ITEM No. 9

GREATER MANCHESTER PLANNING & HOUSING COMMISSION

Date: 5 April 2017

Subject: HOUSING WHITE PAPER BRIEFING

Report of: Anne Morgan & Steve Fyfe

PURPOSE OF REPORT

On the 7 February the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the publication of the Government's White Paper on housing and planning, designed to address the "broken housing market" and its failure to deliver the numbers of affordable homes needed to house the nation. This report provides a briefing on the paper and issues raised.

RECOMMENDATION

That the commission notes, comments upon the briefing and highlights any strategic issues that should inform Greater Manchester's response to the questions set in the White Paper.

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SUMMARY

A briefing note on the White Paper is attached as Appendix A.

In summary, the white paper is divided into the following chapters.

Chapter 1 - Planning for the right homes in the right places. This chapter sets out:
- Plans, simplifying plan making, honest assessments of need and the duty to co-operate
- Clarifying land ownership and who owns what
- Protection for Green Belt which should only be amended in exceptional circumstances
- Neighbourhood plans and
- Making better use of land for housing – higher densities in urban areas and reviewing space standards

Chapter 2 – Building Homes Faster. This chapter sets out:
- Certainty for authorities that have planned for new homes
- Boost LA capacity and capability
- Ensure that infrastructure is provided in the right place with a £2.3Bn Housing Infrastructure Fund
- Secure timely connections to utilities so that this doesn’t hold up getting homes built
- Supporting quicker build out – delays cause by planning conditions, strategic licencing of protected species and new approaches to how developers can contribute to infrastructure
- Address skills shortages in construction
- Hold developers to account for delivery - more transparent data and
- Hold Las to account through a new housing delivery test.

Chapter 3 – Diversifying the Market. This chapter sets out:
- Back small and medium sized builders to grow (incl House building Fund)
- Support custom build
- New contractors through accelerates Construction programme
- Encourage more institutional investors
- Support housing associations and LA to build more homes
- Encourage the public sector to play its part
- Boost productivity and innovation by encouraging modern methods of construction

Chapter 4 – helping people now. This chapter sets out:
- Support home ownership through Help to Buy and Starter Homes
- Investment in Affordable Homes Programme
- Making renting fairer
• Promote transparency and fairness for the growing number of leaseholders
• Cracking down on empty homes and support areas most affected by second homes.
• Encourage the development of housing that meets the needs of future populations
• Help the most vulnerable
• Do more to prevent homelessness by supporting households at risk

The white paper concludes with an Annex on further detail followed by 38 questions which are the subject of a public consultation. The deadline for responding to this consultation is 2nd May 2017.

CONCLUSION

The GMCA Planning and Housing Team have begun drafting a response to the detailed questions set out in the White Paper. It is intended to prepare an overarching response which picks up on key messages and omissions, including but not limited to issues such as:

• the timetable for implementing proposals in the White Paper, in order to understand what impact (if any) there would be on Greater Manchester
• the emphasis on great weight being applied to brownfield land, which is not underpinned by any changes to the viability tests/5 year supply requirements set out in NPPF.
• the barriers to housing delivery which do not lie with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and how these will be addressed
• issues raised in the White Paper without corresponding questions or firm proposals for action e.g. space standards, where the only reference in the White Paper is to “review Nationally Described Spaces Standards”. 