

**Report to:** Executive Member for Housing,  
Neighbourhoods and Regulation

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> March 2010

**Report of:** DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT &  
REGENERATION

**Report No:**

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**Tele No:**

**Report Title:** **GREATER MANCHESTER HOUSING STRATEGY**

**Non Confidential**

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:**

To present the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy for consideration by the Executive Member for Housing Neighbourhoods and Regulation.

**Recommendations:**

The Executive Member is requested to consider the GM Housing Strategy and approve the final draft on behalf of Bolton Council.

**Decision:**

**Background Doc(s):**

The GM Housing Strategy attached at Appendix A.  
The Greater Manchester Strategy  
[http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms\\_media/files/final\\_gms\\_august\\_2009.pdf](http://www.agma.gov.uk/cms_media/files/final_gms_august_2009.pdf)

*(for use on Exec Rep)*

**Signed:**

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Leader / Executive Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

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**Summary.**

The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy is designed as an 'added value' strategy, it is not a comprehensive housing strategy and does not seek to replace district housing strategies, its focus is to deliver and add value to the key priorities of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

Among the objectives in the Strategy are –

- To transform the quality of the City Region residential offer
- To put in place the conditions to support and accelerate delivery of housing growth
- To radically improve the quality of the private rented sector
- Focussed intervention in the most deprived areas
- To understand the spatial implications of the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy, including delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Achieve a rapid transformation to a low carbon economy
- To address the impact of housing on health and well-being

A detailed action plan will be drawn up by March 2010.

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009, the AGMA Executive Board approved the Strategy and recommended that the strategy be ratified by individual districts.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Development and delivery of The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy is a key part of the Planning and Housing Commission's work programme and was an issue highlighted within the Greater Manchester Strategy. The Strategy was developed by a group of officers across the sub-region and was agreed by the Planning and Housing Commission on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and the AGMA Executive Board on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009.
- 1.2 The strategy is intended to help translate the housing priorities set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy into an agreed programme of joint priorities and actions. It is designed to complement rather than replace existing district strategies. The focus of the Greater Manchester Strategy is on areas where working together at a sub-regional level is likely to add most value.
- 1.3 The Strategy was developed following consultation with elected members from districts, housing associations, house builders and a range of other organisations, including the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Strategy was informed by the research carried out through the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other sources.
- 1.4 The draft Strategy was used to inform the signing of the Local Investment Agreement between AGMA and the HCA in December 2009 and will have a strong influence in identifying future priorities for investment.

## 2.0 Current Position

- 2.1 The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy sets out the key issues and challenges affecting housing in the sub-region and outlines common housing priorities. Among the challenges are –
  - **Housing growth**, with the Greater Manchester population projected to rise by a further 354,100 between 2008 and 2030 and a fall in average household size boosting the demand for housing.
  - **The Quality of the Residential Offer**, with almost half of all properties in Greater Manchester in Council Tax Band A compared to 25 % nationally and high levels of terraced properties
  - **Deprivation**, with nearly 600,000 residents in the sub-region within the worst 10 % Super Output Areas nationally and increasing levels of worklessness
  - **An ageing population**, with the number of people aged over 65 and over projected to increase by almost 40 % between 2010 and 2030, which will have major implications for provision of adapted and supported housing.
- 2.2 The Strategy is based around the three key themes in the North West Regional Housing Strategy 2009.
  - Achieving the right quantity of housing
  - Continuing to raise the quality of the existing housing stock and
  - Connecting people to an improved housing offer

2.3 The Strategy is based around the following strategic objectives

- To transform the quality of the City Region residential offer
- To put in place the conditions to support and accelerate delivery of housing growth
- To radically improve the quality of the private rented sector
- Focussed intervention in the most deprived areas
- To understand the spatial implications of the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy, including delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Achieve a rapid transformation to a low carbon economy
- Housing, health and well-being

2.4 A detailed action plan will be developed by March 2010. Among actions highlighted to address priorities are -

- Further strengthening joint work on transport, energy, flood and water supply issues in Greater Manchester
- Through working with the HCA, develop new and existing models for development
- Continue the pioneering long-term approach to transforming neighbourhoods in our Housing Market Renewal areas
- Identify opportunities for regeneration to transform selected neighbourhoods
- Continue to work with social housing providers to maintain standards and wider sustainable improvements
- Implement an accreditation scheme for private landlords in all districts and look to converge policies, procedures and criteria
- Explore possibilities of access to quality private rented sector housing through the sub regional choice based lettings scheme
- Deliver improvements to existing homes above and beyond traditional insulation measures
- Work with private sector energy companies and investors to develop long term schemes to finance retrofitting of homes
- Support development of the Enhanced Housing Options model across districts to ensure that housing provides a linkage to a range of support services, including employment and health
- Develop shared approaches to allocations, debt management and financial inclusion
- Develop stronger linkages between Housing and Health to ensure programmes are meeting the needs of local people
- Develop technology and communications systems to assist vulnerable people to live independently
- Assess Home Improvement Agencies across Greater Manchester to seek to develop and deliver some common standards.

