



Housing First, Planning and Infrastructure Commission

Date: 25 March 2026

Subject: Strategic Infrastructure Board January meeting update

Report of: Peter Emery Chair of the Greater Manchester Strategic Infrastructure Board and
David Hodcroft Head of Strategic Infrastructure

Purpose of Report

This report provides a strategic update to the Housing First, Planning and Infrastructure Commission on the work of the Greater Manchester Strategic Infrastructure Board (SIB), reflecting progress during 2025/26 and priorities for 2026/27. It draws directly on the SIB Annual Review 2025/26 (Annex A) and sets out how infrastructure activity is aligning with the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) Delivery Plan.

Recommendations:

The Commission is requested to:

- Note the alignment with the Greater Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan (para 1.3)
- 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 (paragraphs 2.1 – 2.2 (and Annex A)).
- Note the Progress Report (Annex A) and identify any areas where it could be amended or improved.
- Note the areas for improvement (paragraph 3.1)
- Identify areas for further detailed briefings to the Commission.
- Ensure alignment between Local Infrastructure Plans and SIB priorities / work.

Contact Officers

David Hodcroft – Head of Strategic Infrastructure

1. Introduction/ Background

1.1. A headline briefing was provided to the Commission when it last met on the 22 January. A comprehensive progress report has now been drafted to ensure that members are informed of the latest strategic developments.

1.2. The Strategic Infrastructure Board provides a high-level forum for coordinating organisations responsible for Greater Manchester's infrastructure systems, covering energy, transport, water, digital, green and blue infrastructure, and cross-cutting issues such as resilience, funding and collaboration. Its remit spans eleven agreed infrastructure challenges and focuses on aligning local priorities with national planning, regulatory and investment frameworks.

1.3. The Greater Manchester Strategy Delivery Plan (December, 2025) includes metrics specific to the SIB. These are:

- **By 2030** have mature partnerships around infrastructure with providers, economic and environmental regulators, national government and regional entities.
- **Year 1 (by end March 26):** Priorities aligned to GMS agreed with targeted government departments, economic regulators and regulated infrastructure providers.
- **Year 4 (by end March 2029):** Infrastructure Plan to support the 10 Year Delivery Plan, the Spatial Development Strategy and leverage private capital.
- **Year 10 (by end March 2035):** Investment leveraged through two utility price review cycles and aligned to the priorities of Greater Manchester infrastructure providers, economic and environmental regulators, national government and regional entities.

1.4 Through the leadership of the Board's chair (Peter Emery) the Board's role has continued to evolve. The SIB now provides coordinated, evidence-led engagement with government departments, economic regulators and infrastructure providers, ensuring that Greater Manchester's strategic priorities are reflected in investment cycles, policy reform and delivery programmes.

2. Key Achievements in 2025/26

2.1 During 2025/26, the Board significantly strengthened its engagement with economic regulators and government departments, progressing to structured, senior-level and sequences engagement.

2.2 A major focus in 2025/26 has been the development of operational interfaces that directly support delivery. Notable progress (See Annex A for further detail) includes:

- Completion of Environment Agency screening of delivery plan sites with outputs feeding directly into shared planning and prioritisation.
- Replication of this screening process by United Utilities, covering 48 sites and establishing a three-tier priority model to reduce risk and accelerate delivery.
- Continued development of a single Integrated Infrastructure Pipeline linking local delivery plans with regulatory investment cycles.
- Establishing a strategic partnership with the Greater London Authority to learn from their experience of collaborative street works, application of a Dig Once approach and monitoring and evaluation tools (required by Ofgem to demonstrate social value from collaboration).
- These mechanisms represent a step change in how infrastructure constraints and opportunities are identified early and managed collaboratively.

3. Areas for Improvement

3.1 The Annual Review identifies several areas requiring further focus: As part of reflecting on the progress which the SIB has achieved over the last 12 months, four areas for continued focus have been identified. These include;

1. Review of risk register which can be used to identify challenges and focus attention.
2. Undertake lessons learned so teams can learn from previous experience .
3. Social value and benefits including working with wider GMCA colleagues to capture and report on social value.
4. Data sharing – make it easier to share across organisations where possible.

3.2 These four areas will be built into the seven priorities for 2026/27 which are identified opposite.

3.3 The seven priorities for the coming 12 months focus on building upon the SIB's extensive work undertaken over previous years and is natural evolution of SIB's work whilst also linking back into the wider targets of the GMS and delivery plan.

3.4 These issues have directly informed the priorities for 2026/27.

4. Priorities for 2026/27

4.1 Building on the progress made, the Board's priorities for the next year are:

1. **Greater Manchester Infrastructure Plan**

Development of a comprehensive Infrastructure Plan aligned with new Mayoral Combined Authority statutory requirements, the Integrated Pipeline and the National Infrastructure Pipeline.

2. **Collaborative Street Works – Implementation**

Moving from pilots to delivery, with agreed governance, operational readiness and learning from other city regions.

3. Formalising Governance with NESO / RESP

Establishing clear relationships, escalation routes and working practices to ensure GM priorities are reflected in regional and national energy planning.

4. Water White Paper Response and Continued Reform Engagement

Sustained engagement with Defra and Ofwat to embed place-based delivery models into national reform and to shape United Utilities next investment programme.

5. Transmission and Distribution Network Delivery

Supporting NGET and SP Electricity North West to deliver and unlock growth locations and improve resilience.

6. ED3 (Electricity Distribution 3)/ Ofgem Engagement

Strengthening clarity on strategic priorities and investment sequencing with SP Electricity North West. Ensuring their next 5 year investment plan (from 2028) reflects Greater Manchester priorities.

7. Social Value and Benefits

Developing a clearer framework for capturing and communicating the social, economic and environmental benefits of infrastructure investment.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Strategic Infrastructure Board has made substantial progress in 2025/26, demonstrating a clear shift towards mature, place-based infrastructure leadership, which is unique outside of London and other major global cities. The focus for the coming year is to consolidate this progress by strengthening delivery interfaces, formalising governance, and translating strategic influence into consistently improved outcomes for housing, growth and resilience across Greater Manchester.

5.2 Agreements on priorities and outputs for the next 12 months will be made with the EA, SP ENW before April 2026 and with UU and Cadent during April and May.

5.3 Progress reports will be provided and aligned to Greater Manchester Strategy delivery plan reporting.

Annex A - Annual Review 2025/26

Attached separately.