

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025

Subject: Greater Manchester's Remediation Acceleration Plan: ensuring fire safety in flats as part of the response to Grenfell

Report of: Deputy Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First and Dave Russel, Chief Fire Officer, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

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### Purpose of Report

To provide an update to the Authority on the development of the Greater Manchester Remediation Acceleration Plan (the Plan). The Plan has been developed in response to a request from Government and is part of a wider programme to accelerate the remediation of residential buildings with unsafe cladding. To ensure the Plan will deliver for the people of Greater Manchester, it has been written in consultation with residents and partners. This report provides an overview of the Plan.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the Greater Manchester Remediation Acceleration Plan and the delivery arrangements and endorse the Plan.

### Contact Officers

Jenni Seex, Head of Protection and Building Safety, GMFRS

[seexj@manchesterfire.gov.uk](mailto:seexj@manchesterfire.gov.uk)

# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing	G	
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		
Further Assessment(s): Carbon Assessment		
<div> <div>G</div> <div>Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.</div> </div> <div> <div>A</div> <div>Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.</div> </div> <div> <div>R</div> <div>Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.</div> </div> <div> <div>RR</div> <div>Negative impacts overall.</div> </div>		

## Carbon Assessment

Overall Score		#####
<b>Buildings</b>	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	#####	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
<b>Transport</b>		
Active travel and public transport	N/A	
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities	N/A	
Vehicle procurement	N/A	
<b>Land Use</b>		
Land use	N/A	
<div> <div>No associated carbon impacts expected.</div> <div>High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.</div> <div>Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.</div> <div>Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.</div> <div>Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.</div> </div>		

## Risk Management

To ensure the Plan will deliver for the people of Greater Manchester, it has been written in consultation with residents and partners. We engaged directly with residents through two dedicated meetings led by the Deputy Mayors of Greater Manchester and supported by Homes England. These sessions provided invaluable feedback on the experiences of

residents and their expectations. We have also benefitted from the ongoing engagement of the Manchester Cladators and End Our Cladding Scandal campaigners. In conjunction with Homes England we hosted workshops attended by local authority colleagues representing strategic housing services, building control, and housing standards functions; and colleagues from the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). We have also engaged with the Greater Manchester Private Sector Housing Group to consider how the inspection and enforcement activity which may be required can be delivered across the city-region.

We have engaged with housing providers and managing agents through the regular meetings and the monthly drop-ins which GMFRS host. We have engaged with the BSR through the workshops held in conjunction with Homes England to look at processes, escalation points and interventions; and to consider the overlapping legislative framework, and how the most effective response can be determined and applied. We have engaged directly with colleagues in other regions to look at their approaches and identify any good practice.

Oversight of the Plan is considered in sections 2.1.3 – 2.1.5.

## **Legal Considerations**

Following the publication of the final Grenfell Tower Inquiry report, the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to mayors to request that they convene regulators and other key partners to prepare a local remediation acceleration plan. The GMCA is the fire and rescue authority for Greater Manchester and is responsible for the enforcement of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and other associated legislative provisions. GMFRS will lead on the delivery of the Remediation Acceleration Plan.

The Government intends to implement further legislation when the parliamentary schedule permits.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

To develop and deliver this Plan, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has provided the GMCA with £500,000 of new burdens funding in 2025/26. They have offered a further £300,000 for this financial year, which we have applied for. MHCLG has repeatedly indicated that longer-term funding will be provided. In July 2025, MHCLG published an update confirming their continued commitment to their

Remediation Acceleration Plan (RAP), and their commitment to supporting the delivery of local plans. MHCLG's RAP states, *"by the end of 2029 all 18m+ (high-rise) buildings with unsafe cladding in a government funded scheme will have been remediated. Furthermore, by the end of 2029, every 11m+ building with unsafe cladding will either have been remediated, have a date for completion, or the landlords will be liable for severe penalties."* New burdens funding for the Greater Manchester Remediation Acceleration Plan is therefore expected to continue until at least 2029. We are awaiting formal confirmation of this. The maintenance of Greater Manchester's Delivery Team and their work to deliver the Plan will cost c. £800,000 p/a, all of which is expected to come from MHCLG new burdens funding, and we do not envisage any need for GMFRS to exceed the funding envelope provided by MHCLG.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

### **Number of attachments to the report: 1**

### **Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

### **Background Papers**

Greater Manchester's approach to Building Safety Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Lead for Safer Stronger Communities and Paul Dennett, Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Lead for Housing First 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