2.5 The detailed action plan will be presented to the Planning and Housing Commission in March 2010. This will be monitored through the Commission and will be delivered by members of the Greater Manchester Housing Officers Group.

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009, the AGMA Executive Board approved the Strategy and recommended that the strategy be ratified by individual districts.

### **3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 3.1 The outcome of this strategy is intended to develop more cohesive communities and support areas and individuals in greatest need.

### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Executive Member is requested to consider the GM Housing Strategy and approve the final draft on behalf of Bolton Council.

## **Appendix A.**

# **Greater Manchester Housing Strategy 2010**

Final Draft

## **The Greater Manchester context**

Greater Manchester has led the national focus on sub-regional working, most recently through our successful agreement with Government on a statutory city region pilot, the first in the country. This agreement gives us the opportunity to tailor programmes at a local level to meet our own economic, social and environmental needs and to have a direct and more dynamic hand in where the future of our city region lies. The starting point for this is the new Greater Manchester Strategy<sup>1</sup>, agreed by the leaders of Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) in August. AGMA's new, devolved status marks the culmination of more than twenty years of collaborative working across the city region's ten districts: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan – the Manchester City region as defined in this strategy.

**The Manchester Independent Economic Review<sup>2</sup> (MIER) highlighted how Manchester city region has the scale and density to grow much more rapidly if it can address the main reason it 'punches below its weight': its low productivity. The MIER highlighted how this can be addressed through a well-directed, coherent strategy that focuses on addressing key constraints to build a bigger 'agglomeration' of skilled jobs, amenities and successful places and supports appropriate and realistic growth ambitions across the city region. If we can get the city region to this critical mass, it creates a virtuous circle of long term sustainable economic growth. That is the aim of the Greater Manchester Strategy.**

## **The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out the following vision and principles for the future of our city region:**

### **The Vision**

*By 2020, the Manchester city region will have pioneered a new model for sustainable economic growth based around a more connected, talented and greener city region where the prosperity secured is enjoyed by the many and not the few.*

### **Our principles**

- *We will secure our place as one of Europe's premier city regions, synonymous with creativity, culture, sport and the commercial exploitation of a world class knowledge base.*
- *We will compete on the international stage for talent, investment, trade and ideas.*
- *We will be seen and experienced as a city region where all people are valued and have the opportunity to contribute and succeed in life.*
- *We will be known for our good quality of life, our low carbon economy and our commitment to sustainable development.*

The Greater Manchester Strategy, AGMA, August 2009, available at [www.agma.gov.uk](http://www.agma.gov.uk)  
Manchester Independent Economic Review, April 2009, available at [www.manchester-review.org.uk](http://www.manchester-review.org.uk)

- *We will create a city region where every neighbourhood and every borough can contribute to our shared sustainable future.*
- *We will continue to grow into a fairer healthier, safer and more inclusive place to live, known for excellent, efficient, value for money services and transport choices.*
- *We will deliver focused and collegiate leadership based around collaboration, partnerships and a true understanding that together, we are strong.*

New governance structures are already taking shape. The development of a Multi-Area Agreement (MAA)<sup>3</sup> with Government was the precursor to securing our status as a formal city region and this Agreement will be absorbed into our work as a statutory city region. At the same time as the development of this MAA, a new Executive Board and seven strategic commissions, consisting of representatives of the public, private and third sectors were established by AGMA to help direct and monitor the delivery of our strategic plans. These are charged with overseeing the new economy, health, planning and housing, environment, transport, public protection, capacity building and collaboration.

### **Why a Greater Manchester Housing Strategy?**

The Greater Manchester Strategy sets out eleven strategic priorities which can help deliver prosperity for all and a higher level of sustainability and quality of life for the city region (see Annex A for a summary of the strategic priorities). Many of these relate in some way to housing issues or are relevant to housing providers. But the key priority is **“Creating quality places to meet the needs of a competitive city region.”** In our view, the central rationale for a Greater Manchester Housing Strategy is the need to turn that strategic priority – and our statutory city region agreement with Government - into a reality. The real housing issues underpinning that priority are important in their own right and have a significant impact on our economic, social and environmental future as a city region.

