

**GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY HELD  
ON 12 NOVEMBER 2020, AT 18:00 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor John Walsh (Chair)	Bolton
Councillor Martin Hayes	Bury
Councillor Paul Copper	Bury
Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin	Manchester
Councillor Jill Lovecy	Manchester
Councillor Linda Robinson	Rochdale
Councillor Mike Glover	Tameside
Councillor Sharmina August	Salford
Councillor Charles Gibson	Stockport
Councillor Janet Mobbs	Stockport
Councillor Kevin Procter	Trafford
Councillor Amy Whyte	Trafford
Councillor Fred Walker	Wigan

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor Andy Burnham	GMCA
Mark Atherton	GMCA
Joanne Heron	GMCA
Julie Connor	GMCA
Jamie Fallon	GMCA
Matt Berry	GMCA
Paul Harris	GMCA

**HPE 244/20 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Liam Billington (Tameside).

**HPE 245/20 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no announcements or urgent business.

**HPE 246/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED/-**

No declarations of interest were received.

**HPE 247/20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD 8 OCTOBER 2020**

**RESOLVED/-**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

## HPE 248/20 COVID RECOVERY UPDATE FROM THE MAYOR

The Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor Andy Burnham provided a verbal update on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and GM's response.

The following key points were highlighted:

- It was confirmed that a further update on the 'Living with Covid Resilience Plan' would be provided to a future meeting. It was recognised that the one-year Plan acknowledges that the pandemic was still ongoing in GM and was likely to be so for some time. However, GM has been clear that the building back better phase of responding to Covid needed to start now, revolved around an acceleration towards a zero carbon society.
- A Covid Emergency Committee had been convened, which had strengthened partnership working across agencies, enabling the effective mobilisation of resources to provide timely and targeted support.
- It was acknowledged that the north had been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, which was continuing to have a negative impact on people's mental and financial wellbeing.
- Encouragingly, GM was seeing its first week on week fall in infection rates (since the 22 August 2020), which could suggest that GM had passed its second peak. It was acknowledged that due to the time lag, this period would continue to pose significant challenges for the NHS (pressure could ease by beginning of December 2020 at the earliest).
- Concerns remained in relation to contact tracing capacity, with the latest figures showing that only approx. 56% of contacts were being reached within 24 hours of being identified. The National NHS test and trace system also failed to group households, which was not helpful. It was highlighted that a number of districts were supporting the national system to reach 'index cases' (those who have tested positive in the last 24 hours), which was working well. However, districts must then pass the case back to the national team, which was not constructive.
- It was noted that GM were continuing to work with Government on the Covid response, and were open minded about the pilot taking place in Liverpool. A recent letter from Government had suggested that 10% of the population could be tested, leaving a degree of control to local areas to allocate them to priority areas such as educational settings and social care. In addition, GM had submitted its own proposals to Government, which included a proposal to utilise resources from GMP and GMFRS to support the national system.
- The homelessness situation in GM was very concerning, however, the Homelessness Housing Teams, and key partners were working tirelessly to support people in need. In GM there was currently:
  - 480 people being supported by the single room provision
  - 480 people being supported by the A Bed Every Night (ABEN) scheme (created by the Mayor and districts)
  - 1300 people and approx 3000 families living in temporary accommodation
  - 106 people sleeping roughA homelessness response over the coming winter was being mobilised, and the Government had indicated that further funding would become available via the 'Protect' programme to which, Manchester and Salford were eligible.
- The situation within schools continued to be a concern, due to the ongoing disruption to learning caused by the number of cases. Given this, GM leaders were working with Headteachers, key partners, and colleagues from the Liverpool City Region to lobby

Government to cancel the forthcoming exams and adopt an assessment approach similar to Wales. It was noted that children in the north had had more time out of school than other areas, which would put them at a significant disadvantage.

- It was anticipated that GM could be put back into tier 3 restrictions when lockdown ended on 2 December 2020. It was felt that the restrictions GM had been under for nearly four months had not had the desired impact, only dampening cases, but had had a detrimental impact on residents and businesses. For these reasons, the Mayor stated that he would be requesting that GM be put in to the less severe Tier 2. It was noted that the additional business support funding given to regions in Tier 3 (£20 per head formula), which saw GM get £60m was now being given to every local authority in the country. The Mayor confirmed that to be asked to re-enter Tier 3 without additional support funding would be challenging.
- In terms of building back better, GM was pressing on with its big picture plans, which included the final version of the revised Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF). The Plan was currently being considered by districts after AGMA unanimously agreed on 30 October 2020 to recommend to districts that the GMSF Publication Plan be approved for consultation and submission.
- GM were also currently consulting on the Clean Air Zone, and introducing Minimum Licencing Standards for Taxi's.
- In terms of bus reform, it was confirmed that the decision had been delayed due to the pandemic, but the Mayor was now considering the implications of the proposals, and would be providing further advice to leaders on how to progress with the ambition, to develop a more integrated, and affordable transport system.
- The Mayor advised that the news in relation to a vaccine was encouraging, noting that GM was aiming to ensure that it was in the best position to be able to maximise on the recovery as soon as possible.

