

**Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Housing Commission  
held on the 31 October 2023 via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Salford Council	Councillor Colin MacCalister
Tameside Council	Councillor Ged Cooney (In the Chair)
Salford Council	Councillor Tracy Kelly
Rochdale Council	Councillor Daniel Meredith
Trafford Council	Councillor Elizabeth Patel
Bury Council	Councillor Sean Thorpe
Manchester Council	Councillor Gavin White
Bolton Council	Councillor Akhtar Zaman

**Independent Members:**

Inspiring Communities Together	Bernadette Elder
Arup	Jane Healey-Brown

**RFCC Representative:**

Rochdale Council	Councillor Tricia Ayrton
Salford Council	Councillor Phillip Cusack
Bolton Council	Councillor Richard Silvester

**Officers in Attendance:**

GMCA Public Service Reform	Jack Bennett
GMCA Governance & Scrutiny	Helen Davies
GMCA Homelessness	Joe Donoghue
GMCA Housing Strategy	Steve Fyfe
GMCA Housing Strategy	Mary Gogarty
GMCA Flood & Water Programme Management	Jill Holden
GMCA Housing Strategy	Aisling McCourt
GMCA Planning Strategy	Anne Morgan

**PHC/001/23            APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Mike McCusker (Salford), Councillor Elaine Taylor (Oldham), Steve Rumbelow (Rochdale), Matthew Harrison (Great Places), Carl Moore (Homes England).

Substitute Members for the meeting were: Councillor Sean Thorpe (Bury) and Councillor Tracy Kelly (Salford).

**PHC/002/23            CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy, GMCA noted that the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee was carrying out a piece of Task and Finish work on Integrated Water Management and Affordable Housing. Members had attended a briefing on the Affordable Homes work and the scope of the review was being considered. The target number of Affordable Homes delivered in Greater Manchester was the consideration for the next six-months.

**PHC/003/23            THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2023**

The Committee noted two amendments, on page five of the minutes, the word Ayrup should be spelled Arup.

Also on page five it was noted that Councillor Gavin McGill (Bury) had both given apologies and was in attendance. This should have stated that Councillor Gavin White (Manchester) was in attendance and Councillor McGill had given apologies.

**RESOLVED /-**

That further to the amendments noted, the minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March 2023 be accepted as a correct and accurate record.

**PHC 004/23 MEETING PURPOSE**

**PHC 004A/23 TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW**

**RESOLVED /-**

That the Planning and Housing Commission Terms of Reference be accepted.

**PHC 004B/23 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBER TO GREEN CITY REGION PARTNERSHIP**

The Chair sought nominations to the Greater Manchester Green City Region Partnership (GCRP). It was noted that Councillor Mike McCusker had been appointed to the GCRP as a representative of the Bee Network Committee. Councillor McCusker was also a member of this Committee and could potentially fulfil a dual role should he be in agreement.

Councillor McCusker had given apologies to the meeting, in his absence the Chair agreed to discuss this matter with him, and subject to his agreement nominate him as the representative for the Planning and Housing Commission. The Commission was in agreement with this course of action.

**RESOLVED /-**

That subject to agreement by Councillor Mike McCusker, he be nominated as the Planning and Housing representative to the Green City Region Partnership.

**PHC 005/23 INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT**

**PHC 005A/23 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Jil Holden, GM Flood and Water Programme Manager, GMCA gave a presentation to the Commission on GM Flood and Water Management (FWM), this included the specific governance and groups that supported FWM. These groups were the North-West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NWR FCC), the NWR FCC Finance and Business Assurance subgroup and the GM FWM Strategic Group.

The Commission was given five suggested recommendations to the Commission:

1. All items for approval at the NW RFCC be brought to PHC for consideration to agree GM's position.
2. Flood and Water Management session to be held for RFCC members/PHC Exec Members (core members only), to help engage specifically with RFCC members and will follow on from PHC.
3. Where timing of PHC does not provide the opportunity to meet in advance of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup, a Flood and Water Management session will be held separately.
4. Where appropriate the RFCC chair, PHC chair and GM RFCC members will meet outside of PHC in advance of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.
5. 2024/25 nominations, PHC to appoint the GM NW RFCC members from its membership. Currently RFCC members are invited to PHC and are not PHC Exec Members.