### **Key Decision**

No

### **Exemption from call in**

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

N/A

# **1. Introduction/Background**

- 1.1.1. This report provides an update on work undertaken on the development of a Greater Manchester Remediation Acceleration Plan following the first iteration of the plan which was considered by the GMCA on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- 1.1.2. The development of the Greater Manchester Remediation Acceleration Plan (the Plan) was in response to a request from the Deputy Prime Minister to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and other Mayors around the country to support the acceleration of remediation of flats with unsafe cladding.
- 1.1.3. There has been significant work in Greater Manchester to address fire safety deficiencies in high rise flats since 2017 and the scope of buildings affected has increased over the last eight years as the building safety crisis has unfolded. Despite changes in legislation and funding schemes the timescales involved in making buildings safe are lengthy leaving many residents living with uncertainty and increased costs.
- 1.1.4. Based on the latest information provided by MHCLG across Greater Manchester there are currently 196 high rise buildings which require remediation works, 121 mid rise buildings (11-18 metres) requiring remediation works and 173 buildings under investigation by Homes England to determine eligibility for the Cladding Safety Scheme.

# **2. Overview of the Plan**

- 2.1.1. The key aim of the Plan is to ensure all blocks of flats over 11 metres with serious fire safety deficiencies are remediated as quickly as possible and that residents are supported through this process. In developing the Plan we have listened to the views and experiences of affected residents.
- 2.1.2. GMFRS will lead on the delivery of the Plan. They will use the funding provided by MHCLG to ensure Greater Manchester has the resources in place to inspect buildings; enforce where necessary; provide support and guidance to Resident

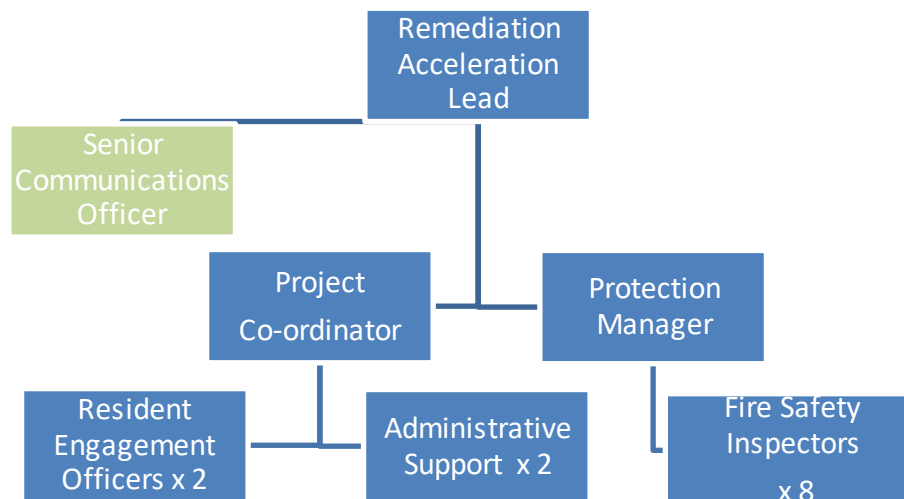
Management and Right to Manage Companies; and increase resident engagement.

- 2.1.3. The Plan's delivery will be overseen by the Greater Manchester High Rise & Building Safety Strategic Oversight Group chaired by Paul Dennett (Deputy Mayor for Housing First and Salford City Mayor) and attended by Kate Green (Deputy Mayor for Safer & Stronger Communities). The Group includes representation from all key stakeholders including the resident action groups Manchester Cladiators and End Our Cladding Scandal. All Local Authorities have now confirmed nominations to attend the meeting. These officers will support the oversight of the Plan and help unblock barriers to remediation where required. An annual progress report will be taken to the GMCA.

### **3. Summary of the Plan**

#### **3.1. Funding and the new delivery team**

- 3.1.1 The ask to develop and deliver a Remediation Acceleration Plan has been supported with a commitment of new burdens funding from MHCLG. The first version of the plan indicated delivery costs of approximately £850,000 per annum. In April 2025 MHCLG provided the GMCA with £500,000 of new burdens funding in 2025/26. They have offered a further £300,000 for this financial year, which we have applied for. MHCLG has indicated that longer-term funding will be provided but this cannot be confirmed until the Autumn.
- 3.1.2 The Plan sets out a structure for a Remediation Delivery Team as detailed below and GMFRS has commenced recruitment.



