

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED
AUTHORITY HELD ON FRIDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2024 AT MANCHESTER
TOWN HALL**

PRESENT

Mayor of Greater Manchester	Andy Burnham (in the Chair)
Deputy Mayor (Police, Crime & Fire)	Kate Green
Bolton	Councillor Nicholas Peel
Bury	Councillor Eamonn O'Brien
Manchester	Councillor Joanna Midgley
Oldham	Councillor Arooj Shah
Rochdale	Councillor Daalat Ali
Salford	City Mayor Paul Dennett
Stockport	Councillor Mark Hunter
Tameside	Councillor Andrew McLaren
Trafford	Councillor Tom Ross

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair of GM Overview & Scrutiny	Councillor Nadim Muslim
Chief Fire Officer, GMFRS	Dave Russel

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Group Chief Executive Officer, GMCA, GMFRS & TfGM	Caroline Simpson
Group Deputy Chief Executive	Andrew Lightfoot
Group Monitoring Officer	Gillian Duckworth
Group Treasurer	Steve Wilson
GMCA Director of Governance & Scrutiny	Julie Connor
Bolton	Sue Johnson
Bury	Lynne Ridsdale
Manchester	Paul Marshall
Oldham	Shelley Kipling

Rochdale	Steve Rumbelow
Salford	Tom Stannard
Stockport	Michael Cullen
Tameside	Julian Jackson
Trafford	Sara Todd
Wigan	Alison McKenzie-Folan
TfGM	Martin Lax
TfGM	Steve Warrener
GMCA	Sylvia Welsh
GMCA	Lee Teasdale

GMCA 185/24 APOLOGIES

That apologies be received and noted from Councillor Bev Craig (Manchester), Councillor Neil Emmott (Rochdale), Councillor Eleanor Wills (Tameside), Councillor David Molyneux (Wigan) & Harry Catherall (Tameside).

GMCA 186/24 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, opened the meeting by reflecting on the report published on the morning of 13th December by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on child protection by Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The Mayor and Deputy Mayor Kate Green had attended a press briefing on the report which had been issued overnight. The report was the first part of the final stage of the wide-ranging review process on historic child abuse in the region initially commissioned by the Mayor in 2017.

The HMICFRS report had found that on child protection, GMP was now rated good or adequate across all measures. A separate letter sent by HIMCFRS and co-signed by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services & Skills (OFSTED) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), as partners in the wider Greater Manchester system review, provided encouraging news, describing the GM system as unique and welcoming its collaboration across the 10 districts and with partners organisations. It was stated that the Greater Manchester public could now have confidence,

independently verified, in the arrangements now in place in the region to protect its children. It was also noted that throughout the review process, over 200 past perpetrators of child abuse had been arrested with a significant number of charges resulting from this. The Mayor thanked the survivors who had come forward and spoke to the media initially that led to the review taking place.

Members were informed of the consultation taking place over the Christmas period pertaining to reforms in the Local Government Pension Scheme. Assurance was given that there would be a push for an extension to the current deadline of 16th January 2025 into at least early February 2025.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester reflected on the achievements of the GMCA during 2024 and thanked the people of Greater Manchester for re-electing him as Mayor of Greater Manchester during the May 2024 elections. Looking forward to 2025, the GM economy continued to grow faster than other regions of the UK, with projections indicating that this growth was set to continue. The importance of the Greater Manchester Housing First unit was highlighted, with the region fully dedicated to supplying its share of national housing targets, and homelessness commitments would continue to be strengthened. April 2025 would also be a pivotal moment for the region with the commencement of the integrated settlement, and the higher level of accountability that would result from it.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update on the CSE Assurance Review and the GMP Child Protection Inspection report be received.
2. That it be noted that the GMCA will be writing to the government to push for an extension into February 2025 on the consultation around reforms to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
3. That the update from the Mayor on achievements during 2024 and key aims heading into 2025 be received.

GMCA 187/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED /-

There were none.

**GMCA 188/24 MINUTES OF THE GMCA MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER
2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA meeting held on 29 November 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**GMCA 189/24 MINUTES OF THE GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2024**

Councillor Nadim Muslim, the Chair of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee was invited to provide an update on the recent work of the Committee. The November meeting had received a report from the Mayor of Greater Manchester on the Greater Manchester Live Well Strategy, members had welcomed the opportunity to support the development of the Live Well framework. There was support for the ambition to provide a consistent offer across every district of Greater Manchester, and the proposed creation of Live Well centres and spaces with holistic person-centred support. An update was also received on Technical Education, Work & Skills, this linked well to the Live Well ambitions, and it was recognised that a one size fits all approach would not be the best approach for the region.

