

**GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA)  
HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE, 15 JANUARY 2018 AT 10.30 AM, GMCA, CHURCHGATE  
HOUSE, 56 OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER M1 6EU**

Present: Councillor Lisa Smart (in the Chair)

Councillor Michelle Barnes (Salford)  
Councillor Andrew Morgan (Bolton)  
Councillor Adrian Pearce (Tameside) – Substitute  
Councillor Gill Peet (Tameside)  
Councillor Hannah Roberts (Oldham)  
Councillor Linda Robinson (Rochdale)  
Councillor Bernard Sharp (Trafford)  
Councillor Elaine Sherrington (Bolton)  
Councillor Fred Walker (Wigan)  
Councillor Elise Wilson (Stockport)  
Councillor James Wilson (Manchester)

In attendance: Eamonn Boylan (GMCA), Garreth Bruff (GMCA), Andy Burnham (Greater Manchester Mayor), David Dickinson (TfGM), Rod Fawcett (TfGM), Susan Ford (GMCA), Anne Morgan (GMCA) and Simon Nokes (GMCA)

Apologies: Councillors: Councillor Lynn Holland (Wigan) and Councillor Robert Sharpe (Salford)

**M33/HPE URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR**

There was no urgent business introduced by the Chair.

**M34/HPE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the meeting.

**M35/HPE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DATED  
13 DECEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the last meeting dated 13 December 2017 were submitted for approval.

**RESOLVED:** That the committee approved the minutes of the last meeting on 13 December 2017 as a correct record.

**M36/HPE GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK (GMSF) UPDATE**

Members considered the report of the GMCA Head of Planning Strategy, that provided a brief update on the progress of the GMSF as well as providing information on the proposed review of National Planning Policy Framework.

It was highlighted that work was taking place around the evidence base and land supply. All ten Districts had published their brownfield registers in December 2017

which are on District websites also available on the mapping GM website. The registers were part of the overall urban land supply and listed the place where development might happen in the next five years. At the end of the month the urban land supply for GM will be published.

The review of the National Planning Policy Framework was expected to commence in the next two months and the GMCA's response to this. A further report will be brought back to the Committee when the consultation begins.

In discussion, the main points raised were as follows:

- Concern about why the GMSF e-bulletin was only being distributed to 10,000 people. Officers explained that the 10,000 people were the respondents from the first consultation in October 2016 about the GMSF who gave their email address and was a starting point for further communication.
- The Member commented that the note on Neighbourhood Planning reminded her of the need to engage residents in planning matters at a neighbourhood level, and that a similar approach needed to be used with the GMSF.
- The Chair suggested that the first round of consultation on the GMSF was perceived as being 'done to communities' rather than 'by communities'. It was hoped that in the next round of consultation that lessons would have been learned and that there was a clear case made explaining how the proposals in the GMSF provided a better solution than the alternatives.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee noted the report.

## **M37/HPE THE GM APPROACH TO TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE: INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN**

Members received a presentation from the Projects and Programme Manager, TfGM, which set out TfGM's approach to ensuring that the design of transport infrastructure in GM adopted best practice regarding accessibility and inclusion.

Following the presentation, Members asked a range of questions, which were noted as follows:

- As half of Greater Manchester Stations did not have disabled access would it be easier to deliver more accessible transport infrastructure if the GMCA were given control of GM rail stations. Officers advised that it would be easier but changes would still take several years and major construction works would be required.
- Why was there no moving walkway in Bolton Interchange over the bridge between the bus station and the rail station as this had been recommended by the scheme's disabled consultation group. Was this because of lack of funding and will this be reconsidered should funding become available? Officers advised there were site specific challenges which meant a walkway was not deliverable. It was also noted that the slopes on the ramped access exceeded both and best practice. A Member also advised that they had received very positive feedback about the Bolton Interchange.

- There was concern expressed about having to pay to use the toilet facilities at the Altrincham interchange and how this may impact on vulnerable groups. It was reported that any disabled or encumbered person did not have to pay. Whilst other users the fees paid supported the upkeep of facilities.
- Further clarification was sought on whether the percentage of users of public transport matched the 19% of Greater Manchester residents who had a disability or long term illness. There was interest in how TfGM used customer insight to inform their design decisions. It was reported that the percentage of disabled transport users was similar around 21%. This percent did not include users whose mobility was temporarily impaired. There was also an awareness that the numbers will change because of the ageing population.
- It was mentioned that the Bolton interchange had acted as a catalyst for regeneration across the whole area. However, it was important that a state of the art facility with excellent inclusive design was not let down by the accessibility of its surrounding environment.
- The complete separation of passenger and vehicular access was welcomed as being better for everyone, but especially for those with visual impairments.
- More information was requested on how reference groups were consulted and whether these reflected the needs of different types of user. I was asked how people could become involved with this work. Wider advertisement and training was needed. To ensure this happened, Officers acknowledged that developing an inclusive design had been a steep learning curve and that items had been missed but were able to be rectified immediately once identified.
- TfGM work with Henshaws (who work with people of all ages, both children and adults, living with sight loss and a range of other disabilities across Greater Manchester), the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and the company React Technologies who make a system to provide real-time travel information at bus stops.
- A Member asked for further clarification about the app which could be used instead of the React system. It was also reported that the key fob for the toilets did not always work and asked what would happen to improve access. It was explained that the app was a hybrid system adopted from the RNIB. TfGM, React and the RNIB were working closely together and TfGM was being kept up to date about developments. The React fobs were still operational.
- A Member asked what consultation work to understand the challenges of people living with dementia. Salford University had recently opened a dementia unit which might be helpful to TfGM's Officers work in this area.