### **3.2. Prioritisation of work**

- 3.2.1. Thousands of residents in Greater Manchester are living in buildings which require significant work. The remediation landscape is complex with unsafe buildings in different government schemes. This means some residents have been waiting for eight years for their building to be remediated. We have included these buildings in our plan, but they require further government intervention to hold developers to account.
- 3.2.2. Through our new Remediation Delivery Team (RDT), we will take a twin track approach, working with partners to ensure buildings with newly identified defects move towards remediation quickly, whilst ensuring buildings already subject to significant delays progress towards remediation as a matter of urgency. In relation to high rise residential buildings, we will start with those which have been operating with temporary simultaneous evacuation strategies for the longest period. Our approach will not differ between funding schemes and we will be working to accelerate remediation irrespective of who is responsible for the works.

### **3.3. Working with partners**

#### **3.3.1. Residents and resident campaigners**

We will:

- Establish a Residents' Forum and a monthly meeting with the Manchester Cladiators

- With Homes England, produce guidance for residents who are Directors of Resident Management Companies and Right to Manage Companies, and deliver related engagement sessions.
- Create a dedicated website area as a conduit to wider information and support.
- Undertake further consultation to identify the current barriers and escalate them to national Government.

### **3.3.2. Homes England**

We will:

- Formalise our effective working relationship to agree escalation points for interventions and commit to agreed service level standards.
- Ensure the national remediation system is effectively utilised and undertake enforcement in a collaborative way. We will agree and formalise a case conferencing procedure, ensuring decisions are made transparently.
- Develop further guidance and information where necessary as buildings progress through the Cladding Safety Scheme.
- Explore how we can ensure that for buildings under 18 metres, building control approval minimises risks and ensures there is early consultation before the works start.
- Explore the development of guidance to support a proportionate response to changes in evacuation strategies for buildings in the Cladding Safety Scheme, reducing the need for Waking Watches.

### **3.3.3. Local Authorities (LAs)**

We will :

- Establish regular review meetings with each LA to track progress on buildings in their area and identify joint working required.
- Work with LA contacts to help unblock barriers to remediation.
- Explore whether any of the existing powers of LAs can be delegated to GMFRS.
- Undertake joint training to increase understanding of technical fire safety matters and hazards and ensure there are effective referral mechanisms in place.

### **3.3.4. Building Safety Regulator (BSR)**

We will:



- Work as part of multi-disciplinary teams which support the building control process and the assessment of safety cases. The fire safety inspectors within our RDT will bolster the resources available to BSR and ensure consistency.
- Ensure all relevant information gathered by our RDT is fed into the BSR assessment process to inform decision making and support residents.
- Identify trends where applications for remediation works are rejected, to raise awareness and improve the quality of applications for other buildings.
- Support the improvements BSR is introducing in building control.
- Develop information sharing arrangements to reduce duplication and ensure common concerns are addressed on our website.
- Coordinate action on specific high rise buildings to collectively reduce risks.
- Engage BSR teams in formal case conferencing arrangements, ensuring decisions are made in a transparent way and minimise costs that residents may incur.

### **3.3.5. Housing Providers and Managing Agents (HPMAs)**

We will:

- Establish a regular programme of events under the Plan.
- Expect HPMAs to work with us to improve residents' experiences and hold them to account when communications are poor.

### **3.3.6. Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)**

We will:

- Look to replicate the arrangements we are putting in place with Homes England across the other schemes to ensure residents can expect the same standards irrespective of the funding arrangements.
- Seek detailed information from MHCLG officials to inform enforcement decisions and action in cases where there have been extensive delays.
- Offer to host workshops and utilise existing and historic cases to 'stress test' any new legislative proposals.

## **3.4. Our ask of Government**

We fully welcome the present government's increased focus on accelerating the remediation of unsafe buildings and the dedicated funding they have provided us in Greater Manchester to help drive this forward. Some barriers still remain that

require national action. Our Plan includes our asks of government in order to address these issues.

- 3.4.1. **Urgently assess the current capacity required to accelerate remediation and provide investment to build competency and capacity** - The extent and complexity of the building safety crisis has identified significant gaps in competency across the whole system, from building design, to building management and regulatory awareness and expertise.
- 3.4.2. **Close the regulatory gap** - There have been significant improvements in legislation to improve the safety of high-rise buildings. Similar improvements are needed for buildings below 18 metres.
- 3.4.3. **Ensure the completion of a single and sustainable dataset** - A co-ordinated approach is needed to build on the Homes England Cladding Safety Scheme system and establish a single comprehensive data set of all buildings which may require remediation.
- 3.4.4. **Establish clear standards and expectations** - Utilise evidence from high rise buildings to clearly set out reasonable timescales which will provide a benchmark for monitoring progress of all buildings that require remediation.
- 3.4.5. **Provide clarity on funding** – The Cladding Safety Scheme offers a more holistic approach to funding works, but there are concerns regarding internal compartmentation works which can be costly and are not effectively funded.
- 3.4.6. **Embed leaseholder protections and ensure adequate funding** - Leaseholder protections could go further, and there needs to be sufficient resource committed to supporting leaseholders to understand and utilise these protections and ensure they deliver on their intent.