Secondly, we know that housing issues often refuse to fit neatly within the boundaries of individual Councils. Much joint working has been done within Greater Manchester and with neighbouring areas and at regional level – whether on research and intelligence gathering, strategy development, or programme delivery. Examples such as Greater Manchester’s two Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders and more recently the New Growth Point demonstrate our commitment to working across boundaries where the issues we are addressing require it. So, an important additional rationale is to identify where we can make better progress by working together on housing issues across the City Region and set out how we will make that happen.

Thirdly, we know, for example, that the Homes and Communities Agency, expects sub-regions such as ours to put forward a shared collective view of our challenges, opportunities and priorities for their future investment and support. The Greater Manchester Housing Strategy – and the conversations that help produce that Strategy – will be one crucial tool in demonstrating our ability to come together to develop an agreed set of priorities. Those shared priorities can then be reflected in our future investment programmes.

### **Where does the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy fit?**

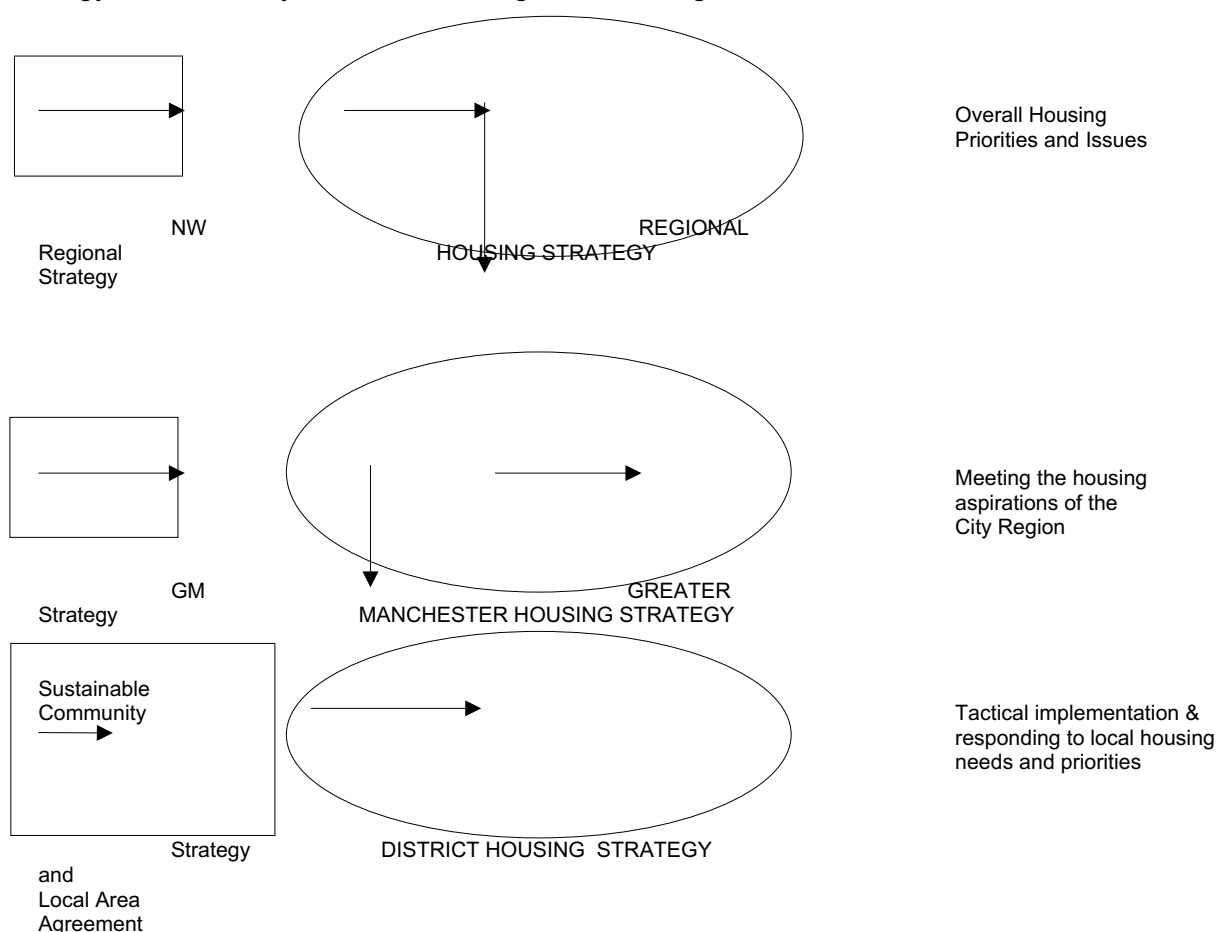
The Greater Manchester Strategy is designed as an ‘added value’ strategy – in other words, it doesn’t set out to be fully comprehensive, but focuses instead on those key priorities that are central to delivering the Strategy’s vision. This Greater Manchester Housing Strategy adopts the same approach. It is designed to complement current district housing strategies, not to



