

**DRAFT GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA)
HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE, 13 MARCH 2018 AT 10.30 AM, GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES TRAINING CENTRE, CASSIDY CLOSE,
MANCHESTER M14 5HU**

Present: Councillor Lisa Smart (in the Chair)

Councillor Adrian Pearce (Tameside) – Substitute
Councillor Gill Peet (Tameside)
Councillor Hannah Roberts (Oldham)
Councillor Linda Robinson (Rochdale)
Councillor Bernard Sharp (Trafford)
Councillor Fred Walker (Wigan)
Councillor Elise Wilson (Stockport)
Councillor James Wilson (Manchester)
Councillor Michael Winstanley (Wigan) - Substitute

In attendance: Julie Connor (GMCA), Dawn Daly (Joint Veterans Alliance), Chris Findley (GMCA), Susan Ford (GMCA), Maura Jackson (Bolton Young Persons Housing Scheme), Dave Minshull (Joint Veterans Alliance), Pauline Towns (Community Volunteer) and Mike Wright (GMCA)

Apologies: Councillors: Councillor Michele Barnes (Salford), Councillor Lynn Holland (Wigan), Councillor Andrew Morgan (Bolton), Councillor Elaine Sherrington (Bolton) and Councillor Patricia Sullivan (Rochdale)

Officers: Eamonn Boylan (GMCA) and Anne Morgan (GMCA)

M49/HPE URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business introduced by the Chair.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all those present. Initially the meeting was inquorate. The Chair, in agreement with Members agreed to continue on this basis until one further Member joined the meeting. The agenda was reorganised accordingly, taking items for noting first. The meeting then became quorate at 10.45 am.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hannah Roberts (Oldham) who had volunteered to attend the Housing and Planning Commission meetings in due course.

M50/HPE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the meeting.

M51/HPE GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK (GMSF) UPDATE

A report was presented that provided an update on the GMSF. The report covered three main areas; publication of the existing land supply information; consultation on the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and publication of the new Sub National Populations Projections (SNPP) and Sub National Household Projections.

The brownfield land registers published by districts in 2017 would be collated alongside the rest of the urban land supply for publication at the end of March 2018. The overall land supply requirement was for sufficient land for 170k homes across Greater Manchester. Evidence would provide the opportunity to comment on land supply within the urban area. The NPPF consultation (launched on 5 March 2018 until 10 May 2018), that would provide further details on the proposed methodology for assessing housing need, would be brought to the Committee. It was confirmed that the 2016 based population projections would be released in May/June 2018 and the household projections in summer 2018, which would coincide with the publication of the next draft GMSF. Assumptions underpinning the draft GMSF would need to be re-considered.

In discussion, the main points raised were as follows:

- It was confirmed that once all information had been received, the urban land supply figures would be published by the end of March 2018.
- It was uncertain how district housing supply figures would be affected by the new methodology, it was dependant on the results of the consultation.
- It was clarified that in recent statements Government had set an ambition that 300,000 homes a year should be delivered across England. Over the period 2015 - 2035 Greater Manchester would need to find land to deliver over 200,000 homes. The precise figure would depend on the final methodology for calculating housing need (Greater Manchester's requirement) that the Government was consulting on. At the present time it was anticipated that Greater Manchester would need to deliver well over 10,000 homes/year across Greater Manchester if Greater Manchester was to meet the anticipated requirement, which was approximately 3% of the Government's ambition for England. The GMCA was set to publish* information on Greater Manchester's existing supply within the urban area, which would demonstrate that Greater Manchester could provide land for over 170,000 homes up to 2035. The need to look for land in the green belt would depend on the gap between Greater Manchester's existing land supply (plus some assumptions that could be made realistically) and Greater Manchester's housing requirement. * since the scrutiny meeting, this information has been published
- The NPPF draft consultation response (deadline 10 May 2018) would be considered by the Committee at the next meeting on 17 April 2018. Leaders would consider the draft response in early April 2018.

