



Planning & Housing Commission

Date: 22 January 2026

Subject: A Systemic Approach to Retrofit

Report of: Mark Atherton, Director of Environment, GMCA

Purpose of Report

To provide a briefing on the Systemic Approach to Retrofit being taken by GMCA.

Recommendations:

AGMA is requested to note the contents of the report.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Implications

N/A.

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

N/A.

Risk Management

N/A.

Legal Considerations

N/A.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

N/A.

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A.

Number of attachments to the report:

1 presentation.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None.

Background Papers

None.

Tracking / Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

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?

No.

Bee Network Committee

N/A.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2026

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of GMCA's systemic approach to retrofitting homes. The strategy is designed to address the region's significant retrofit challenge, improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and support vulnerable residents, while also driving economic growth and job creation.

2. Background

Greater Manchester (GM) is home to approximately 1.2 million dwellings, with a tenure split of 60% owner-occupied, 20% social rented, and 20% private rented. Of these, around 800,000 homes require retrofitting to meet modern energy efficiency standards. A key Government policy objective is for all rented homes to achieve at least Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030. Current EPC data shows the majority of homes are rated at D or below, highlighting the scale of the retrofit challenge.

3. Systemic Approach

The GMCA's approach is systemic, involving collaboration across public and private sectors, local authorities, social housing providers, and installers. The strategy is underpinned by the GM Retrofit Portal (gmca.retrofitportal.org.uk), which acts as a central hub for residents and stakeholders. The portal provides:

- **Funding Guidance:** A grant checker to identify eligibility for free or discounted upgrades.
- **Impartial Advice:** Resources to help residents understand retrofit options and benefits.
- **Home Analysis:** Free online assessments to estimate costs and savings.
- **Installer Connections:** Tools to find local, approved installers and request quotes.

4. Communications and Community Engagement

A robust communications campaign supports the retrofit strategy, ensuring broad and inclusive outreach. Key elements include:

- **Local Authority Partnerships:** Collaboration with councils for targeted engagement, such as home assessments and community events.
- **Physical and Digital Advertising:** Billboards, bus adverts, flyers (e.g., included in council tax mailouts), and social media posts.
- **Multilingual Materials:** Translations into Arabic, Polish, and Urdu to reach diverse communities.

The campaign's central message is "Feel the benefit of impartial energy advice", emphasising the financial, health, and environmental advantages of retrofitting. The approach ensures that information is accessible and actionable for all residents, including those in hard-to-reach or vulnerable groups.

5. Technical Measures and Quality Standards

The retrofit programme prioritises a "fabric first" approach, focusing on:

- **Insulation:** Walls, lofts, and floors to improve thermal efficiency.
- **Ventilation:** Ensuring healthy indoor air quality.
- **Windows and Doors:** Upgrades to reduce heat loss.
- **Low-Carbon Technologies:** Installation of air source heat pumps, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, and battery storage.

All works adhere to rigorous standards, including:

- **PAS 2035:2023 and PAS 2030:2023:** National standards for retrofit processes and installation.
- **Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS):** Ensuring quality for renewable energy installations.
- **TrustMark:** Government-endorsed quality assurance.
- **Insurance-Backed Guarantees:** Providing consumer protection.

6. ECO4 LA Flex Programme

The GM ECO4 LA Flex initiative is designed to support vulnerable residents by improving home energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty, and contributing to health and carbon

reduction goals. The programme aligns with [NICE Guidance NG6](#), which addresses health risks associated with cold homes.

Eligibility is determined via three routes:

- **Route 1:** Combined household income below £31,000 per year.
- **Route 2:** Proxy targeting (e.g., Index of Multiple Deprivation, council tax reduction, free school meals).
- **Route 3:** NHS referrals for residents with health conditions exacerbated by cold homes.

Three approved installers deliver the programme across the region, each covering specific localities.

Delivery and Impact

From April 2023 to September 2025, the ECO4 LA Flex programme has achieved:

- 3,851 retrofits completed
- £25,095,678 total investment
- £593.33 average annual bill saving per property (estimated)
- 14,061 tonnes of CO₂ saved (estimated)
- 172 jobs supported and 26 apprenticeships created.

This demonstrates the programme's tangible impact on both residents and the local economy.

7. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)

GMCA has secured significant funding through the SHDF, supporting large-scale upgrades in social housing:

- **Wave 1 (2022 – 2024):** £15 million programme, 819 homes, 2,304 measures (insulation, heat pumps, solar PV).
- **Wave 2.1 (2023 – 2025):** £97 million programme, 5,481 homes, 20,987 measures, including 1,107 air source heat pumps. Digitalisation enables remote monitoring of performance.
- **Wave 3 (2025 onwards):** £147 million programme. Devolved delivery has enabled the introduction of three bidding windows per year for homes that have had retrofit

assessments and designs completed. A detailed schedule of application deadlines, award notifications, and project milestones has been published to guide social housing providers through the process.

8. Warm Homes: Local Grant

The Warm Homes: Local Grant supports owner-occupiers and private renters in low-income households, with a focus on area-based targeting (IMD top 20% most deprived) and scheme delivery by GMCA or local authorities.

The next steps include upgrading the GM Retrofit Portal, recruiting resident engagement and technical officers, assisting local authorities in identifying target areas, and launching the scheme in February 2026.

9. Net Zero Housing Retrofit Framework Agreement

GMCA, in collaboration with Net Zero Hubs, has established a £1 billion national procurement framework agreement for housing retrofit. The framework covers:

- Supply only (Lots 1–6)
- Design, supply, and installation (Lots 7–12)
- Turnkey solutions (Lot 13)
- PAS2035 roles (Lot 14)
- Customer journey (Lot 15).

The framework was launched in August 2025 and supports the delivery of both the Warm Homes Local Grant and Social Housing Fund, providing a robust procurement route for local authorities and housing providers.

10. Conclusion

Greater Manchester's systemic approach to retrofit is a model of integrated policy, funding, and delivery. It combines ambitious targets, robust standards, and inclusive engagement to drive large-scale improvements in housing quality, energy efficiency, and social outcomes. The programme's success is evidenced by substantial investment, measurable impacts, and a clear roadmap for future delivery.