

## **GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: 11 December 2024

Subject: GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Report on Affordable Living update report

Report of: Paul Dennett, GMCA Portfolio Lead for Housing, Salford City Mayor

---

### **Purpose of Report**

To report on the progress being made in delivering the recommendations from the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Report on Affordable Living which was presented at the 13 July 2024 meeting.

### **Recommendations**

Members are requested to:

1. Note and comment on the content of the attached report.

### **Contact Officers**

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy, [steve.fyfe@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:steve.fyfe@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At the 13 July 2024 GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members received a Task and Finish Report on Affordable Living which provided an investigation into how the affordable homes offer could better meet the needs of people in Greater Manchester. The report set out ten key recommendations for action to increase affordability, including affordable housing, across Greater Manchester.
- 1.2 The recommendations asked for:
- (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 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 rented 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.

1.3 Members endorsed the recommendations and recognised areas where activity should be led by GMCA. Since July 2024, progress has been made across the key activity led by GMCA, as noted in Table 1. Specifically, a GM Integrated Settlement was confirmed at the Autumn Spending Review, there has been a strengthening of the relationship with Homes England through a new commissioning model and a 10 Year Plan for Growth and Prevention is being prepared providing a place-based approach to deliver new homes, jobs and infrastructure, that aligns national and local investment. Plans are also in place to develop a co-produced GM Housing Strategy, building on the Housing First philosophy and the ambition is for everyone in GM to live in a home they can afford that is safe, secure, healthy and environmentally sustainable - a healthy home for all by 2038.

1.4 GMCA will be participating in the Government's consultation on the future of social rent policy, with officers working on our submission to the consultation, an issue which has implications for a number of the recommendations from the task & finish group. Members will also wish to note that officers have made a submission to the Government's consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and are awaiting the Government's

response to this. Inevitably this will also have implications for areas such as land value capture, our ability when development is brought forward to deliver policy requirements set out in Places for Everyone and in Local Plans, including truly affordable net zero housing. The Committee will also be aware that, following an uplift in the previous financial year, the recent Government's budget announcements have seen a further freeze in the Local Housing Allowance.

- 1.5 Table 1 below focuses on recommendations most relevant to the GMCA, but we do need to think and act systemically, with the GMCA always considering how it can add value, even where it is not directly responsible. For example, can we find innovative solutions to the challenges in delivering supported housing, especially in bringing together capital investment with a longer-term revenue commitment to provide the right support packages for residents? This connected approach lies at the heart of the Housing First philosophy which the Committee recently discussed in detail with the GM Mayor.

**Table 1: Progress on the GMCA-led recommendations from the Affordable Living Task and Finish Group**

No.	Recommendation	GMCA-led action areas	Progress
1	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• GMCA to continue to support Local Authorities to seek out potential schemes through innovative approaches and bold actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of relationship with Homes England, through a new commissioning model.</li> <li>• Includes agreement of a joint Affordable Housing Working Group Action Plan.</li> <li>• Commitment to a GM Integrated Settlement at the Autumn Spending Review.</li> <li>• Ongoing Government engagement as part of the Spring Spending Review process.</li> <li>• 10 Year Plan for Growth and Prevention being prepared providing a place-based approach to deliver new homes, jobs and infrastructure, that aligns national and local investment.</li> </ul>
2	<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support Local Authorities and Housing Providers to ensure tenants have full access to welfare and other hardship funds through every interaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing collaboration with Local Authorities and Greater Manchester Housing Providers and other partners through the GM Live Well Financial Resilience Group.</li> </ul>
3	<p>A GM Housing Strategy that is ambitious enough to deliver what is needed to meet the housing needs of residents in Greater Manchester,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMCA to co-design the next GM Housing Strategy with other key stakeholders that builds on what is already being done, but also</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans in place to develop a co-produced GM Housing Strategy in the new year, building on the Housing First philosophy and the</li> </ul>

No.	Recommendation	GMCA-led action areas	Progress
	including the ambition for all new homes to be zero carbon, enabled by long term partnerships that have the ability to deliver more collaboratively.	confidently pushes the boundaries as to what can potentially be done, setting the standard as zero carbon.	ambition is for everyone in GM to have a healthy home for all by 2038
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Package of support for private landlords being incorporated into the Good Landlord Charter offer.</li> </ul>
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMCA to ensure that being an accredited member of the Good Landlord Charter is universally recognised, with its unique benefits clearly identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery partner has been procured for the Good Landlord Charter.</li> </ul>
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing Roundtable session with Registered Providers to understand appetite, capacity and barriers to delivery.</li> <li>• GM Strategic Place Partnership to be integrated into the emerging governance for the Housing First Unit to ensure the alignment of priorities and decision-making processes.</li> </ul>