

**GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
HELD ON 29TH JULY 2020, AT 18:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Councillor John Walsh (Chair)	Bolton
Councillor Martin Hayes	Bury
Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin	Manchester
Councillor Linda Robinson	Rochdale
Councillor Mike Glover	Tameside
Councillor Liam Billington	Tameside
Councillor Janet Mobbs	Stockport
Councillor Charles Gibson	Stockport
Councillor Kevin Procter	Trafford
Councillor Fred Walker	Wigan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Julie Connor	GMCA
Matt Berry	GMCA
Joanne Heron	GMCA
Anne Morgan	GMCA
Chris Collar	GMCA
Simon Warburton	TfGM
Megan Black	TfGM
Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council
Councillor Andrew Western	Trafford Council

HPE 210/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Amy Whyte, Trafford

HPE 211/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Members were notified that there had been a change in the running order of the agenda with items 5 and 6 switching places.

RESOLVED/-

That the item be noted.

HPE 212/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED/-

No declarations were received.

HPE 213/20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 9 JULY 2020

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

HPE 214/20 GM CLEAN AIR PLAN: CONSULTATION

Cllr Andrew Western, Portfolio Lead for Green City-Region and Leader of Trafford Council introduced a report providing Members with an update on the GM Clean Air Plan Consultation.

The commitments mandated by Government of the reduction of nitrogen dioxide at the roadside by 2024 were reiterated to Members. It was noted that the ministerial direction to introduce a Clean Air zone by 2021 had been delayed due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. This deadline had been pushed back to Spring 2022 to enable effective consultation. The paper circulated aimed to update Members and also sought approval on the consultation policy for residents and businesses. This Policy was highlighted as being an 8 week consultation commencing in October 2020, with further detail of the process to be finalised. It was proposed that an updated report be brought back to this Scrutiny Committee in September. The challenge of delivering consultation during potential Covid impacts was highlighted. It was stated that the policy principles for consultation such as day charge, discounts exemptions, available financial support, and overall financial package to deliver the programme had been highlighted. Members heard that the paper also alluded to the Clean Air Conversation which took place last year and had received feedback from 3300 residents.

The proposal for minimum licensing standards for taxis in Greater Manchester was highlighted as being due to go before the Leaders meeting on Friday. It was acknowledged that although this issue was outside of Councillor Western's portfolio, it had made sense for this to be discussed in tandem with the wider Clean Air Transport Agenda.

The specific revisions to charges, discounts and exemptions from the outline business case which had been submitted to Government last year were highlighted to Members. The financial ask of Government was noted as being critical, which would include the comprehensive package of support to those most affected by the changes. It was acknowledged that the full funding had not yet been agreed by Government, but an initial trench funding of £41 million had been secured. It was highlighted that this would be used for private hire vehicles, bus retrofit, HGVs coaches and minibuses. Members heard that there had also been written assurance from Rebecca Powe MP, with further funding forthcoming for Hackneys and Light goods vehicles. It was highlighted that the overarching aim was to achieve widespread transition to cleaner vehicles to address the air quality issues rather than have residents / businesses pay the charges.

Following Member questions, it was acknowledged that this work sat alongside much broader carbon reduction work with examples given of the Low Carbon Investment Fund for GM, and the Retrofit agenda for public / domestic estates which were noted as a significant challenge. It was highlighted that GM had been looking to make an ambitious submission into the spending round nationally to access funding coming forward as part of economic recovery, and was much more

than about reducing levels of nitrous dioxide. The importance of having a broader suite of other wider climate emergency associated work was noted, with limitations of funding to reduce nitrous dioxide beyond the mandated rates. Members were informed that it was hoped that there would not be further delay to the implementation of this work due to the ongoing pandemic and that nationally there was impetus to make progress with this agenda.

The connection between poor air quality and the motorway networks across the City Region which was noted as coming under the jurisdiction of Highways England was noted as a challenge. Members heard that GM had previously requested greater devolved responsibilities of strategic road networks, however as yet there had been no movement on this issue.