The December meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had received an update on Affordable Living. The committee had welcomed the update and recognised the progress made since the initial report in July 2024.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the minutes of the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 27 November 2024 be noted.
2. That the update received from Cllr Nadim Muslim on the current work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**GMCA 190/24 GMCA BEE NETWORK COMMITTEE MINUTES – 28
NOVEMBER 2024**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the GMCA Bee Network Committee held on 28 November 2024 be noted.

GMCA 191/24 GREATER MANCHESTER APPOINTMENTS

RESOLVED /-

1. That Cllr Eleanor Wills be appointed as a GMCA Member to the GMCA Standards Committee.
2. That the Cllr Eleanor Wills be appointed as a GMCA Member to the Growth Company Board.
3. That Cllr David Sweeton (Lab) (Tameside) and Cllr Brenda Warrington (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed as members and Cllr Charlotte Martin (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed as a substitute member to the GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
4. That Cllr Laura Boyle (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed as a member of the GM Waste & Recycling Committee.
5. That Cllr Leanne Feeley (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed as a member and Cllr Hugh Roderick (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed as a substitute member on the GM Culture & Social Impact Fund Committee.

6. That Cllr Andrew McClaren (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed to the GM Work & Skills Forum.
7. That Cllr Laura Boyle (Lab) (Tameside) be appointed to the Green City Region Board.
8. That the appointment of Cllr Stephen Homer (Lab) (Tameside) as a member and Cllr Jacqueline Owen (Lab) (Tameside) as a substitute member on the Bee Network Committee be noted.
9. That the appointment of Cllr Eleanor Wills (Lab) (Tameside) as a member and Cllr Tafheen Sharif (Lab) (Tameside) as the substitute member of the GM Integrated Care Partnership Board be noted.
10. That the appointment of Cllr Laura Boyle (Lab) (Tameside) as the member and Cllr Jacqueline Owen as the substitute member on the GM Clean Air Charging Authorities Committee be noted.
11. That the appointment of Cllr Laura Boyle (Lab) (Tameside) as the member and Cllr Jacqueline Owen as the substitute member on the Air Quality Administration Committee be noted.

**GMCA 192/24 GREATER MANCHESTER'S APPROACH TO BUILDING
SAFETY**

Deputy Mayor Kate Green, together with Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Dave Russel, and City Mayor Paul Dennett (Portfolio Lead for Housing First) presented a report which provided an overview of the Greater Manchester response to the publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report, and to the approach taken in response to the government's request to produce a Local Remediation Acceleration Plan.

Points highlighted included:

- The recommendations arising from the Phase 2 Grenfell Tower report placed a set of obligations on GMFRS, all ten GM authorities and the local resilience forum.
- GM is able to build upon a strong history of collaboration on the front, following the Mayor's establishment of a GM High Rise & Building Safety taskforce (now the High Rise & Building Safety Strategic Oversight Group) chaired by City Mayor Paul Dennett, that brought together all relevant stakeholders and give real impetus to the work required over the past seven years. Leading on the enforcement work needed and providing residents with necessary assurances.
- It was proposed in the report that the above group could continue to provide the strategic oversight and scrutiny required to ensure that GM responds to the enquiry and delivers on Local Remediation Acceleration Plan.
- The Local Remediation Acceleration Plan submitted also contained a number of asks of the government. The measures that needed to be taken within the timescales set out did not all currently fall within the gift of GM and a number of other players, including government and non-statutory players and regulators, would also need to take place to ensure the Plan could be delivered.
- It was noted that the previous regulations had only impacted upon buildings over 18 metres in height. The new proposals also included buildings between 11 and 18 metres – which would significantly increase the number of buildings included across the region, bringing in areas that previously may not have been geographically impacted.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be noted that the governance structure had been established to ensure the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 2 report were being implemented effectively within the city-region.
2. That the contents of GM Remediation Acceleration Plan, set out in appendix A of the report, be noted.
3. That further update reports on this work will be submitted to the GMCA in the new year.

