

**MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 2022 VIA MS TEAMS**

PRESENT

Matthew Harrison	Great Places
Jane Healey Brown	Ayrup
Bernadette Elder	Inspiring Communities Together
Councillor Alan Quinn	Bury Council
Councillor James Wright	Trafford Council
Councillor Toby Hewitt	Bolton Council
Councillor Mike McCusker	Salford City Council
Councillor Susan Gambles	Wigan Council
Councillor Colin Maclister	Stockport Council
Councillor Tricia Ayrton	Rochdale Council
City Mayor Paul Dennett	Salford City Council
Councillor Gavin McGill	Bury Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Nicola Ward	Statutory Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Steve Fyfe	Head of Housing Strategy, GMCA
Aisling McCourt	Principal Housing Strategy, GMCA
Helen Davies	Senior Governance and Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Molly Bishop	Strategic Lead on Homelessness, GMCA
Jacqueline Gailey	Apprentice Core Investment, GMCA
Jennie Corbett	Strategic Policy Asylum and Refugee Integration, GMCA
Sean Owen	Head of Low Carbon Policy, GMCA

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

GMPHC/1/22 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Western (Trafford); Simon Warburton (TfGM); Councillor Gavin White (Manchester); Councillor Jacqueline North (Tameside); Councillor Daniel Meredith (Rochdale); Councillor Amanda Chadderton (Oldham); Councillor Ray Mashiter (Salford); and Councillor Clare Cummings (Bury, Councillor Gavin McGill was substituting).

GMPHC/2/22 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

The Chair noted that under agenda item 6: Homelessness, sub section a) GM Homelessness Prevention Strategy Review, the papers for this item had not been published as part of the agenda pack and the recommendation for that item would be to defer until the next meeting.

GMPHC/3/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported by any Member in respect of any item on the agenda.

GMPHC/4/22 Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting held 23 September 2022

The Chair noted the following actions from the last meeting:

- On page 12 of the agenda pack, under the item: Flood & Water Management: Local Levy part of the resolution was:
That officers undertook to clarify if there was any geographical ring-fencing of the levy funding
Jill Holden Flood & Water Programme Manager, GMCA emailed Jane Healey Brown on 29 September with a response to this query- the funding was not ringfenced to Greater Manchester and it was balanced against the needs of all 5 North-West partnerships and the Local Levy balance.
Councillor Alan Quinn (Bury and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Member) clarified that £3million was the maximum applied for via the Local Levy.
- On page 16 of the agenda pack, under the item: National Policy Updates (b) a Decent Homes Standard in the Private Rented Sector Consultation, part of the resolution was:

That the response to the consultation be shared with Commission members ahead of its submission on 14th October 2022.

The consultation response was shared with Commission members via email on 13 October 2022.

- On page 17 of the agenda pack, under the item: GM Housing Strategy Implementation Plan part of the resolution was:

That an update on the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund be provided to the next meeting.

This update was agenda item 5.

Councillor Gavin McGill (Bury) noted he was present for the last meeting as a substitute for Councillor Clare Cummings (Bury) but his attendance had been omitted from the minutes.

RESOLVED/-

That subject to the changes outlined above, the minutes of the meeting 23 September 2023 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

GMPHC/5/22 Housing Retrofit

a) Policy Overview and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Update

Aisling McCourt, Principal – Housing Strategy and Sean Owen, Head of Low Carbon Policy attended the meeting and introduced the paper to the Committee. The report provided an update on activities and strategic developments relating to the retrofit agenda and progress against policy A5 in the GM Housing Strategy which aimed to identify pathways to volume domestic retrofit and reduce fuel poverty.

The Committee was shown a presentation that outlined how 61,000 homes needed to be retrofitted between now and 2040 to meet the 2038 carbon neutral target across Greater Manchester. The six workstreams in the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy Implementation Plan were outlined and key streams included:

1. the work needed to improve understanding of the condition of Greater Manchester housing stock;
2. the need to provide a clear strategic governance framework to take a retrofit agenda forward in Greater Manchester; and

3. accessing government funding for retrofit programmes.

The Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions and there was some discussion that included:

- Plans to lobby government to enable more homes to come forward for retrofit;
- The acknowledgement of pressures but the need to deliver;
- ECO+ funding was different to funding that had gone before, this was now about retrofitting the whole-house not just preventative measures;
- The consultation for ECO+ additional funding had been released, discussions with the wider districts was planned to establish a Greater Manchester offer;
- Local Authorities had the ability to direct ECO+ funding by identifying suitable properties and directing funding to where it was needed; and
- The intention to reach to districts to understand if there was a collective approach to ECO+ funding, as this was the biggest opportunity for funding to come to the area for those in need.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be received and noted.

b) Your Home Better

Charlie Baker, Red Cooperative, (part of a consortium delivering Your Homes Better (YHB) a systemic intervention delivering retrofit to willing to pay homeowners in Greater Manchester), attended the meeting and presented an overview of YHB.