- In terms of impacts to areas that bordered Greater Manchester, there was a legal requirement for planning authorities to consult and a statement of co-operation was being produced. The response would take account of the need to work with authorities around Greater Manchester and strong relationships with neighbours were crucial.
- There was a national affordable housing definition. However, there was only a brief mention in the GMSF about social housing as responsibility for this rested with local authorities.
- Councils that consistently failed to deliver housing would be penalised. There was a 75% threshold for build rate. The Government could either take over an authorities planning function or the new home bonus could be lost.
- Government had not addressed developers building at their own rate once planning permission had been granted. More detail was needed about how any backlogs would be treated.
- To encourage delivery, planning permissions could be granted with time limited conditions. Penalties were being considered, by the Government for land banking.
- The Chair asked that a GMSF update be provided at the next meeting on 17 April 2018, as a briefing note.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the draft NNPF consultant response (deadline 10 May 2018) to be considered by the Committee on 17 April 2018.

M52/HPE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING DATED 15 FEBRUARY 2018

The minutes of the last meeting dated 15 February 2018 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting on 15 February 2018 as a correct record subject to Councillor Bernard Sharp (Trafford) being added to the apologies list.

M53/HPE HOMELESSNESS

The focus of this item was street homelessness, rough sleeping and the work taking place in Greater Manchester. A briefing note that provided rough sleeping data for Greater Manchester and England had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. Rough sleeping was an important area and real issue of concern for Members and residents. At the suggestion of Members and to give a new approach, people who worked in the field had been invited to the meeting to provide an overview of the work they were undertaking. The Chair asked what they would change to make a difference and how the Committee could help support their work.

Each speaker provided a summary of their work, the key points were noted as follows:

Maura Jackson, Chief Executive (Bolton Young Persons Housing Scheme)

- The scheme was an independent charity, in its 26th year of operation in Bolton.
- The name of the scheme had recently been changed to Backup, which was more young person friendly and demonstrated their services were all about support.
- They provided temporary supported accommodation to people aged 16-25 in Bolton.
- They supported young people who were homeless with support needs by offering accommodation, emotional and practical help with the aim of enabling independent living. They provided eight different services/projects offering different services tailored to a young person's needs.
- 30% of people they accommodated came through the care system.
- The UK life expectancy of a homeless man was 47 and a woman was 43.
- The scheme was a managing agent and did not own any housing stock. They were social landlords and had at any time up to 123 young people in accommodation in Bolton.
- Early intervention was vital to ensure there were no long term issues such as substance abuse or homelessness.
- 85% of the budget was spent on staffing to support care plans.
- Backup had an 87-90% success rate of varied positive outcomes for young people.
- In six years the scheme had quadrupled in size with a portfolio of 123 units. Only five people had to be asked to leave last year. In 26 years nobody had been evicted.
- The scheme was the North West charity of the year in 2017. They employed six ex-residents.
- The main issues of concern related to welfare form and the impact of changes for young people.

Dave Minshull (Joint Veterans Alliance Limited (JVA))

- JVA was comprised of outreach Officers committed in supporting the veteran community and adults at risk who found themselves homeless or struggling in today's society due to sanctions in the Greater Manchester and Salford boundaries.
- They also offered a street soup kitchen facility three times a week in Salford.
- The organisation provided food, clothing, and sign posted support.
- They also offered assistance to those who were struggling from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat stress and issues relating to drug/alcohol abuse and other mental health issues caused by aspects of life within society and conflicts.
- Their goal was for veterans and adults at risk to be able to live happily and independently.
- The longer a person was on the streets their issues with substance abuse and mental health issues deteriorated. Buildings were needed to get people off the street.
- Issues with Universal Credit would increase homelessness. Numbers were far greater than what was being reported.

- Policies and processes for dealing with homeless people throughout Greater Manchester should be consistent as people did not recognise borders and it is confusing.
- Affordable housing was an issue, paying for deposits and credit checks were all big issues.

Pauline Towns (Community Volunteer)

- “We Shall Overcome” was a national group in its fourth year, which answered the needs of local homeless people.
- The Station Hotel in Ashton-Under-Lyne, was the hub. It operated like a drop-in community centre.
- Food parcels, hot drinks, a dry sleeping bag or tent and advice on where to get a bed for the night were available. It is a 24/7 service.
- Homelessness numbers were growing astronomically. Universal Credit was having a massive impact.
- The long term homeless could not access housing. There was a big issue with substance abuse, professional care was no longer available. People were committing suicide due to their extreme circumstances.
- Infinity Initiatives are a community interest company, operating in Tameside who support those deemed to be vulnerable with multiple needs.
- It is a ‘catch 22’ for the homeless, a person could not get a job without a home and a person could not get a home without a job. Processes to manage this problem are over complicated and confusing.
- Benefits and sanctions were increasing homelessness and forcing people into criminality.
- Severe weather emergency funding should be reviewed and dispensed earlier.