**GMCA 193/24 BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY – A
PROPOSAL FOR A STRONGER EDUCATION SYSTEM AS
PART OF GREATER MANCHESTER’S STRATEGY – TO
ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE & THRIVE
ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER**

Councillor Eamonn O’Brien, Portfolio Lead for Technical Education, Councillor Mark Hunter, Portfolio Lead for Children & Young People and Deputy Mayor Kate Green, introduced a report which provided a focused overview of key areas across the education landscape from (Early Years to post 16) that if worked on with more intentionality and, focus and with a Greater Manchester and or combined national approach, would see improved outcomes for the sector and thus for young people.

The report sought approval and commitment from the GMCA to formalise the joint work programme, as outlined in the report, to ensure the right governance to take forward actions that demonstrably showed Greater Manchester to be the first Combined Authority to make this bold step. The report had been drafted in partnership with and endorsed by senior officers in all ten local authorities and the Combined Authority.

The paper highlighted areas that were being implemented to reduce the risk of fragmentation across the Greater Manchester system. There were some elements more under the direct control of Greater Manchester as a collective system than others, and these would be addressed through strong collaborative working.

The driving impetus behind the report was essentially that every child has a right to a decent education, to feel welcome and valued within the school setting, and to make the most of their childhoods and future potential. This was particularly beneficial in terms of ensuring that vulnerable and disadvantaged children received a strong education and the foundational support that the school setting could offer. There was considerable overlap with a greater risk of children being at harm and risk of criminality

where such children were allowed to 'fall between the gaps' and this could not be allowed to take place.

The GMCA Violence Reduction Unit had been funding a significant amount of activity in primary schools, particularly at the crucial transition points of years 5/6 where some children did begin to fall out of education due to struggling with these transition points.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester welcomed the report and emphasised the importance of school readiness and the value that this work. It was stated that work should be brought forward in the new year that would commit to a renewed level of dedication to lifting levels of school readiness. Pre-pandemic, Greater Manchester had been steadily closing the gap on the national average picture, but unfortunately the impact of the pandemic, which left a lot of children in the Greater Manchester region outside of school longer than many other areas of the UK, resulting in the gap beginning to open up again.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester advised that there had been discussions about the potential to establish/promote a Greater Manchester 'Bank of Teachers' which would essentially form a conduit for supply teachers, lessening of the cost burdens currently felt by many schools due to recurring needs for supply teachers provided by expensive agencies.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be agreed that there should be a greater focus on education in the Greater Manchester Strategy.
2. That it be agreed that the areas outlined in the report were the priorities for this work.
3. That it be agreed that work on promoting inclusive mainstream schools, improving attendance, on making GM the best place to teach and on post 16 sufficiency should be taken forward immediately, noting that these areas do not require agreement from central government.

4. That it be agreed that officers should further develop this proposal, working with the education sector and partners alongside senior officers from LAs. This will include developing proposals which can be taken forward at GM level now and proposing solutions which require national government action.
5. That the GMCA record its thanks to Tim Bowman, Gemma Marsh and the Education, Work & Skills Team at GMCA for all their work on bringing this together.
6. That concerns raised about exclusions and pupil referral units be noted, and that work will take place to establish a best way in which all young people in the region can benefit from the best possible education system.
7. That it be noted that a renewed dedication to improving school readiness was required in the new year.
8. That consideration would be given to establishing a 'bank of teachers' to reduce pressures on schools and dependencies upon agencies in the new year.

GMCA 194/24 DELIVERING THE BEE NETWORK UPDATE - PERFORMANCE

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, presented an overview of the performance of Greater Manchester's transport network for the period March 2024 – November 2024, and provided an update on preparations for implementation the final tranche of bus franchising. Key points highlighted included:

- October 2024 had seen the highest patronage numbers to date since the launch of the Bee Network, with a 7% increase on October 2023.
- Bus revenue had outperformed the target in every month to date.
- Metrolink patronage had increased 20% over the past year, completing a recovery from the pandemic, and November 2024 had seen the highest level of usage in its 32-year history, as part of this, fare evasion was also down by 1/3 after considerable work in this area.

