planning system and devolved flexibility to allow GM to determine what should be the priority for the conurbation.

5.46 The recently agreed trailblazer devolution deal for GM should further increase the opportunities for DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up, Homes & Communities) to listen to the needs of the conurbation when reviewing national planning guidance. It would also be useful for key planning influencers to meet with representatives from each of the 10 GM Local Authorities, Homes England, and the Housing Associations to begin to demystify the planning barriers to viable schemes.

Section 106 monies

5.47 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill looks to introduce a new Infrastructure Levy (IL) to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy, however rates will be based on the gross development value of a property at the point of sale. Section 106 agreements would remain but only to support the delivery of "the largest sites". The amount of IL payable would be determined by Local Authorities.

5.48 There have been several pilots across the UK but clarity as to its introduction is still awaited. This funding allocation alone would not be sufficient to meet the gap in resource but would be able to contribute to the whole housing investment model. There has also been some risk highlighted by the National Housing Federation in that "in its current form, the new Infrastructure Levy could lead to the diversion of developer contributions away from affordable and social housing and towards other, unspecified forms of expenditure entirely unconnected to development."[14] It's important that there is a level of standardisation as to how section 106 monies are and can be used.

5.49 The GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee when reviewing this report expressed their concern that some developers are avoiding their responsibility to provide funding for public improvements under Section 106 due to current loopholes within viability assessments. It was reported that often this investment is put into the public realm, only benefiting the value of the properties, rather than the wider community.

[14] National Housing Federation - Joint letter to the Secretary of State on the proposed Infrastructure Levy

4. Opportunities

GM Devolution trailblazer

5.1 The latest GM Devolution Trailblazer increases Greater Manchester's ability to influence future Affordable Homes Programmes (AHP), through deeper Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England. Sharing local data and local strategic plans will be key when bringing forward potential schemes. Through a shared GM Affordable Housing Action Plan capturing the day-to-day joint work to be done, the partnership also ensures that Homes England are aware of the local landscapes and priorities.

5.2 The AHP provides grant to support the cost of building housing for rent or sale at sub-market rates – a key element of the Government's plan to end the housing crisis, tackle homelessness, and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.

5.3 The fund is part of a range of tools and funding streams that Homes England has at its disposal to support the delivery of housing of all types and tenures recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach is not the most effective.

5.4 This funding and support is available for all organisations with an interest in developing affordable housing – including housing associations, local authorities, developers, institutional investors, for-profit registered providers, community-led organisations, and others.

5.5 The trailblazer provides an opportunity to be clear ahead of the next Affordable Homes Programme in 2026 to determine what GM needs to maximise the potential impact of the programme through the alignment of strategic priorities, in that Greater Manchester can direct the building of what they want/need rather than what national targets dictate, whilst aligning these developments with other pots/interventions (e.g. transport investment, energy and heat infrastructure, brownfield funding etc). Furthermore, the trailblazer will make it easier for GM to commission supported housing in the knowledge that the AHP capital contribution has been secured.

5.6 It also provides the opportunity for Greater Manchester to set the standards for the next programme and approve funding allocations, this is in addition to its current role in identifying potential sites and challenging decisions of Homes England within the parameters of the framework.

5.7 Furthermore, the role of Homes England as an enabler should be made clear through the development of the GM Housing Delivery Plan. The provision of additional funding for identifying potential barriers and working with the GMCA and partner organisations to address them is one way that Homes England can fulfil this role.

GM Housing Delivery Plan

5.8 The creation of the GM Housing Delivery Plan should enable a clear strategic direction, with all key stakeholders working towards a single shared vision. It should not lonelily build upon this review and evidence the scale of the challenge but also highlight the successful schemes across GM.

5.9 The Plan should make it clear how the GM system can respond more effectively to housing needs, especially regarding the acute outcomes such as homelessness, significant waiting lists and the lack of specialist housing. It should identify the gap between what is currently being delivered and what is further required to meet the forecasted demand.