replace them, to concentrate on identifying sub-regional priorities and issues where there is added value in working together, and to translate those priorities and issues into agreed strategic priorities and actions we will seek to deliver together.

The strategy identifies joint priorities and in doing so will inform, alongside local strategies and plans, decisions over how resources are distributed across Greater Manchester. It will also help districts to identify where new approaches or delivery vehicles may be required.

The diagram below illustrates the relationships between the Greater Manchester Housing Strategy and other key documents at regional, sub-regional and local level.



Work is also underway on a spatial framework for Greater Manchester, which will have implications for (and needs to be informed by) planned delivery of housing growth in the City Region.

### What is the timescale for this Strategy?

Many decisions about housing have an enduring impact. This strategy has been developed with an eye on the long term consequences of our actions, but it also tries set a direction for the next three years or so in the face of current uncertainty about the duration and impacts of the current recession. We expect our Action Plan to remain under constant review, and under the guidance of the Planning and Housing Commission, to annually consider the need for a comprehensive review of this Strategy.

## What does the evidence tell us?

This Strategy draws on a range of evidence and intelligence, including the Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>4</sup>, Making Housing Count<sup>5</sup> and the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER)<sup>6</sup>. This section briefly summarises some of the key issues affecting Greater Manchester housing markets.

### What makes Greater Manchester different?

- Greater Manchester is home to over 2.5 million people, and is the UK's strongest growth pole outside London, with the potential to generate growth that would bring the region nearer to the levels it aims for.
- Huge employment growth: 110,000 over the last decade as Greater Manchester has transformed into a knowledge based, service led economy.
- Major growth in economic output over the last decade: £8.6bn (2.3% per annum).
- Strong population growth forecast over the next decade, primarily due to natural increase.
- An economy worth £44.8 billion (2006) and 40% of the North West economy generated by the 93,627 businesses.
- The high demand for family housing is not matched by supply and the supply of such housing is generally found outside the regional centre and on the edges of local authority areas,
- The Regional Centre has witnessed a rapid expansion in its residential supply over recent years reflecting policies encouraging a greater mix of uses within the centre.

### Housing Growth

The past ten years have seen extraordinary changes in Greater Manchester's housing market:

- Population growth of almost 67,000 between 2001 and 2008, with the population projected to rise by a further 354,100 by 2030.
- Higher increases for those of working age, largely due to a (recently slowing) trend in economic migrants (30,700 international immigrants in 2008).
- A changing demand profile due to a move away from manufacturing to service sector industries and a shift towards high-end and low-end occupations.
- A fall in average household size from 2.46 in 1999 to 2.33 in 2007, significantly boosting the demand for housing.

### Quality of the Residential Offer

The quality of our homes and the neighbourhoods they form part of is, in places, poor, both in terms of the condition of stock and in terms of the range of property available:

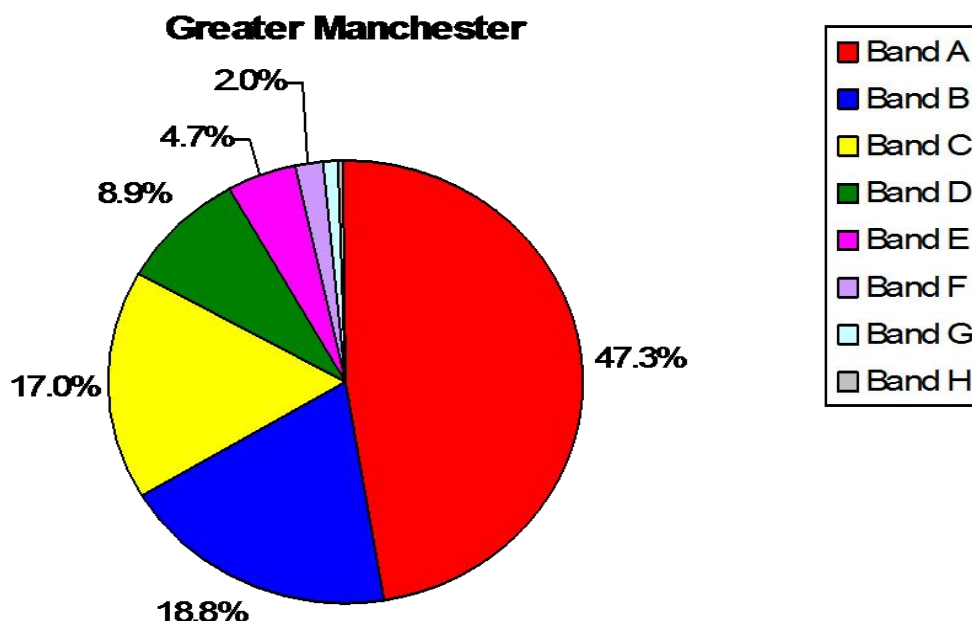
- Almost half of the properties in Greater Manchester are Council Tax Band A, compared to 25% nationally (see Figure 1);

