



Greater Manchester Green City Region Partnership

Date: 27 January 2023

Subject: GM INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Report of: David Hodcroft, Infrastructure Lead, GMCA

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide an update to the Partnership on:

1. The actions agreed at the Mayoral round table on flood resilience and integrated water management, held on 30 September.
2. The development of an Integrated Water Management Plan for Greater Manchester

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Partnership is asked to:

1. Note the key issues and lessons set out in para 1.6.
2. Note the agreement to create an Integrated Water Management Plan.
3. Note the principles set out in Annex B, agreed with United Utilities and the Environment Agency.
4. Note the content of the plan section 3.
5. Note that GMCA Scrutiny Committee has established a task and finish group to investigate integrated water management and the wider determinants of flood risk in Greater Manchester and will report to Scrutiny in March.

6. Note the intention to review the existing GMCA governance structures to strengthen accountability, scrutiny and provide clarity of responsibility. Three portfolio holders to take joint responsibility (Safe & Strong Communities (Police and Fire), Green City Region and waste, and Place Based Regeneration & Housing, Clean Air.)

CONTACT OFFICER:

[David Hodcroft](#) – GMCA Infrastructure Lead

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In September 2021, the GMCA received two reports setting out:
 - 10 September - Issues and proposed response to flood risk and water management in Greater Manchester (including a debrief from Storm Christophe (February 2021) and
 - 24 September - an agreement to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Environment Agency and United Utilities.
- 1.2 The GMCA agreed to receive an annual report on progress, success, and any issues/barriers to delivery.
- 1.3 As reported in 2021, whilst flood risk management is a cross portfolio issue, cutting across duties, responsibilities, and agencies we do not view and approach the issue through a single co-ordinated and strategic lens.
- 1.4 The GMCA has the power under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to take any steps which it considers is likely to improve the “*economic, social or environmental well-being*” of the GMCA’s area, and the GMCA has relied on this power in the past to lead on projects for the Government and the 10 Greater Manchester Authorities.
- 1.5 The memorandum of understanding between the Combined Authority (including TfGM (Transport for Greater Manchester)), Environment Agency and United Utilities was the start of a process that enables a more integrated approach, providing a platform for place-based interventions, sharing capital investment programmes and leverage of funds for shared benefits. It does not focus on all aspects of the water cycle. Progress was reported to the Greater Manchester Housing Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 March 2022.
- 1.6 Key lessons and issues identified over the past 12 months are:
 - A whole catchment approach is required working across Greater Manchester and with those outside (Greater Manchester is connected by water).

- This is a cross cutting and multidisciplinary issue for the GMCA and the individual Local Authorities and roles, responsibilities and accountability are fragmented.
- There is a role for the GMCA to convene stakeholders, provide strategic direction and to support the individual Local Authorities.
- The GMCA has committed to a vision through the GMS (Greater Manchester Strategy) and issues have been identified in previous reports – this is about doing it better/differently than we are given the complexity of the system.
- There is significant investment involved (~£142M from the EA (Environment Agency) programme (2021/27 requiring £40M match funding and over £1bn from UU (United Utilities) from 2025-30).
- There is a need to focus on how we deliver more efficiently to address issues, while driving economic opportunity as a result of the expenditure.

- 1.7 A round table was held on the 30 September (see Annex A) and it was agreed that the GMCA should produce an Integrated Water Management Plan to draw together a collective vision, objectives, and actions, and identify accountability and resources for delivery.
- 1.8 The plan should inform United Utilities next Price Review (PR24) and look beyond its delivery 2025-30 be based on agreed and shared outcomes. Metrics should be defined with short, medium, and long term timescales.
- 1.9 It was also agreed that the stakeholders at the round table should reconvene by early spring 2023 to evaluate and review progress.

2. INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 Water management covers both water quantity (flood/drought) and water quality. Taking an integrated approach to water management including preparing for and managing flooding is a cross portfolio issue. It cuts across duties, responsibilities, and agencies. It involves planning, research, preparation, engagement, investment, partnerships, responding to events and recovery.
- 2.2 A strategic approach needs to be adopted where risk and water management issues impact across districts within Greater Manchester or from outside of the Greater Manchester boundary. Greater Manchester is connected by water and as a principle rainwater should be managed as a resource to be valued for the benefit of people and the environment and retained within the environment as close as possible to where it lands. Implementation will not happen on its own and requires co-ordination and partnership working across a complex network of infrastructure assets, physical systems and regulatory roles and responsibilities.
- 2.3 The Greater Manchester Strategy provides a clear direction of travel for our city-region and is focused on those areas where we need to work together to achieve our shared vision and where collective action is required: better air quality and natural environment, pride in our places to drive investment into our growth locations and resilient to a changing climate enable resilient, safe, and vibrant communities.
- 2.4 The scale of capital investment from the Environment Agency and United Utilities (~£bn) alone is significant and creates an economic opportunity, requiring a demand for highly skilled jobs in planning, design, engineering and project management, partnerships, and communication.
- 2.5 As an illustration of the scale of the challenge, for United Utilities to meet new targets to reduce storm overflow spillages by 2050 (regulated pollution events from the sewer network) enough storage needs to be found for 4,200,965m³ of surface water. This equates to ~35 Beetham Towers. New development needs to achieve a net gain in water and significant retrofitting of the urban area is required.