The Chair suggested and Members agreed, that the committee should send a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport asking for Greater Manchester to have control of rail stations to accelerate improvements to station accessibility and to enhance transport users' experience.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the presentation be noted.
  2. That a letter be written to the Secretary of State for Transport asking for more powers for Greater Manchester in terms of control of rail stations.

### **M38/HPE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Statutory Scrutiny officer, GMCA presented a report, which asked the committee to outline specific requests to be addressed by the report authors in preparing the reports coming forward to this committee. There were no further items suggested for the work programme suggested at the meeting.

In light of May elections it was agreed that the May 2018 meeting be cancelled.

**RESOLVED:** That the May 2018 meeting be cancelled.

### **M39/HPE THE TOWN CENTRE CHALLENGE**

Members considered the report of the Greater Manchester Mayor that provided an update on the Town Centre Challenge, background to the initiative and the work currently underway.

The Mayor explained that the Town Centre Challenge was a new initiative launched in November 2017. Districts had been invited to nominate one of their towns for focussed attention to help accelerate regeneration. Six nominations had been received so far. The Mayor, working with each District, would convene key stakeholders in town centres (for example housing providers, public and private landowners, developers, and community groups) in a concerted effort to support Districts to unlock the potential in town centres. The focus would be on developing a viable housing market and supporting sustainable communities. This was integral to the work on the GM spatial framework as it could encourage the development of higher density, affordable housing, linked to existing transport infrastructure and local retail and leisure facilities, and could reduce the requirement on greenbelt land. Reference was made to the potential use of Mayoral development corporations, which could help accelerate the development of town centres and include the potential to use Mayoral compulsory purchase powers. The Mayor agreed to provide the Committee with a further update in June 2018 before the next iteration of the spatial framework was published for consultation.

Members asked a number of questions:

- The Chair asked why Oldham had not nominated a town centre. It was reported that Oldham thought their plans were at an advanced stage and so did not currently need this targeted support.
- A Member asked why Stockport had been put forward as a town centre, when other Districts had nominated secondary town centres. It was explained that the choice of town centre was a decision for an individual district and Stockport felt that their primary centre would best benefit from the support of the Mayoral challenge. Further rounds of the Town Centre Challenge may be undertaken if the approach was successful where other town centres could be nominated.

- A discussion took place about the difficulty of using of compulsory purchase orders in districts. A Member asked what pressure could be put on government to streamline the legal process. It was noted that the Mayor's compulsory purchase powers were new and different to those of a district. They were more flexible. It was also important to note that it often was not the use of the powers but the threat of the user of the powers that could unlock a site.
- A Member raised a concern about the pressures that high density living could put on infrastructure such as parking, transport and green spaces. It was also asked how much time the Mayor would spend on one town centre before moving onto another. The Mayor acknowledged there were challenges about building in high densities including fire safety, parking and infrastructure, but these were issues for the local planning authority. Undertaking a masterplan for an area was often helpful way of understanding the challenges which needed to create sustainable places which addressed these challenges in a holistic way. Public transport and green space issues would be part of this process. It was envisaged that meetings in Districts would start next month. The first output was to ensure that housing growth in centres was optimised.
- Secondary town centres or district centres, nominated would present different challenges for this work. It was advised that a focus on these places was long overdue. This work hoped to breathe new life into town centres, potentially bringing, new homes which were both attractive and affordable to young people. This would encourage broader economic changes to bring about the transformation of a town's fortunes. The Mayor and the GMCA would provide benefits to help all places to regenerate, supporting the GM aspiration that no place, and no person was left behind.
- A Member agreed with the concept but was concerned it was a way of moving increasing housing numbers from greenbelt into town centres and not enough focus was made on the quality of the new housing stock. Assurance was given that the focus would be very much on developing high quality residential groups creating great places to live.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Committee noted the town centres which had been put forward as part of the challenge.
  2. It was agreed that a further report be considered by the Committee in June 2018.

#### **M40/HPE DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 15 January 2018 at 6.00 pm on Thursday 15 February 2018 at Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Services Training Centre, Cassidy Close, Manchester M4 5HU.