## 4. Launch of the plan

The Plan was scrutinised by the Greater Manchester Police Fire and Crime Panel on 17th July.

Following discussions with MHCLG and a review of the Plan there have been some minor amendments to the plan since the Police Fire and Crime Panel. The details of the changes are appended to this report.

Subject to endorsement by the GMCA the Plan will be launched in the Autumn with a resident focussed event.

## Changes to GM Remediation Acceleration Plan

<u>Section &amp; Page</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Reason</u>
5	Minor wording changes – to Greater Manchester High Rise & Building Safety Strategic Oversight Group and Manchester Cladiators and End Our Cladding Scandal campaign groups.	Resolving minor errors
6	Revision of population estimate from 2.8 to 3 million	
16	Structure – amended to Fire Safety Inspectors	Reflect role title
22	Changed ‘unremediated buildings’ to buildings where remediation work has not started	Stylistic
20	Inserted:  Where the implementation of a Waking Watch is necessary we will continue to ensure that this provision is replaced with a fire alarm system as quickly as possible using enforcement powers where necessary.	Response to suggestion from MHCLG under the LA section where it did not fit.
10	New section - Inspections and Enforcement added as follows;  GMFRS undertook inspections of all high rise buildings in 2017 and in cases where cladding was identified required the type of cladding to be identified and the risk of external fire spread assessed along with assessments of other fire safety features in the buildings.	Provide some context for later section on why GMFRS is leading on inspections and enforcement

	<p>Where a risk is identified that means that the building can no longer support a 'stay put' strategy then GMFRS has provided and support as to how an evacuation strategy can be supported in line with national guidance and carries out regular assurance visits to ensure these arrangements remain in place.</p> <p>It was agreed through the High Rise Task Force in 2018 that the GMFRS would lead on inspections and enforcement as the utilisation of powers under the Fire Safety Order was more efficient and effective than powers under the Housing Act 2004.</p> <p>GMFRS undertook further inspections as part of the national Building Risk Review exercise which concluded in December 2021 and provided information on the external walls for all occupied buildings as part of that programme.</p> <p>GMFRS has continued to support housing providers and managing agents to respond to advice notes issued by the Government.</p> <p>The use of formal enforcement action has been considered as a last resort and where those responsible for buildings have applied for and engaged with one of the Government's funding schemes enforcement has not been considered appropriate. In a small number of cases enforcement action has been taken to address delays in progressing remediation.</p>	
17	<p>New wording on enforcement powers as follows;</p> <p>The delivery arrangements have been developed following discussions with other regulators including Local Authorities, the BSR and Homes England. There are a range of legislative options available which can be used in relation to required fire safety works.</p>	<p>Response to feedback from MHCLG and to ensure the Remediation Enforcement Guidance is explicitly referenced.</p>

	<p>These include the powers that GMFRS has under the Fire Safety Order and powers of Local Authorities under the Housing Act 2004. The BSR has a range of powers under the Building Safety Act which can be utilised in relation to occupied high rise buildings. The Building Safety Act introduced powers for a range of parties to apply for Remediation Orders and Remediation Contribution Orders. These powers are available to the Secretary of State, leaseholders in affected buildings, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Local Authorities, the BSR and Homes England.</p> <p>GMFRS is the only regulator which covers all of Greater Manchester but is not a national regulator and therefore can ensure consistency of approach and experience for residents. Whilst recognising that there are new powers available which may be appropriate in specific circumstances as a general approach we consider that the Fire Safety Order is the most appropriate legislative mechanism for the majority of regulatory activity likely to be required.</p> <p>The Government has published Remediation Enforcement Guidance which suggests that local regulators should agree partnership working agreements at local level to determine which regulator should lead. Under our plan GMFRS will be the lead regulator for inspections and enforcement in the majority of cases but will work with partners where necessary if other legislative interventions are required.</p>	
32	Ask 4 – Deletion of paragraph on Residential Emergency Evacuation Plans	Regulations have been laid and come into force in April which addresses this element of the ask.