- 2.6 There remain challenges to delivering an integrated water management approach due in part to the complexities that exist through legislation, governance, and funding. This is compounded within the GMCA governance structures - there are many groups, workstreams and boards where water management is embedded within their terms of reference. It is not, however, apparent what actual responsibility and accountability these groups take in supporting the delivery of water management and this needs to be addressed.

3. CONTENT OF THE PLAN

- 3.1 Development of the Integrated Water Management Plan commenced last November supported by external technical capacity (co-funded by United Utilities, the Environment Agency and United Utilities). At the round table on the 31 March the project team will present the following:
- A vision for integrated water management in Greater Manchester.
 - An adaptive planning framework to support successful IWM in Greater Manchester - The framework should identify the WHAT and, where possible, provide the HOW or at least provide a steer to what the HOW should look like.
 - A future plan of opportunity / need and potential schemes, including Identification of a small number of quick win schemes to plan and delivery in 2023/2024.
 - Stakeholder and engagement plan
 - A costed roadmap action plan that outlines key stages, milestones, maturity requirements and metrics to challenge and measure performance.
 - The interventions required to deliver the vision and make progress against the baseline of existing issues, risk and opportunities.
 - Principles for good governance and delivery.
- 3.2 The intention is to seek GMCA approval for the Plan between April and May 2023.

3.3 The plan needs to be adaptive to respond to national policy developments, for instance:

- Water and sewerage companies are finalising Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans, published in draft in June 2022, and to be published in full in 2023
- Ofwat finalised its methodology for the next Price Review (PR24), prior to evaluating water company business plans for 2025-30.
- The Environment Agency is updating guidance to upper tier local authorities and supporting capacity building.
- The government published a Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan at the end of August, including a 25-year £56 billion programme of water and sewerage company investment to address untreated sewage discharges into rivers, lakes and seas
- The government has published revisions to the flood risk and coastal change planning guidance in August 2022 (is consulting on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework until March 2023) and is developing indicators to monitor long term changes in flood and coastal resilience, and monitoring the impact of changes to grant funding policy.
- Government to respond to the recommendations from the National Infrastructure Commission into [surface water flooding](#) (November, 2022) within 12 months.
- National Resilience Strategy published (December, 2022) and commits to taking forward the National Infrastructure Commission's recommendations on resilience standards for key infrastructure sectors.
- Government accepted (January, 2023) the review for implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Consultation in 2023 (policy, standards, costs/funding, skills).
- The Environment Agency will produce a new national assessment of flood risk (NaFRA2) that will help places better plan and adapt to future risks from flooding from rivers, the sea and surface water from 2024.

- Reforms of flood risk management strategies by 2026 to inform next flood risk investment programme (from 2027).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are set out on page 1.

Annex A – Invitation list for 30 September Mayoral Round Table on Flood Resilience/Integrated Water Management

- Beverley Hughes – GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority) Deputy Mayor and GMCA Portfolio holder for Safe & Strong Communities (Police and Fire).
- Cllr Martyn Cox – Leader of Bolton Council and GMCA portfolio holder for Green City Region and waste.
- Cllr Andrew Western – Leader of Trafford Council and GMCA Place Based Regeneration & Housing, Clean Air.
- Cllr Eamonn O'Brien, Leader of Bury Council and GMCA portfolio holder for Education, Skills, Work, Apprenticeships and Digital.
- Cllr Allan Quinn – Executive member for Environment, Bury Council and GMCA representative on the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.
- Paul Dennett – Mayor of Salford City Council and GMCA portfolio holder for Homelessness, Healthy Lives and Quality Care.
- Eamonn Boylan GMCA/TfGM – Chief Executive
- Steve Rumbelow – Rochdale Council Chief Executive
- Sandra Steward – Chief Executive Tameside Council
- Harry Catherall Chief Executive Oldham Council
- Adrian Lythgoe – Chair of the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Jo Harrison – Director of Environment, Planning and Innovation, United Utilities
- Lesley Worswick – Area Director (Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire) Environment Agency
- Ben Scott – Flood Risk Manager for Greater Manchester, Environment Agency
- Mark Easedale – Environment Manager for Greater Manchester, Environment Agency