The Chair and Members thanked the speakers for their powerful messages. The identified themes for change were:

- Welfare reforms and sanctions affecting young people.
- Affordable rent and issues with the affordability check.
- Availability of homeless hubs and agency visits to deal with issues.
- A review of care providers and their pricing structures.
- Impact of Universal Credit.
- Sweep provision and severe weather emergency fund dispensation.
- All policies and processes should be consistent across Greater Manchester.
- A review of care leavers and the services available.

The Homelessness Lead for Greater Manchester provided the Committee with an update on Greater Manchester led schemes, which included the social impact bond, the referral cut-off date was noted as October 2018, trailblazer programme, key points included the creation of a hub and a social lettings agency and the Greater Manchester housing first programme. In terms of the housing first programme, once the final funding settlement was understood, a report would be brought back to the Committee.

A question and answer session took place, which was noted as follows:

- What help was available to young people leaving the care system and what impact this had on districts was discussed. It was suggested that the GMCA look at standardising policies and provide commonality across districts. The GMCA had no homelessness duty but was working with districts to help co-ordinate. Work was underway to achieve commonality, there was a real opportunity to do things differently. New legislation, the Homelessness Reduction Act had resulted in districts committing to use the same information technology (IT) system. Through the Act, there was a duty on districts to prevent homelessness. It was suggested that Greater Manchester districts investigate if there was more that could be done.
- A discussion took place about help available for military veterans and what more could be done at an entry level. The Ministry of Defence (MoD), had started to prepare soldiers a year before their discharge. They were being prepared for modern civilian day life such as applying for housing and schooling. The scheme had been successful. However, there was still a generation of veterans already on the streets, which would take years to overcome. Veterans were helping veterans.
- A concern was raised about the 30% of care leavers accessing help through the Bolton Young Persons Scheme. It was suggested that the real figures, which experienced homelessness were even higher. Early intervention was required. However a number of projects and schemes due to austerity measures were no longer available. It was further suggested that a monitoring regime and a standard for providers to meet was required, there was a need for scrutiny. A review would be welcomed.
- It was suggested that the punitive sanctions regime, Universal Credit and benefit reforms attributed to homelessness where having a mayor impact. Mechanisms Councils could use to counteract the disadvantages to young people were discussed. The GMCA had a life readiness approach and the trailblazer programme was reviewing pathways relating to hospital and prison discharge. Councils were being asked to be creative about the ways they applied their discretionary housing payments to put people into accommodation and prevent homelessness.
- The rough sleeping data for GM and England was felt to be unrealistic. The data was unreliable and based on a Government counting system, it only provided a snapshot. A model being used in Barcelona was being considered to provide more realistic data.
- It was suggested that a task and finish group be established to discuss issues in more detail and share best practice.

In summary and as a result of the discussions and key points raised, the Committee agreed that the GMCA would be asked to consider the following recommendations for further work:

1. Note that the Committee supports and welcomes work on the Social Impact Bond and work to build homelessness hubs.

2. Notes the need to continue to lobby Government about the impact of welfare reforms and the impacts on housing and homelessness.
3. To request all Greater Manchester Councils to work collaboratively on simplifying processes and systems to achieve greater consistency.
4. That the Committee recognised that the GMCA had no direct homelessness duties. Councils would acquire a new duty to prevent homelessness and GMCA would assist in the discharge of this across Greater Manchester
5. The Committee requested that there should be a universal application of the emergency weather policies across districts.
6. That the GM Mayor to use his soft power to influence care leaving provision and that it be the same in each district.
7. That an inspection regime be established and a common set of expected standards be produced for hostel providers.

RESOLVED: That the GMCA be asked to consider the above recommendations by the Committee.

M54/HPE WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the work programme that was considered at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

M55/HPE DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 17 April 2018 at 6.00 pm, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M3 5NS