



## **Housing First, Planning and Infrastructure Commission**

Date: 22 January 2026

Subject: Strategic Infrastructure Board January meeting update

Report of: David Hodcroft Head of Strategic Infrastructure

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide a briefing to the Commission on (a) The items considered at the Board meeting held on 14 January 2026, (b) the Strategic Infrastructure Board highlights and success from 2025, progress against 2025/26 and (c) Confirmation of priorities for 2026.

### **Recommendations:**

The Commission is requested to:

- Note the SIB's achievements and maturing role (a) in engaging directly with government departments and economic regulators to ensure that strategic priorities are reflected and (b) strengthening tactical working with infrastructure providers.
- Note the agenda for the January Board meeting (See Annex A)
- Review and provide feedback on the 2026 priorities, especially regarding integration with Housing First and planning objectives.
- Identify areas for further briefing or information, particularly on regulatory engagement, digital infrastructure, and resilience.
- Ensure alignment of local plans and delivery with the Greater Manchester Strategy and SIB priorities

### **Contact Officers**

David Hodcroft – Head of Strategic Infrastructure

## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1. This briefing provides an overview of the Greater Manchester Strategic Infrastructure Board (SIB) activities, achievements in 2025, and priorities for 2026, as they relate to the Housing First, Planning and Infrastructure Commission. It is structured to support the January 2026 Commission meeting, ensuring members are informed of the latest strategic developments, governance changes, and operational priorities across infrastructure, housing, and planning.

## 2. Strategic Infrastructure Board: 2025 Highlights

2.1 Five highlights have been identified, these are:

### **a. Strengthening Influence and Collaboration**

- The SIB has evolved from a consultee to a direct influencer with regulators (Ofgem, Ofwat) and infrastructure providers, formalizing its role within the Combined Authority and reporting annually to GMCA leaders.
- Regular 1:1 meetings with providers have improved alignment of local and mayoral plans, integrating them into a single strategic pipeline.

### **b. Regulatory Innovation and Street Works**

- The Board's work on Collaborative Street Works was recognized by Ofgem, with the approach adopted for Greater Manchester and considered for national rollout.
- SIB contributed to national regulatory reform, advocating for place-based approaches and removing barriers to infrastructure delivery.

### **c. Digital Infrastructure and AI Growth**

- Advanced Greater Manchester's digital leadership through an AI Growth Zone proposal and a data centre strategy, emphasizing strengths in power, water, and connectivity.
- Engaged with stakeholders (SP ENWL, United Utilities, Environment Agency) to identify spatial priorities for future data centre locations.

### **d. Resilience and Water Management**

- Progressed the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP), securing funding for rainwater management and supporting the Sir John Cunliffe review.
- Demonstrated strong partnership working and strategic alignment with national priorities.

#### **e. Board Maturity and Governance**

- Undertook a maturity evaluation, developed flexible terms of reference, and committed to annual reporting and longer meetings to address growing complexity.
- Influenced Ofgem's final determinations for NGET and Cadent, unlocking regulatory support for GM's ambitions.

### **3. Priorities for 2026**

3.1 Seven priorities have been identified, these are:

1. Greater Manchester Infrastructure Plan: Outlining priorities and needs aligned to new Mayoral CA statutory requirements, including the Spatial Development Strategy, Integrated Pipeline, and National Infrastructure Pipeline.
2. Collaborative Street Works: Prepare for and begin implementation.
3. Governance of RESP/NESO: Establish relationships for oversight.
4. Water White Paper Response: Engage with Ofwat/Defra.
5. NGET Transmission Delivery: Support strategic priorities.
6. ED3/Ofgem: Strengthen engagement and clarify priorities with SP ENWL.
7. Social Value: Communicate benefits from infrastructure investment

### **4. January 2026 SIB Meeting Agenda (for Commission Update)**

4.1 Key items from the SIB meeting to be shared with the Commission are:

- Ofgem Final Determinations (Cadent, NGET) and collaborative street works.
- GM Data Centre Strategy and digital infrastructure.
- National Infrastructure Pipeline and GMCA/TfGM inputs.
- Greater Manchester Strategy delivery plan targets for 2026 and Integrated Pipeline.
- Board highlights and confirmation of 2026 priorities.
- Updates on flood risk, integrated water management, energy planning, digital place plans, and developer feedback.
- Forward look and next steps for the next quarter.