Members heard that GM had been liaising with the Department for Transport with a request to update the regulatory framework for taxis and private hire services which was noted as being 'out of date'. It was highlighted that whilst changes had been accepted as being required, as yet it had not been possible to make the parliamentary time to review this issue. It was noted that Greater Manchester had highlighted the need for changes to the national regulatory environment to achieve the outcomes of local authorities through minimum licensing standards. Members heard that protecting and enhancing the standards of vehicles operated in GM along with protecting businesses was the key aspirations of this project.

Following Member comments, it was acknowledged that there were links between areas of social deprivation and poor air quality, and protecting the future health and wellbeing of residents was a key aspiration.

In regards to the implications for taxis that are not licenced by GM boroughs, it was clarified that all non-compliant taxis regardless of the origin would be subject to clean air zone regulations. It was reiterated that privately owned and operated vehicles are exempt from charges. It was noted that extensive signage was being considered to notify vehicles travelling in to the conurbation from outside areas that could be affected by the charges.

Members were reassured that packages of support would be thoroughly communicated and well sign-posted to make sure that those that could seek support would be aware. It was also clarified that outstanding evidence relating to Hackney and light goods vehicles had now been submitted to Government, and that this information was now being worked through by the Joint Air Quality Unit. Members heard that Greater Manchester had been able to secure the majority of funding available to support clean air transition such as for bus retrofit, private hire vehicles, HGVs, Coaches and minibuses.

Members discussed the downgrade/ upgrade options for light goods vehicles, and were reassured that as long as either option lead to the increase in compliant vehicles, that this would be beneficial and highlighted the critical need to secure the maximum government funding to offer support for adaptations where required.

The importance of engaging and listening to consultation feedback to highlight any new additional economic impacts due to the coronavirus pandemic was reiterated. For example, feedback from those coming off furlough and the new self-employed. A twin-track approach was suggested with the need to learn from Covid, whilst taking into account the need to deliver these changes as quickly and as effectively as possible.

It was clarified to Members that through-traffic from the Strategic Road Network would be liable for charges. It was acknowledged that a specific issue had been picked up which would present challenges to a location in Tameside supporting the plan, which was currently being worked through with Elected Members and Ministers.

In terms of Uber drivers, Members heard that would all vehicles operating within Greater Manchester would be subject to the minimum licencing standards, and that only those with a Licence issued in Greater Manchester would be eligible for financial support packages.

Members were made aware of a central government database (vehicle checker) which could determine if a vehicle was in scope for a charge. The vehicle checker was noted as being accessible online at: <https://www.gov.uk/check-clean-air-zone-charge>. It was highlighted that this could be used to check vehicles in scope affected by charge such as motorhomes, as well as what the charge would be each day and the financial support available.

RESOLVED/-

- That the progress of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan be noted;
- That the position that the GM local Authorities hold an 8-week public consultation on the GM Clean Air Plan commencing in October 2020 be endorsed by Members
- That the policy for consultation be endorsed by Members.
- That an update on the finalised delivery methodology for consultation be brought back to this Scrutiny meeting in September be agreed by Members

HPE 215/20 GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED TIMELINE

City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio holder for Housing, Homelessness and Infrastructure introduced a report which provided Members with an update on the proposed timeline for the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

It was highlighted that this report would be considered by the AGMA Executive Board on Friday, and that Member comments and input would be welcome to frame the discussion. The context of this plan was framed to Members within the current economic challenges facing the City Region and wider UK. Unemployment and the shrinking of the economy were highlighted as key challenges moving forwards with strategic planning highlighted as being crucial to GM to recover from Covid-19.

Members also heard that there had been several recent Government announcements, namely the National Infrastructure Strategy and the awaited Government White paper on Devolution and Local Recovery. There was also the potential for a new planning Bill with a new green and white paper to enable participation expected.

It was noted that Government had been clear on the requirement for a positive plan for recovery and the future with an impetus on building with planning reforms proposed and the regeneration revival of the GM high-street. Members were updated on government funding granted for schemes, it was stated that the Brownfield land fund of £81 million been granted without needing to commit to a higher local housing need number as part of the housing deal with Government. It was noted that this was positive news, and addressed some concerns around viability and

infrastructure requirements. It was highlighted that 87% of Housing land supply was located within urban areas throughout Greater Manchester.

Members were informed that the GMSF Plan could not adopt a Spatial Development Strategy approach due to government regulations not being in place, and that the GMSF had been developed as a Joint Development Plan document of the 10 local authorities of GM.

