

**Minutes of the Greater Manchester Housing First Planning Infrastructure
Commission meeting held on Thursday 22 January 2026**

Present:

Salford City Council	City Mayor Paul Dennett - Chair
Manchester City Council	Councillor Gavin White
Tameside Council	Councillor Andrew McLaren
Wigan Council	Councillor Susan Gambles

Independent Members:

Onward Homes	Bronwen Rapley (GM Housing Providers)
Inspiring Housing Community	Bernadette Elder
Land Trust	

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Members:

Bury Council	Councillor Alan Quinn
Salford City Council	Councillor Phillip Cusack
Manchester City Council	Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin

Officers in Attendance:

GMCA	Steve Fyfe
GMCA	Clare Taylor-Russell
GMCA	David Hodcroft
GMCA	Jill Holden
GMCA	John Bibby
GMCA	Mark Atherton
GMCA	Anees Mank
GMCA	Natalie Webster
GMCA	Andrew McIntosh
GMCA	Jacqueline Gailey
GMCA	Kerry Bond
Homes England	Holly Harrow

Environment Agency

Nick Pearson

Environment Agency

Dermot Smith

LRFCC

Adrian Lythgo

HFPIC/26/01 Apologies

Resolved/-

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillors Mike McCusker, (Salford), Elizabeth Patel (Trafford) and Martin Lax (TfGM), Carl Moore (Homes England) and Jane Healey-Brown

HFPIC/26/01 Chairs Announcements and Urgent Business

Resolved/-

1. There were no chairs announcements or any items of urgent business reported.

HFPIC/26/03 Declarations of Interest

Resolved/-

1. There were no Declarations of Interest reported.

HFPIC/26/04 Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission Meeting held on 23 October 2025

Resolved /-

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025 be approved.

HFPIC/26/05 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management New Flood Policy

Nick Pearson and Dermot Smith, Environment Agency (EA), spoke to a presentation providing an update on the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management funding policy coming into effect in April 2026.

Key points presented included:

- Funding policy aims and eligibility
- Prioritisation and strategic objectives
- Changes to previous funding
- Awaiting detailed guidance on prioritising and allocation of funding
- Implications – understanding of risk, competition for and oversubscription of funding

Members were asked to consider:

- Shared understanding of risk
- Focus on future pipeline
- Continuation of existing projects
- Identification of beneficiaries and partners
- Opportunities to work innovatively to identify programme level funding
- How to build on the work of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) to build on the shared understanding of risk

Comments and Questions:

Adrian Lythgo, Chair of the NWRFCC, reflected on members' questions about how the new policy may affect devolved areas' influence on priorities, noting that this will only be clear once detailed guidance is published.

Members raised concerns about potential funding constraints and reduced local flexibility caused by mandatory policy priorities, noting in particular the contradiction between Green Book guidance and regional inequalities, such as the North's limited ability to raise the required 10% contribution. They highlighted the ongoing challenge of meeting this minimum infrastructure contribution, historically funded through reserves and local levy, now reduced to 3%, and expressed concerns about expectations for business sector contributions and the implications this may carry. It was suggested that GM engage with the Environment Agency to seek clarity from Government.

Members discussed opportunities through GM's Places for Everyone and how devolved pipelines might support flood mitigation to enable housing growth. The EA confirmed that National Flood Risk Assessment (NAFRA) evidence was used to identify suitable areas. The importance of identifying beneficiaries to contribute to funding and working collectively was noted. Officers advised that the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) aligns GMCA, United Utilities and EA priorities to inform understanding of risk and opportunities.

Officers confirmed that project prioritisation processes are not yet known and that the IWMP may enable low-cost, scalable projects. Refurbishment of existing assets can now be funded nationally and accessed by districts.

The Chair suggested an opportunity to influence the policy by meeting with government to discuss GM devolution and influence policy. Members noted that Defra approval of NW funding, and the possibility of funds being withdrawn for other national priorities, contradicts the principle of devolution.

Officers advised that conversations with Defra are ongoing and that regional flood committee chairs could also raise these issues.

The importance of appropriate annual appointments to the NWRFCC Board was noted.

The Pathfinder Project, focusing on the IWMP and the Platt Bridge Pilot, continues to highlight funding pressures. Senior Defra officials are visiting Combined Authority

Chief Executives, including GM in February, offering an opportunity to raise these issues. The Chair requested coordinated input from GMCA and partners ahead of the visits.

Adrian Lythgo confirmed that all policy-related points had already been submitted to Defra and the Environment Agency through the national consultation and reiterated the need for the NWRFC to retain a meaningful role in local decision-making.

Officers advised that the EA inspects and rates assets but were unsure whether costs had been assessed to inform feasibility of future nature-based solutions. It was also noted that some United Utilities assets are transferred to districts, and further work will explore whether associated costs are passed to developers.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the GMCA will work with the wider GM partnership to continue to build an evidence based, robust and integrated flood and water management programme.

HFPIC/26/06 Planning Reforms

Clare Taylor-Russell, GMCA spoke to a report providing an update on the Government's December 2025 consultation draft of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The draft expands and restructures the NPPF, introducing themed policy chapters, separating plan-making and decision-making policies, and adding new technical annexes. A consultation is open until 10 March 2026 and further guidance on the new plan-making system is open for feedback until 15 March 2026.

The new NPPF will not apply to Greater Manchester (GM) local authorities that submit plans by 31 December 2026.

The Government has also published guidance for the new 30-month plan-making process, which includes early preparatory work, gateway stages, formal consultations and examination.