The Commission Members considered the recommendations and were in agreement noting specifically the added level of democracy and joint-decision making that would be achieved by appointing GM NW RFCC representatives from the PHC membership, as opposed to the current arrangements where the RFCC Members are independent from the PHC.

**RESOLVED /-**

That:

1. the report be received and noted;
2. the meetings for the Planning and Housing Commission be scheduled and diarised for the full municipal year;
3. the five recommendations be agreed; and
4. the 3% Levy for be agreed.

**PHC 005B/23            INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

David Hodcroft, Principal Planning Strategy presented the key messages contained in the report circulated with the agenda pack, specifically to consider if there were any

issues highlighted in the report which were relevant to the Commission's Work Programme for the forthcoming municipal year.

The Commission heard that the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee had presented recommendations, that related to Integrated Water Management, to the GMCA in May 2023. Following this, the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) was approved by the GMCA in June 2023. The IWMP was a joint plan between the GMCA, Environment Agency and United Utilities. The Commission noted that due to the confidence gained by partners because of the IWMP, United Utilities had committed to restructuring the organisation to a sub-regional footprint as opposed to a regional one.

Clarity was sought by the Commission on the involvement of the Canals and Rivers Trust, it was noted that through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the three key partners previously mentioned and formal working agreements meant that other partners such as Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Local Authorities and wider working partnerships could now develop.

The Commission queries how the PHC could engage to influence early-stage programme design. It was noted that the three partners meet at a Director level on a monthly basis with an officer co-located within the team at GMCA once a week.

## **RESOLVED /-**

That:

1. the decision made by the GMCA on 30 June and 29 September in relation to the Integrated Water Management Plan (para 1.1) be received and noted;
2. the Scrutiny Committee recommendations be taken forward through the Integrated Water Management Plan (Annex A);
3. the summary of the Annual Business Plan (Annex B) as presented on the 11 September be received and noted;
4. the main outputs be delivered by March 2024 (paragraph 2.3); and
5. any issues highlighted in the report that are relevant to the commission's work programme for the forthcoming municipal year be considered.

**PHC 006/23**

**GM HOUSING STRATEGY**

**PHC 006A/23**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE**

Steve Fyfe, Head of Housing Strategy, GMCA delivered a short presentation to the Commission, it included an overview of the GM Housing Strategy that was adopted in June 2019 and set strategic priorities for action at GM level.

The Commission noted the key points of the Implementation Plan, including the Private Rented Sector (PRS), Retrofit and Fuel Poverty, new models of delivery and truly affordable net zero homes. In terms of the Devolution Trailblazer deal, it was expected that there would be more control and integration through the Single Settlement.

The Commission discussed its role adding value through the Devolution Trailblazer deal, and the expectation to comment on schemes such as Homes England programmes in the GM region. Concern was raised about the increase of temporary accommodation and the impact for homeless people and associated costs. Joe Donoghue, Strategic Lead on Homelessness at GMCA noted there were a series of deep-dive reviews within localities across GM, Local Authorities (LAs) are conducting sessions with the Centre for Homelessness. Manchester, Bolton and Rochdale were considering core data on spend and all ten LAs would review that session. There was some discussion that GMCA did not face the same financial pressures faced by LAs such as children's placement out of borough and complex packages of care.

**RESOLVED /-**

That the presentation be received and noted.

**PHC 006B/23**

**SOCIAL HOUSING QUALITY FUND UPDATE**

Aisling McCourt, Principal Housing Strategy, GMCA gave a short presentation to the Commission on the £15million capital fund to improve the quality of social housing to tackle damp and mould health hazards. £30million was awarded to Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities and GM social housing providers were eligible to apply. Following a funding competition over the summer with subsequent assessments, 17 successful applicants were identified, and recipients

have until 31 March 2024 to spend a combined sum of £14.84 million funding on up to 12,835 homes.

The Commission was advised about the prioritisation of funding, value for money and cost justification and reviewed the grant allocations by district and priority.

The Commission queried if there were any unsuccessful applicants, assurances were given that everyone who bid was successful, but some areas were not eligible. GMCA did follow-up with Registered Providers (RPs) who did not apply and an extensive social media campaign was rolled out.

The Commission noted that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had stipulated that damp and mould reports needed to be attached to the Decent Homes Standard. Tracking complaints would demonstrate if the funding measures had made an impact.