5.10 The GM Housing Delivery Plan must be ambitious and noticeably clear on the scale of the challenge and must provide new solutions in conjunction with established solutions to enable housing providers to meet the growing demand.

5.11 Across all GM and national schemes, engagement with private landlords remains most difficult. One example is their lack of engagement with the GM

Ethical Lettings Agency, which looks to provide private housing stock at an affordable rate, without unaffordable deposits and other barriers to access. The Housing Delivery Plan should look to scale this up directly with developers and liaise with Local Authorities regarding the potential use of homelessness prevention funds etc to support this initiative.

"In one sentence, the GM Housing Delivery Plan should upscale and improve the affordable housing offer in Greater Manchester to ensure the offer meets the housing need."

GM Housing Provider Partnership

5.12 There are 25 housing providers across GM who are specifically looking for ways to improve affordable and social housing provision through the GM Housing Provider Group.

5.13 In 2022/23 there were almost 2000 completions, in excess of £400m invested in new properties, 1911 new builds commenced and a further 941 homes granted planning consent.

5.14 Of those completions, 35% were properties for affordable rent, and 12% were social rentals. 97.5% (1,859 properties) were completed with the support of the grants and 2.5% were completed with the support of Section 106 agreements.

5.15 Increasing the partnership to all the registered providers in Greater Manchester would strengthen its voice and ability to deliver against GM targets. Stronger collaborative relationships between Local Authorities, the GMCA and all registered providers would see more homes delivered.

Strategic Place Partnership

5.16 The Strategic Place Partnership was established to enable greater collaboration and is viewed as a pilot for placed-based working, focusing on unlocking brownfield land to deliver affordable housing and town centre regeneration across the city region. Its key aims are -

1. Place based engagement and resource alignment around key priorities with key partners, both local and national
2. Collective view of housing delivery opportunities across GM and what is required to unlock them
3. Accelerated New Homes and Affordable Homes Delivery - including homes for affordable and social rent, older persons, and specialist housing - to support GM housing aims and needs targets

5.17 This Partnership brings together GMCA and Homes England to enable potential sites to be taken forward for development, taking a place-based approach to resource alignment around key priorities with key partners, both local and national.

5.18 This should be the place where challenge is put to partners to find ways to deliver, whether that be through grant application or effective resource management on a wider partnership scale. It should be a place that encourages some risk taking and courageous leadership through taking a collective view of housing delivery opportunities across GM and what is required to unlock them.

5.19 Land that is being used for 225 housing units on Royal Road, Castleton in Rochdale was not handed to the Local Authority, instead the Rail Corridor Partnership that includes Transport for Greater Manchester, Northern, Network Rail, and Homes England (whose focus is to unlock sites around the key rail network connection points) were able to bring together a regeneration plan that encouraged land owners to bring sites forward, sites that were never intentionally earmarked for housing, further illustrating the need for strong and effective working relationships with landowners to enable sites to be de-risked and opportunities to be illustrated.

5.20 The GM Brownfield Fund has unlocked this previously (Housing Investment Fund bid) unsuccessful site to enable 110 affordable properties to be created. This 3-year funding stream has the flexibility to meet the challenge of providing affordable and/or sustainable homes whilst creating the assurances that encourage a little speculation in order to work up a deliverable proposition.

5.21 There is potential to do more. Conversations are needed across GM amongst housing providers, developers, and public sector partners to identify housing growth capacity and what needs to be addressed to address the short, medium and long term needs. Pooling resources across GM could provide better access to expertise, shared practice, and the ability to prioritise sites more strategically. These conversations should be honest and realistic about what can be delivered within the available resources and where further opportunities should be pursued.

GM Healthy Homes

5.22 Through a strong partnership between the GMCA, Homes England and Registered Providers, the supply of new supported housing is being developed. Barriers to their delivery can sometimes be caused by funding cycles, the requirement for complex agreements and the elements of bespoke design needed for these homes.

5.23 However, the Healthy Homes programme aims to address these by working closely as a group of stakeholders to increase communication, standardise management agreements and fast track decision making to maintain the required level of momentum for each scheme. The programme is also looking to normalise independent living within larger housing schemes. A pipeline of projects are being developed in order to meet the growing need of GM’s population.

