

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Housing Commission held on the 5 February 2025 via Microsoft Teams**

### **Present:**

|                  |                                                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Salford CC       | City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Leader – Chair |
| Bolton Council   | Councillor Akhtar Zaman                           |
| Manchester CC    | Councillor Gavin White                            |
| Salford CC       | Councillor Mike McCusker                          |
| Tameside Council | Councillor Andrew McLaren                         |
| Trafford Council | Councillor Liz Patel                              |
| Wigan Council    | Councillor Susan Gambles                          |

### **Independent members:**

|                                |                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspiring Communities Together | Bernadette Elder (Voluntary, Community, and Land Trust Social Enterprise (VCSE)) |
| Arup                           | Jane Healey-Brown (Private Sector)                                               |
| Onward Homes                   | Bronwen Rapley - Vice Chair (GM Housing Providers)                               |

### **North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Members:**

|                                         |                           |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bury Council                            | Councillor Alan Quinn     |
| Salford City Council                    | Councillor Phillip Cusack |
| NW Regional Flood and Coastal Committee | Adrian Lythgo             |

### **Officers in Attendance:**

|      |                |
|------|----------------|
| GMCA | Anne Morgan    |
| GMCA | David Hodcroft |
| GMCA | Joe Donohue    |
| GMCA | Mary Gogarty   |
| GMCA | Jill Holden    |
| GMCA | Thomas Graley  |
| GMCA | Aimee Brough   |

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Environment Agency | Dermot Smith   |
| Environment Agency | Nick Pearson   |
| Homes England      | Holly Harrow   |
| TfGM               | Jonathan Marsh |
| Salford University | Philip Martin  |
| Salford University | Graeme Sheriff |
| GMCA               | Kerry Bond     |

**PHC/001/25            Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Elaine Taylor (Oldham).

**PHC/002/25            Membership of the Greater Manchester Planning and Housing Commission**

**Resolved/-**

1. That Councillor Andrew McLaren has replaced Councillor Laura Boyle as the Tameside Council representative on the Commission as agreed at the December meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority be noted.

**PHC/003/25            Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business**

None received.

**PHC/004/25            Declarations of Interest**

**Resolved/-**

1. There were no Declarations of Interest reported.

**PHC/05/25**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2024**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the committee, held on 9 October 2024 were submitted.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**PHC/06/25**

**Flooding Update**

Jill Holden, GMCA talked to a report and presentation providing an overview of Greater Manchester Flooding Incident 31 December 2024/ 1 January 2025. The update included:

- An overview of the flooding incident between 31 December 2024 and 1 January 2025:
- Multi-agency response
- Summary timeline
- Flood guidance statements
- GM weather and flood warnings
- Impact on flood defences
- Repair and recovery of defences
- Event recovery

Nick Pearson, Environment Agency (EA) updated members on the current EA recovery work.

Flood and weather warning guidance is being reviewed by the LRF's to improve communications for future events. Flood advisory service telecons were held once yellow warnings were triggered, flagging possible significant impacts to areas.

Questions and comments included:

Members welcomed the review of the communications and warnings.

The Section 19 reviews of lead local flood authorities' timeline of completion dates will be confirmed with members.

Members suggested the 100-year event future modelling and language be reviewed. Due the effects and impacts of climate change it was recommended that lead local flood authorities refer to the new published 'Check Your Flood Risk' maps that use National Flooding Risk Assessment 2, demonstrate the effects and risks of climate change on rivers, the sea and surface water.

Members suggested the legislation be updated to strengthen the responsibilities and legal parameters of the EA and government/local authorities.

The EA have a strategic overview of all sources of flooding, and work with partners on risk management, accessing Grant in Aid and supporting Local Authorities producing Section 19 flood investigation reports.

Improved and simplified communication to residents on climate change and weather patterns and the impact on local flooding will continue via the Environment Agency working with Local Authorities and other Risk Management Authorities.

It was suggested that resources needed to support local authorities, inform action plans and a coordinated joint approach be investigated.

It was suggested that GM revisit the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) to understand how this legislation can better encourage developers to include permeable driveways and sustainable drainage in new developments.