- Amanda Wright – Partnership Manager, Natural England
- Petula Neilson – Natural Course Programme Manager, Urban, Water & Wetlands Team
- Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Lancashire Area Natural England
- Anne Selby – Chair Greater Manchester Natural Capital Group.
- John Sanders – Chair Mersey Rivers Trust
- Simon Nokes – GMCA Executive Director
- Andrew Lightfoot GMCA Deputy Director
- Andrew McIntosh – GMCA Place Director
- Mark Atherton – GMCA Environment Director
- Kathy Oldham - GMCA Chief Resilience Officer
- David Hodcroft – GMCA Infrastructure Lead
- Jill Holden – GMCA Flood Risk Manager

ANNEX B – Integrated Water Management Plan – Principles

GOALS – That the Plan will help progress

- To better support catchment-based approaches with the Integrated Water Management Plan complementing and sitting alongside other strategic documents - to maximize opportunities to align agendas and achieve multiple benefits.
- To establish an adaptive pathway to steer long term investment and action at multiple spatial scales.
- To enhance the resilience of the system by further embedding collaboration within institutional cultures and practices to ensure this is treated as “business as usual.”
- Prioritization of activity and actions that will deliver the outcomes and measures of success set out in the GMCA/UU/EA MOU.

SCOPE – Of support required and what the plan should contain

- Overarching aim is to develop a cohesive plan, setting out how water will be managed sustainably in Greater Manchester and in a way that addresses the future risks posed by climate change and considering our wider plans for growth in the city-region.
- Includes water quantity (freshwater (including drinking water), wastewater, storm water) and quality, canals¹ and therefore adjacent catchment land management.
- Needs to be framed around the sustainability and resilience of the water system – clearly identifying: (i) future potential risks for drought (ii) all forms of flooding (surface water, sewers, fluvial and ground water) (iii) environmental impacts – biodiversity/pollution (iv) population change, demand and economic development and climate change.

¹ Canals and rivers trust and Manchester Ship Canal (to be confirmed).

- Defines our vision for water in Greater Manchester - (holding the line or seeking a netgain?) and therefore the outcomes being sought.
- Needs to be a living plan - incentives/funding and regulations will change.
- Signposts and is clear on the strategic fit with other documents, both statutory and non-statutory (e.g., LNRS (Local Nature Recovery Strategy), FRMPs (Flood Risk Management Plan), RBMPs (River Basin Management Plans), DWMPs (Drainage and Wastewater Management plans), WRMP (Water Resource Management Plans), Places for Everyone (P4E), GM 5 Year Environment Plan, FCERM (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management), GM Resilience Strategy).

DEFINE – Role of existing evidence, the plans spatial boundary and stakeholders

Evidenced:

- Begin by bringing together evidence from existing catchment management (EA/CMPs), asset management (UU) plans, identifying where gaps exist.
- Should build on the systems thinking completed for Ventura.

Spatial boundary:

- Main focus for action will be the geography within the GM boundary but also recognize complementary interventions required outside of the boundary (but within a relevant catchment)
- Need a systemic catchment-based approach – Irwell, Mersey and Douglas - under which further sub-catchment place-based planning sits.

Targets / Outcomes:

- Includes existing and common targets, outcomes, thresholds, and metrics (agreed and set by the plan).
- These should illustrate an alignment to the success measures and outcomes set out in the MOU.

Stakeholders:

- Internal (CA) (including groups/boards that include external stakeholders) and external (stakeholders to be confirmed).

DESIGN - Strategy/Framework/Investment

- Signposts to other documents
- Clarifies roles and responsibilities and commitments
- Provides the framework for the best value way of maximizing the benefits, against the baseline.
- Identifies beneficiaries

DELIVER – Short and long terms actions

- Enables short term delivery with feedback lessons and learning to move us towards structural delivery changes for longer term delivery (what can we do before 2025, what do we want to do from 2025-27 to inform and provide conceits for PR29).
- Needs to include a high level 5-year action plan which includes costed, prioritized actions with a lead organisation for each
- Needs to include a section on overcoming barriers including costs (funding gaps), land ownership, powers/regulations and governance
- Outputs should track back to the outcomes agreed.
- Is clear that the Plan is co-owned.

Length and deadline:

- 20-30 pages – needs to be accessible
- A web-based presence