- It was known that further work was still required in terms of punctuality, particularly in the tranche 2 area. TfGM was not complacent on this, and there was assurance that tranche 2 reliability would be an absolute priority going into the new year. Though it was noted that tranche 2 under the Bee Network was still performing better than deregulated services had.
- Tranche 3 preparations were largely in place, with Metrolink having already hired over 100 new drivers for services. 60 new electric buses would also come into operation on 5th January, with 134 in place in Tranche 3 by the end of March 2025.
- Rail services throughout the region remained an area of significant concern, particularly through the latter half of 2024, and the Combined Authority would be putting out a call to the government for someone to be appointed to get a full grip on poor network performance across the North West.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update received on the performance of Greater Manchester's Transport Network and preparation for completion of bus franchising be noted.
2. That the GMCA will call for the government to act upon the increasingly poor performance seen across the Greater Manchester and wider national rail network.

GMCA 195/24 TFGM POWER PURCHASE

Caroline Simpson, Group Chief Executive for GMCA, TfGM & GMFRS, presented an update on the status of the TfGM Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) project.

The new contract would go a long way in helping TfGM meet its ambitions within the Environment Plan and the long contract being put into place would provide assurances around reliability and consistency of service.

RESOLVED /-

1. That it be noted that TfGM were progressing work on the procurement of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) under a programme to address current and future energy demand.

2. That it be noted that the TfGM PPA will function as a pathfinder for future PPAs to encompass the wider GMCA Group and potentially other GM partners.
3. That the proposed procurement approach for the TfGM Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) project be noted.
4. That it be noted that a further report will be submitted to the GMCA in Summer 2025, prior to entering into a PPA.
5. That the GMCA record its thanks to Mark Atherton and the GMCA Environment Directorate for the successful delivery of the 2024 GM Green Summit.

GMCA 196/24 BROWNFIELD LAND NEW ALLOCATIONS

City Mayor Paul Dennett, Portfolio Lead for Housing First, presented a report seeking approval for the reallocation of £10.8m of funding from the GMCA Brownfield Housing Fund.

£135m in capital allocation had been received for the years 2020-2025, and £150m as part of the 2023 devolution trailblazer, all of this fund was subject to rules around the spending of monies with certain timescales. The funding remaining could be put to use on a myriad of schemes that would benefit and it was proposed that the funding was reallocated accordingly.

The reallocations would support 19 projects and support in the delivery of 775 homes across the region. It was noted that 684 of the 775 homes would also be affordable homes.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the £10.8m allocations to projects identified at Appendix 1, of the report, be approved, subject to further due diligence.
2. That the variations to projects detailed in Appendix 2, of the report, be approved.

**GMCA 197/24 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – REMOTE MEETING
ATTENANCE AND PROXY VOTING**

Gillian Duckworth, Group Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, presented a report informing the GMCA of the scope of the Government consultation on enabling remote meeting attendance and proxy voting with a view to submitting a GMCA response, to be submitted by the deadline of 19 December 2024.

Members views had been previously canvassed and the general view had been that GMCA committees and panels should continue to be held in-person, although retain the discretion for local determined proxy voting and remote attendance in exceptional circumstances.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the experience of the Covid 19 Pandemic whereby all GMCA meetings were held remotely in considering the response to the Government Consultation be noted.
2. That it be agreed that meetings of the GMCA should normally be held in person but the right to determine whether its meetings or meetings of its various committees were held in person or remotely should rest with the GMCA in order to consider local circumstances and retain flexibility and for this view to be fed back into the consultation.
3. That the Consultation questions and draft responses, based on feedback from Members, as set out in appendix 1 of the report, be noted and that authority be delegated to the Group Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to finalise the submission, in consultation with the Mayor.

**GMCA 198/24 GREATER MANCHESTER INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK FUND
– CONDITIONAL PROJECT APPROVAL**

Steve Wilson, Group Treasurer, presented a report seeking approval for a loan to North West Evergreen Limited Partnership. The loan would be made from recycled funds.

RESOLVED /-

1. That a loan facility of up to £9,500,000 to North West Evergreen Limited Partnership be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Group Treasurer in consultation with the Group Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, to review the due diligence information in respect of the above investments, and, subject to their satisfactory review and agreement of the due diligence information and the overall detailed commercial terms of the investments, to sign off any outstanding conditions, issue final approvals and complete any necessary related documentation in respect of the investments noted above.

GMCA 199/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public should be excluded from the meeting for the following items on business on the grounds that this involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as set out in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**GMCA 200/24 GM INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK – CONDITIONAL PROJECT
APPROVAL**

Clerk's Note: This item was considered in support of the report considered in Part A of the agenda (GMCA 198/24).

RESOLVED /-

That the report be noted.