Officers agreed to update the presentation to include flooding that as omitted, and whether the damage to the waste water treatment plant in Cheshire had an impact on GM.

Members thanked the multi-agency and voluntary mobilisation, support and clear up around the January floods.

**Resolved /-**

1. That the report and presentation be noted.
2. That thanks be put on record to everyone involved in the multi-agency and voluntary mobilisation, including residents, who supported during and assisted in the clear up after the January floods.

**PHC/07/25**

**Cunliffe Review of the Water Sector**

David Hodcroft, GMCA talked to a presentation on the Cunliffe Review, an independent investigation launched in October 2024 and commissioned to address growing concerns around the performance, regulation, and environmental impact of water companies with recommendations to government on how to tackle inherited systemic issues in the water sector to restore rivers, lakes and seas to good health, meet the challenges of the future and drive economic growth.

Greater Manchester will launch the call for evidence at the end of February for a 6-week period and has been chosen as the location to due to the partnership working through the Integrated Water Management Plan.

The Independent Water Commission will report in 2025 quarter 2 with a clear vision of recommended measures to ensure the regulatory system delivers a clear long-term vision and outcomes of water management, strategic planning to deliver environmental, public health, customer, and economic outcomes.

The Chair suggested that a separate lead member and senior officer session be held to inform the Greater Manchester call for evidence submission.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That a lead member and senior officer session be held to inform the call for evidence submission be agreed.

## **PHC/08/25                      National Planning Policy Framework**

Anne Morgan, GMCA presented a report and talked to a presentation updating members on changes to the on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), including:

- The NPPF was published on 12 December 2024
- Focus is on housing development and Green Belt
- Changes include:
  - Standard local housing need methodology which has increased the figures across GM due to changes to affordability weighting
  - 5-year housing land supply – Places for Everyone (PfE) will continue to provide the development plan for the nine participating authorities, excluding Stockport who are looking at a new Local Plan
  - Clarification about the definition of grey belt and development in the Green Belt
  - Significant changes to Green Belt include the explicit need to meet your housing needs in full
  - The introduction of Grey Belt – work will take place to define Grey Belt across GM
  - NPPF have introduced golden rules around affordable housing requirement on Green Belt, this needs to be 15% higher than current policy up to a maximum of 50%
  - No site-specific viability assessments can be undertaken on greenbelt to negotiate the affordable housing requirement down

Devolution White Paper was published in December 2024, significant changes include:

- Introduction of universal coverage of strategic spatial plans

- Introduces local government reorganisation
- Timescale to be introduced for the GM Spatial Development Strategy
- Once the GM Spatial Development Strategy is in place the CA would gain Strategic Management Powers, including the power to introduce strategic infrastructure levies and Mayoral Development Orders
- Proposed governance changes would require a majority decision on the GM Spatial Development Strategy rather than the current unanimous decision

Questions and comments included:

It was noted that a duty to cooperate across GM is an important aspect.

Members welcomed the emphasis on Brownfield land in the NPPF and the increase of social rent and funding available to deliver.

It was confirmed that there isn't yet a timeline of when the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) refreshed viability guidance will be received, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill is expected by the end of March.

Officers confirmed that Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) will replace Places for Everyone (PfE) over the next few years.

The Chair requested that this work be considered alongside the current Waste and Minerals Joint Development Plan Documents.

#### **Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.

#### **PHC/09/25 English Devolution White Paper**

The item was considered under item PHC/08/25 National Planning Policy Framework.

Joe Donohue, GMCA presented a report providing an update on the current landscape for Homelessness and Migration and forward look at work for 2025, including:

- Baseline Core Homelessness Data shows an increase in households and children in temporary accommodation across GM.
- Street homelessness sees continued increases with numbers back at pre-pandemic levels.
- Establishment and embedding of Housing First remains a priority.
- The government announced a £1billion national funding package for local authorities to tackle and prevent homelessness as part of the funding settlement for 2025/26, with GM receiving a £47.6m consolidated grant with a minimum of 49% of the £24.8m Homelessness Prevention Grant being ringfenced to prioritise prevention, relief and staffing activity.
- Rough Sleeping funding has been universally frozen at the 2024/25 allocation rate.
- 2025/26 should be considered a transitional year, in which Local Authorities and GMCA maintain core services and begin developing specifications in preparation for the multi-year settlement.
- In 2025 the GMCA will recommission the Housing First, Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme and the Young Person's Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder with the A Bed Every Night Programme undergoing a comprehensive service review to ensure it continues to achieve its aims and delivers a comprehensive off-the-streets offer for people experiencing street homelessness.
- A Temporary Accommodation Action Plan was approved in September 2024 by the GMCA and the ten local authorities to tackle rising temporary accommodation usage and spend in the region.
- Priorities of the key programme of work to develop new supply ambitions in line with the GMCA Housing First Unit include:
  1. To understand how to reduce the least suitable temporary accommodation
  2. To understand what can be done with existing empty assets across GM

3. How we can increase long-term permanent housing assets into the system
- Government engagement includes:
    - Ending Homelessness Strategy to drive the national agenda
    - The Home Office is considering its options for the future of the asylum support and accommodation model with the launch of an inquiry into the asylum accommodation model.
    - The Renters Rights Bill is set to become law this year with changes to the regulation and operation of the private rental sector.

Questions and comments included:

Members requested that the development of the temporary accommodation plan also includes next steps for future social and affordable housing and that the housing supply delivery data be investigated.

Members requested support for funding to refurbish empty homes in local authority ownership.

Officers confirmed that work is underway to target empty home owners to get properties onto the market to increase the availability of temporary accommodation.

Members welcomed the work at a GM level to tackle housing supply.

Members advised that GMP have assisted in locating empty home owners leading to some owners selling or becoming landlords.

The Chair requested that Cllr Gambles present a report to the next meeting on Wigan's empty homes work and Cllr White present on Manchester's temporary accommodation and maximising housing benefit subsidy work.

Officers passed on thanks to Wigan colleagues for the learning received on empty homes work undertaken in Wigan.

The Chair raised concerns around London residents being moved to other areas of the country where local housing allowance rates are lower than London, sometimes at short notice and away from family, and requested that this be escalated via the LGA and the homelessness minister and suggested that GM Mayor write to the London Mayor on the issue. It was also suggested that accelerated asylum via the home office be monitored.

Officers confirmed that notification to receiving authorities around the flow of people out of London and South East into more affordable areas varies, there is a statutory requirement to notify receiving local authorities of out of borough placements, the same requirement doesn't exist for discharging homelessness duty as a final offer in another area, consequently there isn't any data around the flow of people. GM has an out of area protocol to notify receiving local authorities when discharging homelessness function. An emerging recommendation of the task and finish group that GM are chairing nationally is to modify LGA guidance on notification to include discharge of homelessness duty as a statutory requirement, reform to local housing allowance would be beneficial due to the current divergence of rates nationally.

### **Resolved/-**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a detailed Housing First update be brought to the next meeting.
3. That Cllr Gambles present a report on Wigan's empty homes work and Cllr White present on Manchester's temporary accommodation and maximising housing benefit subsidy work to the next meeting be agreed.

### **PHC/11/25                      Social Housing Quality Fund**

Mary Gogarty, GMCA, presented a report updating members on the Social Housing Quality Fund £14.84m capital grant offered to GM social housing providers to deliver repairs and renovation works in homes affected by damp and mould issues, an additional £6.73m was match funded by housing providers. The programme completed in April 2024, with work being carried out in 16,177 homes.

Philip Martin, Salford University talked to a presentation detailing the tenant research carried out to understand the experiences of social housing tenants regarding damp, mould and condensation and to gain an understanding of the impact of the funded package of measures.

Questions and comments included:

Bronwyn Rapley, Vice Chair GM Housing Providers Vice Chair confirmed that providers have received the research data report and were involved in the development of the project and the research report.

Members welcomed the funding and recognised that further work is required on certain works and interventions to resolve some issues.

Members requested a report to a future meeting detailing the impact of housing issues on health.

**Resolved/-**

1. That the report and presentation be noted.
2. That a report detailing the impact of housing issues on health be brought to a future meeting.

**PHC/12/25                      Future Meeting Dates**

**Resolved/-**

1. That future meeting dates be scheduled.