5.24 Schemes such as Greenhaus, Chapel Street, Salford Central are a strong example of where a long-term partnership between public and private sector organisations can enable the delivery of affordable homes. However, this comes through long standing relationships with shared ambition and an overall focus on the regeneration of an area. Working in partnership allows value to be captured from other areas within the boundaries of the project that can be re-invested into other schemes.

5.25 It is important to recognise that Greenhaus is just one scheme within a significant regeneration project for this area, however it is able to deliver 96 homes, 72 which are rent to buy, 11 social rent and 13 affordable rent. This housing development goes further in providing net zero Passivhaus properties which are net zero in operation due to a building approach focussed on reducing operational energy and improving occupants' health and wellbeing.

5.26 Initial building costs for Passivhaus properties are circa 15-20% more expensive to build, however the overall cost of energy, upgrading systems and removing the need to retrofit could see them being equal in costs to a standard build over their lifetime. As more contractors move into this market and supply chains improve, this cost difference will also reduce. However, as it stands, there is a further significant cost when building net zero properties for affordable rents as it takes longer to recover the initial investment. In recognition of this, Homes England have provided additional grants to address the clear viability gaps and other market intelligence is being gathered by the financial sector to assess the ability to lend against these types of property.

5.27 Quantifying the wider benefits such as health, wealth and wellbeing could enable the consideration of such schemes to be more prevalent as there are clearly additional savings to the public sector through their design concept.

This would also be useful when informing the public of the benefits to choosing such properties, as a circa 50% saving on energy bills would be attractive to all potential occupants. It would be helpful for GM to do further cost benefit analysis to enable the lifecycle costs of both net zero and conventional houses to be compared.

Places for Everyone

5.28 Places for Everyone (PfE) is a long-term strategic plan of nine GM districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth to support delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

5.29 Its other ambitions are –

- To set a trajectory toward becoming a net zero city region by 2038
- To provide a framework to manage growth in a sustainable and inclusive way, avoid un-planned development and development by appeal
- Maximise the use of sustainable urban/brownfield land and limit the need for the Green Belt to accommodate the development needs of the nine GM local authorities
- To align the delivery of development with infrastructure proposals
- To meet the requirement for local authorities to have a local plan in place by December 2023

5.30 The PfE framework should ensure that all new builds provide social and affordable rent as part of their wider offer, alongside supported accommodation as standard.

Income maximisation

5.31 In GM there is an estimated £70m unclaimed pension credit. Addressing this, alongside the wider issue of income maximisation, would ensure that residents have access to the finances that they are entitled to to support their housing and living costs. The recent GM pension top up campaign saw £3M+ attendance allowance and housing benefit being accurately awarded in phase one.

5.32 A holistic approach to targeting people who are eligible for benefits would see significant dividends. This should be the role of all frontline services, whether through the banking sector or citizen advice – signposting should be normal practice.

5.33 It should also be a standard check for any resident who is struggling to pay their rent that the Local Authority or Housing Provider undertakes a benefits check. However, with variation across GM, in some areas there are not enough people to provide the advice needed, therefore national investment is required.

5.34 Discretionary housing payments have been cut in recent years, boosting this provision would also significantly help people stay in their homes and reduce the risk of homelessness.

Voluntary sector engagement

5.35 The voluntary sector should be given the required number of seats at the most appropriate partnerships, recognising that they are often having to fill in the gaps where funding shortfalls prevent housing providers and Local Authorities from widening their services.

5.36 They can also play a key role in representing residents' voice on the development of new schemes and services due to their levels of engagement with communities.

5.37 The preventative approach to a growing demand in supported living can be addressed through relationship building, and developing an understanding of what types of support a person requires. At present this role is predominantly undertaken by housing providers through their tenant ready assessments and other engagement, however this is perhaps another area where the voluntary sector could provide further resources, if they themselves are provided with the required resources.