Local planning authorities are encouraged to begin preliminary activity ahead of the system coming into force in early 2026. Work across GM authorities and TfGM is underway to consider consultation responses with individual local authorities encouraged to submit their own responses.

Comments and questions:

The Chair highlighted the significance of the NPPF consultation, particularly the definition of affordable housing within the draft NPPF. He noted that the current definition of 80% of market value does not reflect local wages, household incomes, local housing allowance, or the realities of Universal Credit and housing benefit. He emphasised that this long-standing issue in Greater Manchester contributes to rents and house prices rising faster than wages and stressed the importance of using the consultation to raise these concerns.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.

HFPIC/26/07 Renters' Rights Act

John Bibby, GMCA provided an update on the Renters' Right Act 2025, setting out the main legal reforms in the act, the timetable and implications for councils.

The Act abolishes Section 21 evictions and introduces Assured Tenancies as the default from May 2026, giving tenants greater security, existing 12-month fixed term tenancies agreed since May 2025 are protected from eviction without grounds as a consequence of the fact that the new approach is being introduced for new and existing tenancies at the same time. The Act also brings in limits on rent increases,

bans rental bidding and discrimination, requires written agreements, and amends eviction grounds.

The Act creates significant new enforcement duties for councils from May 2026. It further introduces a national landlord database, a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman, and future extensions to the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law with implementation in phases two and three following, from the end of 2026 through to the mid-2030s.

It is also expected to impact homelessness services by reducing cases but increasing case complexity. New burdens funding is available initially, with longer term funding expected through landlord registration fees.

Comments and questions:

Members noted that only around 4% of landlords currently rent to people receiving benefits and expressed concern that the Act may further reduce this proportion. It was also noted that lobbying to uprate Local Housing Allowance had been unsuccessful in the last budget, reinforcing the need to increase the supply of affordable homes.

The Chair requested that thanks be placed on record to John Bibby and the GMCA team involved in the amendment to legislation and valued work with GM local authorities.

Resolved:

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. That thanks be placed on record to John Bibby and the GMCA team involved in the amendment to legislation and valued work with GM local authorities be agreed.

Mark Atherton and Anees Mank, GMCA spoke to a presentation outlining Greater Manchester's retrofit strategy designed to address the retrofit challenge, improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and support vulnerable residents, while also driving economic growth and job creation, including:

- Greater Manchester retrofit background with c12k GM homes retrofitted
- Launch of the Government's new Warms Home Plan published on 21 January 2026
 - GM is exemplified throughout the plan due to the work of the GMCA retrofit team and the level of quality assurance
 - Creates increased funding through the integrated settlement
 - Area based approach for combined authorities which could create efficiencies and greater flexibility
 - Fully funded retrofit for low-income households
- Systemic approach with commitment across GM districts and partners including the NHS on eco-flex eligibility for residents
- Creating good quality jobs and growth across the sector with a £1 billion retrofit framework to procure the services
- GM Retrofit Portal – funding, advice and search of quality installers

In the interest of time, the Chair requested that an update on the Warm Homes Plan be brought to a future meeting and asked that the schemes referenced in the presentation be included within that update.

Comments and questions:

Members were advised that GM outcomes performance data presented to the Green City Region Board will be shared with members.

Officers confirmed that it would be beneficial to share and adopt some of the customer/resident communications more widely across GM. A comprehensive toolkit is already available to all districts, providing consistent messaging; however, levels of uptake vary, and members' support in promoting its use would be welcome. It was

suggested that a briefing note outlining achievements be prepared for Leaders and for wider public communication.

Members noted that insulation appears to be downgraded in the new scheme, which may disadvantage residents in certain areas. Officers advised that future flexibility within the scheme will allow delivery of the most effective measures, and further detail will be provided in a future update.

Officers confirmed that all landlords, social and private, must sign up to the GM Good Landlord Charter to be eligible for funding for all GMCA retrofit schemes.

Officers confirmed that eligibility and household income levels for the new Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme has increased to £36k, GMCA delivery is via an area-based approach meaning all residents in selected IMD Income Decile 1 and 2 areas qualify regardless of income.

Resolved:

1. That the report and presentation be noted.
2. That an update on the Warm Homes Plan and other schemes be brought to a future meeting.
3. That a briefing note outlining achievements be prepared for Leaders and for wider public communication be agreed.

HFPIC/26/09

Good Growth Fund & Integrated Pipeline Update

Resolved:

1. That the item be deferred until the next meeting of the commission.

HFPIC/26/10

Strategic Infrastructure Board January Meeting Update

David Hodcroft, GMCA presented an overview of the Greater Manchester Strategic Infrastructure Board (SIB) activities, achievements in 2025, and priorities for 2026 following its meeting on 14 January 2026. The report highlighted strong progress during 2025, including strengthened engagement with regulators such as Ofgem and Ofwat, improved collaboration with infrastructure providers, and advancements in digital infrastructure, resilience and water management.

Key items considered at the January meeting included Ofgem's final determinations for Cadent and NGET, development of a GM Data Centre Strategy, updates on the National Infrastructure Pipeline, and progress against Greater Manchester Strategy delivery plan targets.

The Board also reviewed emerging priorities for 2026, covering the GM Infrastructure Plan, collaborative street works, regulatory engagement, and support for major energy and water programmes.

Headline updates were provided on flood risk, integrated water management, energy planning, digital place plans and one-to-one engagement with providers.

Resolved:

1. That the Board's achievements and maturing role in engaging directly with government departments and economic regulators to ensure that strategic priorities are reflected and strengthening tactical working with infrastructure providers be noted.
2. That the agenda for the January Board meeting at Annex A be noted.

HFPIC/26/11 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved:

That the future meeting dates be noted.