The implications of the National Planning Policy Framework were highlighted, particularly the requirement for 5 year land supply. This was felt to be critical to the GM City Region in order to avoid 'planning by appeal' which was stated as being potentially costly and could increase greenbelt build.

Members heard that Government had been clear that Covid-19 was not a reason to delay preparation of statutory plans or the determination of planning application. It was also noted that the GMSF Plan sits alongside other GM strategies and plans and commitments to carbon neutrality such as the 5 year environment plan, and the new GM 1 Year Living with Covid Recovery Plan.

It was highlighted that as the GMSF Plan was a Joint Development Plan, and that an executive decision from all 10 GM Local Authorities would be required to adopt it. It was confirmed that the Plan would be taken to each full Council meeting during September.

Members heard that the revised timetable aimed for an 8- week consultation period commencing in November 2020. The submission of the GMSF Plan to the Secretary of State for examination was scheduled for June 2021, with the adoption of the GMSF Plan aimed for 2022.

Members highlighted concerns around conducting a consultation in November-December, with uncertainty around Covid lock-down restrictions and this period leading to Christmas noted as a potential challenge. Members were reassured that intentions for consultation in a Covid compliant world had been considered. The importance of delivering/implementing the GMSF Plan in a timely manner was stressed as it could address some of the economic impacts from the fallout from the pandemic. Members heard that this consultation would be built on the previous rounds conducted in 2016 and 2019. It was acknowledged there was now some fatigue with the public in terms of consultation of the GMSF Plan, adding to the need to avoid any further delay to implementation and delivery.

It was highlighted to Members that some GM districts did not have a Local Development Plan in place, and that Government had allowed dispensation for those districts to be covered by the GMSF thus avoided these boroughs being highlighted as lacking in making progress in this regard.

Members expressed concern that the relaxation of planning regulations could cut across zero carbon requirements, it was highlighted that this was a challenge. Members heard that a green/white paper to input into this was awaited with collaboration across the 10 GM Local Authorities required on the issue.

Members heard that the rounds of consultation were a statutory requirement to make progress from a current draft form prior to submission to Secretary of State for inspection. The Brownfield preference policy principle within the GMSF for building homes was reiterated to Members, and that the high percentage of housing being built in urban areas demonstrated that this was being implemented. It was highlighted that the housing targets figures had been set via the

Governments methodology for calculating local housing need, and meeting these targets was crucial to avoid planning by appeal.

Following Member comments, the distinction was made between the responsibilities that sat with the local planning authority function at a district level which was noted as being a sovereignty, and that those that sat with the GM Mayor. Members heard that the 10 local authorities were working together to develop the GMSF Plan. It was highlighted that the Government commitment to an additional 300,000 homes in England per year by mid 2020s system in England would require a nationwide shift in the system to deliver this.

Following Member concerns around the economic impact on Covid-19 on highstreets, and town centres it was clarified that increasing urban density of high street was being considered to support a revival of the High street and that there were examples of the Housing Investments Loan Fund being used to that effect as well as the Mayoral Development Corporation.

Members commented that districts had their own bespoke commitments and needs, and the challenges of meeting housing supply figures where brownfield sites were limited was noted. Members were informed that a consultation on the Governments Local Housing Need methodology presented an opportunity for GM to feedback any concerns on this issue. The importance of districts working together to maximise the benefit of the urban core and the urban density in townships to protect the green space within Greater Manchester was stated.

Following Members commenting that increased social housing was required, it was acknowledged that this was an issue with challenges to accessible affordable homes and homelessness. The reduction of social housing through 'Right to Buy' was noted, and that local authorities had struggled to build Council housing without financial support. The challenges to planning and housing policy was noted, with a need to shift focus to delivering homes rather than the return on investment suggested.

RESOLVED/-

That the proposals in the report be noted and supported by this Scrutiny Committee.

HPE 216/20 REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS

Members noted the Register of Key Decisions

RESOLVED/-

- That Members receive clarification on a proposed ban to smoking outside pubs/restaurants which had been noted as potentially being within the recent Key Decisions
- That the register be noted.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 10th September 2020, 18:00. Microsoft Teams Live