5. Recommendations

1. Bold, national action for the creation of more affordable homes with greater flexibility as a region to ensure that the housing market can line up with affordability of residents in GM. Recognising that the formula for affordable living is multi-faceted and should include rent, energy, and essential food costs.

- GMCA to influence the development of the next Affordable Homes Programme through strengthened partnership arrangements within the latest devolution deal to ensure it is flexible enough to meet the needs of our residents.
- Homes England to use their role as an enabler to provide additional funding to complex but viable schemes.
- GMCA to continue to support Local Authorities to seek out potential schemes through innovative approaches and bold actions.

2. Move towards supporting people out of debt at every point of contact, ensuring a minimum standard of welfare advisors to support residents to access unclaimed welfare support and begin their tenancies with no deficit.

- Government to recognise the impact of debt on access to housing and successful tenancies and ensure that there is a minimum level of welfare support provided to all residents and the appropriate training to ensure this resource is sustainable.
- Local Authorities and Housing Providers to ensure tenants have full access to welfare and other hardship funds through every interaction.

3. A GM Housing Strategy that is ambitious enough to deliver what is needed to meet the housing needs of residents in Greater Manchester, including the ambition for all new homes to be zero carbon, enabled by long term partnerships that have the ability to deliver more collaboratively.

- All Housing Providers to engage with the Housing Provider Partnership and Strategic Place Partnership so that they can challenge one another to unlock more potential sites through a strong partnership approach.
- GMCA to co-design the next GM Housing Strategy with other key stakeholders that builds on what is already being done, but also confidently pushes the boundaries as to what can potentially be done, setting the standard as zero carbon.

4. Clear narrative about what we are trying to achieve collectively, whilst recognising the individual needs of each GM Local Authority, potentially through a GM shared housing allocations framework that sets a standard but allows for local interpretation that supports Local Authorities to manage their available housing stock.

- GM Local Authorities alongside the GM Housing Providers Group to consider the development of a shared housing allocations framework, recognising the need for local interpretation but valuing the shared standard.

5. Flexibility of funding and more ability to joint commission across partner agencies to ensure that supported housing is adaptable and built for future needs.

- Homes England and commissioners in localities to ensure that funding streams are flexible enough to allow for joint commissioning, especially of supported and specialist housing.
- Local Authority Planning Teams to consider how new developments can most effectively be built for future population changes.

6. Levers of Places for Everyone should ensure that social and affordable rented homes are included in every new development.

- Local Authorities to follow the Places for Everyone lead and ensure that their Local Plans specify the percentage of social and affordable rented homes required within each new development.

7. **Effective promotion of the support available to local residents to assist with energy bills, insulation, food provision etc in recognition of the need to see housing as just one element of affordable living.**

- GMCA to ensure that advice on cost-of-living support (e.g. food and fuel bill support) provided through registered providers is also available via private landlords.
- Local Authorities to ensure that this advice is provided to residents at all points of contact i.e. benefit support, council tax enquiries etc.

8. **Creation of a national housing minimum standard for all private rental properties in order to remove any detrimental health outcomes of poor living conditions, driven by the recognised benefits of being an accredited member of the Good Landlord Charter.**

- GMCA to ensure that being an accredited member of the Good Landlord Charter is universally recognised, with its unique benefits clearly identified.
- Government to use the learning from Greater Manchester's Good Landlord Charter as a starting point for ensuring a minimum standard for private rented properties.

9. **An increase in revenue funding in line with the increasing support needs of residents to reduce demand on the wider care system, but allocated to organisations who are meeting people where they are.**

- Government to recognise the growth in additional support required by tenants that is often best met through the voluntary sector or housing providers, and that this needs to be effectively resourced to minimise the cost to acute services.

10. **An annual GM Strategic Place Partnership event with key planning**

influencers (elected members and officers) to begin to break down any planning barriers to viable schemes and to hold further conversations regarding capacity and required expertise.

- As a first step, GMCA to organise an event to discuss the findings of this review and actions which can be taken to remove barriers for the delivery of viable schemes.

6. Access to Information

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