The following questions were raised:

- Members expressed their thanks to the Mayor and Leaders for advocating on behalf of the north in what were unprecedented times.
- A Liberal Democrat Member from Stockport sought clarification as to why the Mayor had met with the Conservative group in Stockport regarding the GMSF but not the Liberal Democrats. The Mayor advised that the radical rewrite of the GMSF sought to protect 60% of the greenbelt and enabled districts to redistribute housing, putting developments where they were most wanted. The Mayor advised that he had offered to meet to discuss the plan with anyone who had concerns, but was not aware of a request from the Liberal Democrats. It was agreed that the Mayor would seek clarification, and contact the Group if a request had been made. The offer of a meeting was still on the table, however, it was acknowledged that making changes at this stage, would need to be carefully considered.
- Members expressed their support to cancelling forthcoming exams and adopting an assessment approach, given that children in the region had been unequivocally disadvantaged by the pandemic. The Mayor advised that he was working collaboratively with GM Headteacher's and colleagues from the Liverpool City Region, in order to seek a resolve on the issue. It was recognised that those due to sit SATs, and those young people on vocational courses had also been significantly impacted and should be included in the correspondence with Government.

- A Member highlighted that Ofsted inspections were due to commence in January 2021, which was an additional pressure on schools. The Mayor agreed, and it was confirmed that the issue would be raised as part of their communications with Government.
- A Member sought clarification as to whether there was any evidence which indicated a fall in infection rates during the half term period. The Mayor advised that his view was that schools should have been closed as part of the lockdown, as he felt GM needed a true circuit break, in order to tackle the stubbornly high cases GM had seen all year. It was not known whether a fall in infection rates could be linked to half term, but the Mayor confirmed that he would be considering the latest data at the Covid Emergency Committee next week, and advised that this information would then be made public.
- Members felt that returning to Tier 3 restrictions following the lockdown, would only further increase the level of inequality between the north and south, and amongst different groups within society. The Mayor explained that the Northern Health Science Alliance had reported that mental health and financial wellbeing (including loneliness) had been hit harder in the north than other areas.
- A Member highlighted the significant challenges faced by local authorities, with many facing significant deficits. The Mayor confirmed that the Spending Review was due to be considered on 25 November 2020, noting that GM would be making the case for council funding to be properly rectified. It was noted that some councils were considering cutting homelessness budgets in 2020/21 due to their financial situation.
- A Member commented that many residents felt that a franchising approach was the most appropriate way for the city region to run bus services. It was acknowledged that there were a number of considerations in relation to improving transport services in GM, which included; connected transport routes/ services, combined ticketing, affordability and vehicle standards. The Mayor agreed that creating orbital transport links was the ambition, and acknowledged that the reformed bus system would need to consider the Clean Air Zone requirements. It was felt that providers were often servicing GM with some of their oldest vehicles, which was not of the high standard GM desired. Options for bus reform were still being considered, but the ambition was to level up the transport system, and develop a London style system.
- A Member expressed his support of the GMSF, which he felt was likely to reduce inequality and support GM residents.
- A discussion took place on how GM could recover from the pandemic. A Member felt that to support a speedy recovery from the pandemic, a mass vaccination programme was required, supported by an effective test and trace system. It was recognised that often the most vulnerable people did not take up the offer of a vaccination, and it was anticipated that public confidence building initiative would be required. The Mayor agreed that the vaccine provided an exit strategy, albeit, building public confidence would be a significant task, given that there were a number of scare stories in circulation. The Mayor referred to 2009/10 when a vaccination ended a case of swine flu. It was confirmed that plans were being developed to ensure that GM was ready to roll out a mass vaccination programme, ensuring that any arrangements were easily accessible. The Northern Health Science Alliance had suggested that

more of the vaccine should be afforded to areas with the highest cases, which was being factored into plans.

- The Chair requested that any further Member questions should be submitted to the Governance Officer, who would seek a response accordingly. The Chair thanked the Mayor for his attendance at the meeting and for his ongoing efforts in tackling the pandemic.

#### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That any further Member questions be submitted to the Governance Officer for response.

#### **HPE 248/20 PUBLIC SECTOR DECARBONSATION SCHEME**

Mark Atherton, GMCA, provided an overview of the report which outlined opportunities presented by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) and GM's ambition to seek substantial funding from the scheme for public building retrofit projects across the conurbation.

It was highlighted that given the constrained delivery timeframes, GMCA approval was being sought now, to receive and expend circ £30-60m funding from Salix (NDPB) to undertake low carbon retrofit projects on approximately 133 public buildings across GM.

As part of the Summer Fiscal stimulus, Government announced £1bn funding for the PSDS, which would be released as 100% grants, via Salix Finance (NDPB), between October 2020 and January 2021. The aim was to halve carbon emissions from the Public Estate by 2032, through the deployment of energy efficiency and heating measures, excluding gas powered boilers, and Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

Over the past nine months the GMCA had been working with Districts and other key partners (including TfGM, HSCP), to undertake baseline assessments of public sector buildings, with over 100 already complete.