#### **RESOLVED /-**

That the update be received and noted.

#### **PHC 006C/23      CARE LEAVERS' HOUSING ACCESS RESEARCH**

Mary Gogarty, Principal Housing Strategy, GMCA gave a short presentation on the Care Leaver' Housing Access Project Report and Action Plan. The project is a workstream that resulted from work carried out by a joint group of District, GM Housing Providers and GMCA officers. They were examining the reality of allocation processes and pressures on the social housing system in GM. The work resulted in six key recommendations:

- 1) Supporting the housing system to implement the ideal pathway;
- 2) Working with care leavers to understand the key areas of consistency to tackle the disparity between boroughs;
- 3) Scoping out of borough moves for care leavers in certain circumstances;
- 4) Supporting the GM Housing Providers review of the Care Leavers Pledges;
- 5) Training for housing professionals around stigma and judgement; and
- 6) Further work on Youth Homelessness Pathfinder Programme with older care leavers.

A Work Plan supported the project.

## **RESOLVED /-**

That the Update be received and noted.

**PHC 007/23                    HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION**

**PHC 007A/23                HOMELESSNESS AND MIGRATION OVERVIEW**

Joe Donoghue, Strategic Lead on Homelessness at GMCA gave three key updates to the Commission.

- 1) That the starting point for high-level homelessness schemes across Local Authorities was unprecedented. There were higher number of rough sleepers across GM creating huge demands on the system.  
The increase of a Section 21 No-Fault Eviction had led to rise in those seeking to prevent their homelessness a 41% increase on last year.
- 2) The continued freeze on local housing allowance has meant it is difficult for people to recover from homelessness and they stay in transitional housing for longer and that created more pressure on those coming into sector. A deep-dive by the Housing team at GMCA last year showed that less than 4% of tenancies were affordable.
- 3) There was a short-medium increase on those entering the asylum system. Between Sept-end of Dec, 2700 households in GM would get a decision on housing. That equated to those likely to be a priority need would be 2000 single people and 700 families.

Long-term underfunding coupled with a short-term spike was creating difficulties. Investment from DLUHC and the Home Office was needed in a sustainable and meaningful way to mitigate large numbers of Asylum Seekers, there were many pressures and work ongoing in the asylum system.

The Strategic Lead on Homelessness acknowledged that earlier, during the Implementation Plan Update, the Commission noted it would value a political discussion on homelessness given the impact across the whole of GM and the need to support all Local Authorities.

The funding landscape for homelessness services beyond 2025 was at risk from the end of March 2025 onwards. Officers were undertaking an exercise to determine a conceptual model of working across GM with infrastructure and defined principles to truly prevent homelessness for the future.

GMCA is currently considering consultation on supported housing regulatory oversight Act that comes into effect this year. There is an ongoing consultation beginning in the next few weeks and updates will follow in due course.

**RESOLVED /-**

That:

1. the report be received and noted; and
2. the suggestion for political discussion by the Commission be taken forward internally by the Strategic Lead for Homelessness.

**PHC 008/23                    PLACES FOR EVERYONE**

**PHC 008A/23                PLACES FOR EVERYONE UPDATE**

Anne Morgan, Head of Planning Strategy, GMCA noted that GMCA was in a period of an eight-week consultation on main modifications that Inspectors were recommending be accepted to enhance the Plan. Suggestion for deletion of three Policies and two sites had been flagged. Consultation ended on the 6 December 2023, following a response to that, Inspectors would consider if further hearings were needed and subject to no further delays the plan would be adopted and would need to be adopted by all nine councils across GM.

The Commission sought clarity on if the process could run into the pre-election period. The Head of Planning Strategy confirmed it could and would depend on the number of responses and if Inspectors needed further sessions.

The Commission agreed that GM was trailblazing and should be thinking about positive communications both locally and nationally and the benefits it will bring.

**RESOLVED /-**

That the report be received and noted.

**PHC 009/23            PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION: WORK  
PROGRAMME**

Anne Morgan, Head of Planning Strategy, GMCA advised the Commission that any ideas for items for the Work Programme could be submitted directly to her.

**PHC 010/23            DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Commission noted the date of the next meeting: 15th January 2024 10.30-12:30pm- Microsoft Teams

**Meeting Closed: 13:01**