The presentation expanded the proposition for affordable zero carbon retrofit homes, the whole structure of properties including walls, floors, windows and doors through to ventilation renewable energy and storage and heat pumps. The Committee were shown possibilities on how to build a market, reasons for retrofit, costs, funding potentials, business models and a complete customer journey.

The Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions, there was some discussion that involved:

- The importance of incorporating ventilation and the opportunity to boost retrofitting by enabling warm houses that were not damp;
- Planning permissions being enabling and not a disincentive for those pursuing retrofitting. Many works would not need planning permission but when the situation arose, they should be streamlined, fit for scale and purpose for this type of retrofit. Whilst a policy change wouldn't be needed, there would need to be guidance in terms of delivery, for example at a validation stage to ensure

- check-lists were fit for purpose. This would need legally compliant requirements and consistency across Greater Manchester. A starting point could be to clarify what each region meant by permissible developments; and
- The potential to use locally sourced ash trees that were being felled across Greater Manchester due to ash die-back disease.

The Committee requested further information or shared learning on anything other Local Authorities were doing well in this area.

RESOLVED/-

That the presentation be received and noted.

GMPHC/6/22 Homelessness

a) Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy review

Molly Bishop, Strategic Lead on Homelessness noted the purpose of the item was to bring a six-month update to the Committee on the Greater Manchester Prevention Homelessness Strategy that had been developed through 2021 with extensive consultation and stakeholder feedback and an Action Plan was developed once the Strategy was approved.

RESOLVED:

That the item be deferred until the next meeting as explained by the Chair under agenda item 2: Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business.

b) Homelessness Funding Update

The City Mayor Paul Dennett introduced the item to the Committee and noted the paper within the agenda pack outlined the plans to support people across Greater Manchester at risk of homelessness during both a cost-of-living crisis and the winter period. The Committee was advised that the proportion of people at risk of homelessness was rising.

The Committee was advised a 6-month update on the Homelessness Prevention Strategy would be brought to the next meeting.

The City Mayor noted that the homelessness and rough sleeping crisis was being predominantly driven by the affordability of housing which continued to be a significant challenge across Greater Manchester; this included both private home ownership but

also rapidly increased rents in the private rented sector which were a significant barrier to larger families across the region.

The Committee was advised that the findings from Dataloft (a property market intelligence company) showed that 4% of tenancies advertised in the last 6-months were at or below local housing allowance rates.

Alongside these findings, the average monthly rents for a 1-bedroom property had been modelled within the report and were shown to be £775 per month.

In terms of the response to the response to the housing and homelessness crisis, the Places for Everyone Spatial Plan Strategy for GM outlined 30,000 net zero socially rented homes by 2037. This target was, in part, to offset the 95,000 homes lost since 1980 as part of Right-To-Buy schemes and according to national data, 40% of these homes were lost to the private rental sector.

The City Mayor noted the challenging environment for the supply of Truly Affordable Net Zero homes due to viability issues within the construction industry.

The Committee was advised that the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme. Had provided 232 new beds over the last 18-months.

The Committee noted the ask to national government, noting people who were or were at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping were in crisis now and benefits needed to lift in-line with inflation, not wait until March 2023, also lifting the rates on Local Housing Allowance (frozen since 2020) and ensuring they were more reflective of housing costs was critical to those on benefit not being disadvantaged.

The Committee noted that following the verification of the annual rough sleeper count and supporting data, the evidence showed the ability to reduce rough sleeping and homelessness in GM had stalled for the first time in 5-years, as a result £460k had been allocated to allocate 86 additional beds through the Bed Every Night scheme, this was a one-off allocation for winter months from the GM Mayors own budget.

The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. There was agreement with the suggestion that action should be taken to ensure private landlords capped rents. There was also the acknowledgement that the removal of Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 (that enabled a Landlord with a legal right to obtain possession of his property from the Tenant at the end of the Tenancy) would help prevent homelessness and evictions within the private rented sector.

Councillor James Wright queried that in relation to welfare and debt advice provision, of any mapping of provision had taken place. Across GM there were some Local Authorities who had this provision (as a non-statutory function) but there was a

significant number of registered providers who gave this directly to tenants. Councillor Wright noted that Trafford was carrying out mapping in this area already to ensure tenants were signposted appropriately and the services available were known especially as the current requests for this service were high.

Molly Bishop, Strategic Lead on Homelessness advised the Committee that wholesale mapping was not always the best approach to this work given the speed of change in this area and may only stay relevant for a short period of time. The Committee was advised that Councillor Amanda Chadderton (Oldham) was leading on a GM Cost of Living Response and with the intelligence from this group there was evidence of what the debt and welfare support was. A Helping Hand website had been commissioned as a single point of access for residents to find advice under key thematic topics.