GMCA had also successfully bid for circ £1m feasibility funding from the Salix Skills fund, which was currently being used to procure, either directly or via districts, approximately 12 consultants to undertake 133 building assessments across the public estate.

It was proposed that the PSDF application be submitted by Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, on behalf of all the participating GM stakeholders. The application would provide details of the city region's approach to decarbonisation across 3 phases (as shown in figure 1, page 19).

- Phase 1 Deliverable outputs by March 31st, 2021
- Phase 2 Deliverable outputs by September 30th, 2021
- Phase 3 A negotiated range of outputs beyond the current stated SALIX Finance timelines

It was confirmed that given the timescales for delivery, the project would focus on 'shovel ready projects', with a view to considering longer term projects, should further funding opportunities arise.

Members raised the following questions:

- A Member explained that many GM residents were unable to replace their boilers, and queried whether there was funding available to support them to 'go clean'. It was confirmed that the PSDS was focused upon public buildings such as schools, and leisure centres, however, there was another pot of funding which included social housing. Further information on the Green Homes Grants was provided in section 249/20.
- A Member explored how the funding would be distributed across the conurbation, and whether boroughs could submit bids independently. It was confirmed that there was an agreement across the 10 districts, to submit a GM bid but this did not preclude districts from submitting their own bids should they wish. Collaborating on the bid, enabled GM to benefit from economies of scale, and following discussions with the funders, it was understood that they would be more receptive to a larger bids. All boroughs and key partners had been engaged in developing the bid and districts had been encouraged to submit as many projects as feasibly possible within the limited timescales. The specifics on the breakdown and numbers could not be confirmed as the feasibility studies were still ongoing.
- Members expressed their support for the scheme and it was acknowledged that this was a fantastic opportunity for GM, particularly in terms of economic activity. A Member queried whether there was a cap on what GM could be bid for? There was no cap on the amount of funding which GM could bid for from the £900 million, however, the process was competitive so GM needed to be cautious. It was confirmed that the bid would reflect what could be achieved within the timescales.
- Would priority be given to GM providers? It was envisaged that the initial phases would use existing procurement frameworks, with the aim to support GM jobs where possible. The longer term aim was to encourage businesses to expand their expertise and workforce, as it was envisaged that future funding rounds would be announced by Government.
- What was the net benefit of the scheme towards our 2038 carbon neutrality ambition? The net gain would be clearer once the feasibility studies were complete, but preliminary work on the 2700 public venues, indicated that if we were to fully decarbonise the top 100 venues, this would halve the total emissions of the total stock. It was noted that due to the timescales and complexities, the top 100 venues could not be put forward for phase 1, although it demonstrated where the focus could be directed in the future.
- A Member explored whether enough proposals had been submitted by districts. All districts and key partners had worked incredibly hard to get the bid to where it was. In terms of learning from the process, and strengthening future bids, taking the work to greater depth would be beneficial. It was advised that the resources available within districts to undertake the work was variable, with those with less resources receiving additional support from the GMCA. It was likely that the districts with more resources would submit more proposals. It was noted that some districts had outsourced their facilities function, and it was felt that this made completing the work more complex.

**RESOLVED/-**

That the update be noted.

## **HPE 249/20 GREEN HOMES GRANT AND SOCIAL HOUSING DECARBONISATION FUND PROJECT UPDATE**

Mark Atherton, GMCA, provided an additional update on the other elements of the £3bn package of investment to support retrofit of buildings.

### **Green Homes Grant**

It was confirmed that GM had successfully attained £4.7m for delivery of Phase 1 of the Green Homes Grant (Local Authority delivery). The pilot which was launched in September 2020, and allows Homeowners (up to £5000) and landlords (up to £10,000 if tenants are on benefits, with a 33% contribution) to apply for grants to spend on energy efficient and low carbon heating measures. It was noted that the timescales were challenging, with the aim to retrofit 500 properties by March 2021, with a view to bidding for a further £5m in phase 2 (which must be delivered by July 2021). It was noted that given the timescales, the first phase would utilise existing procurement frameworks, which tended to be the bigger local suppliers, with a view to adopting sub dynamic procurement systems to support SME's in future phases. A marketing campaign had been launched by the GMCA, which had been shared with districts. It was agreed that this information would be circulated to Members.

In addition, there was a Green Homes voucher scheme (£1.5bn) which would be administered directly by the Government via their voucher website. It was noted that the pilot would only support the replacement of an old boiler with a low carbon heating solution.

### **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**

The Government had pledged £50m to create a Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF-Demonstrator) Demonstrator programme to pilot innovative approaches to retrofitting social houses over 2020/21 at scale, and to support green jobs as part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. It will mean warmer and more energy efficient homes, a reduction in households' energy bills, and lower carbon emissions.

It was confirmed that GMCA had held discussions with GM Social Landlords about the opportunity and had agreed to submit a bid on their behalf, but the outcome was not yet known.

### **RESOLVED/-**

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the marketing materials on the Green Homes Grant (Local Authority Delivery) be shared with Members for information.

## **HPE 250/20 REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS**

### **RESOLVED/-**

That the Register of Key Decisions be noted.

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 10 December at 6pm via Microsoft Teams Live.