The Committee thanked officers for a strong presentation and to see that GM was a leader in lobbying government for change and the scale of mobilisation during the cost-of-living crisis was noted.

The Committee noted the importance of income maximisation and not enabling warm hubs to become the normality in the same way food banks have but rather lobby for people to earn an appropriate wage in-line with the cost of living.

RESOLVED: That:

1. the thanks of the Planning and Housing Commission be extended to all those working across Greater Manchester, within Local Authorities, the Voluntary and Community sector and wider to help vulnerable individuals and families in or at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping in the face of complex and challenging pressures;
2. the cost-of-living pressures and mitigations relating to risk of homelessness be noted; and
3. the intended expansion of A Bed Every Night provision this winter via Greater Manchester Mayor's budget be noted.

c) Regional Asylum Plan

Molly Bishop, Strategic Lead on Homelessness presented the update paper on Asylum dispersal, the paper shared share progress for the agreement of a North-West Regional Asylum Dispersal 'Interim Plan' and presented plans for a strategic approach to monitoring and responding to Home Office procurement going forward.

Officers noted that:

- A North-West plan needed to be agreed so progress could be measured and the Home Office and providers could be held to account;
- the ongoing use of hotels as contingency accommodation would want to be seen to reduce;
- the paper took into account Asylum dispersal in this paper and not resettlement (from Afghanistan, the Ukraine and Hong Kong), the lack of parity between the two routes continued to be problematic; and
- Partners remained to a Warm Welcome, encouraging Asylum seekers to settle within GM. What was needed was the resource and support for people relocating into GM and the communities they are settling into to ensure public services were fair and accessible to all.

RESOLVED/- That:

1. the Greater Manchester position for continued negotiations on the proposed interim Regional Dispersal Plan for asylum dispersal across the North West up to the end of 2023 be noted;
2. the additional governance demands being sought from the Home Office to ensure transparency for the implementation of any asylum dispersal activity in Greater Manchester be noted; and
3. the risks associated with increased levels of asylum dispersal and opening of contingency accommodation in Greater Manchester be noted, and the recommended measures to mitigate these be considered.

GMPHC/7/22 TANZ Task Force Update

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy advised the Committee that the Research Team had completed a strong piece of work summarising knowledge on Net Zero Homes for the Truly Affordable Net Zero (TANZ) Homes Task Force Group, and it was of value to share more widely.

There had been one meeting of the TANZ Task Force, the key focus of which had been to establish if the key areas of enquiry were correct along with monitoring and progress being made.

The Committee noted the value of the report and that whilst net zero homes might be more expensive to purchase, they would be less expensive to maintain and run. Over time prices could become more competitive through economies of scale.

RESOLVED/- That:

1. the report be received and noted; and

2. this item be brought back to this Committee when further meetings had been held.

GMPHC/8/22 Integrated Water Management Plan

Dave Hodcroft, Infrastructure Lead gave an Integrated Water Management Plan presentation to the Committee, this included an overview of the existing commitments within the Greater Manchester (GM) Strategy and how GM was connected by water. In GM there were 63,478 properties at risk from fluvial flooding (from rivers) and 162,979 properties at risk from surface water flooding, the latter being the most complex and frequent type of flooding especially with the associated climate change risks.

The Committee was advised on Place Based Pilots in the Upper Mersey, this was a partnership collaboration to ensure that co-owned, co-developed, place based plans in place to deliver shared outcomes supported by multiple sources of funding.

The Infrastructure Lead outlined the National Infrastructure Commission recommendations to government (that would reduce the risk from surface water flooding) and why Sustainable Development Plans (SuDS) were essential with the increase of 35,000-95,000 new properties putting more pressure on drainage systems.

Councillor Alan Quinn (Bury and the Flood and Regional Coast Committee representative) noted the difficulties in water management for Local Authorities when residents use hard materials to cover green spaces such as drives and gardens, alongside noting the additional 180k new homes being built all connecting to United Utilities infrastructure. The Committee noted there was more chance of flooding due to rainfall than fluvial (river) flooding and that Local Authorities and the Environment Agency were using old infrastructure to manage water and flood management.

The Committee agreed that there should be legislation to mandate housing developers to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and government must fund resources to assist with flooding mitigation.

Councillor Quinn gave some helpful examples from flooding mitigation across the Bury region.

The Chair noted severe flood warnings for 2023.

RESOLVED/-

That the presentation be received and noted.

GMPHC/9/22 Any Other Business

Jane Healey-Brown, Associate Director, Arup noted that she had represented Greater Manchester on Part One of the independent examination of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, conducted by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Committee noted the examination was ongoing.

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy advised that a post-Christmas summary could be presented to the Committee that included an update on the end of the first stage.

RESOLVED/-

That an update be brought to this Committee on the end of the first stage of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan.

GMPHC/10/22 Date of next meeting

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting was 19 January 2023 11am – 1pm.