## **Figure 1 – Breakdown of properties by Council Tax Band**

Greater Manchester Strategic Housing Market Assessment, September 2008, available at [www.agma.gov.uk](http://www.agma.gov.uk)

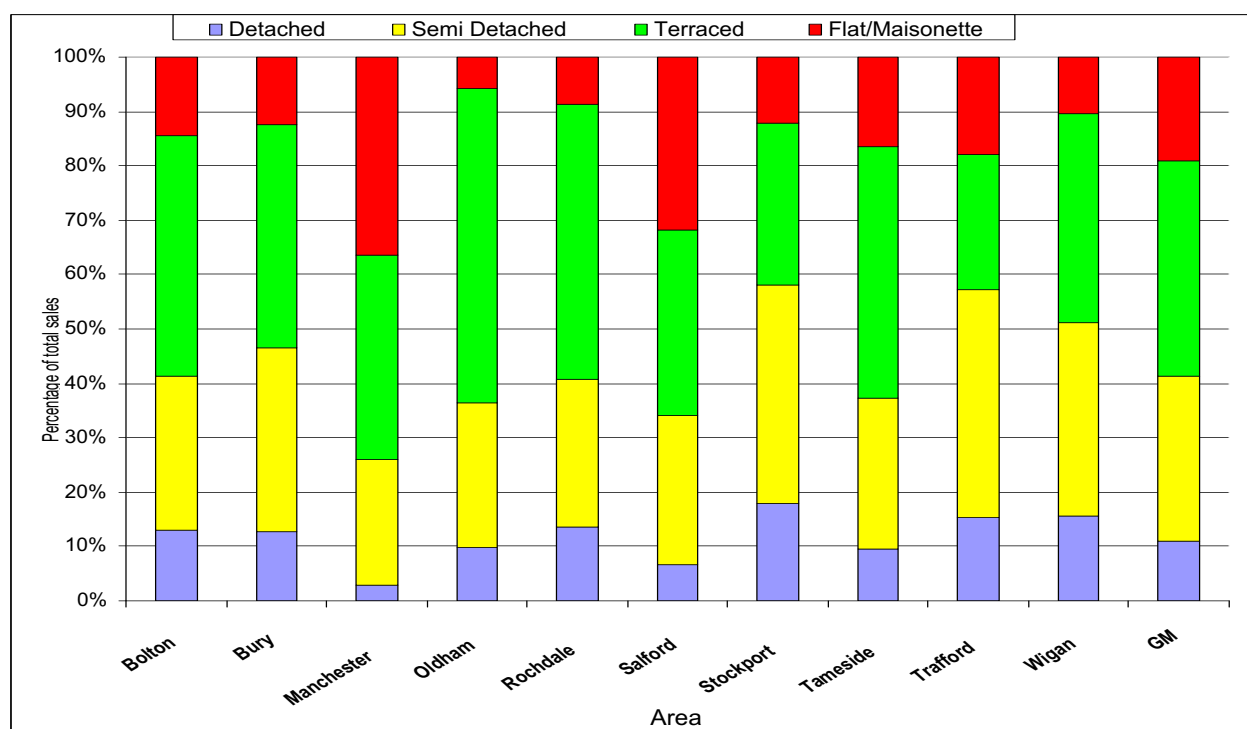
Making Housing Count, 2007, available at [www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.12572](http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.12572)

Manchester Independent Economic Review April 2009, available at [www.manchester-review.org.uk](http://www.manchester-review.org.uk)



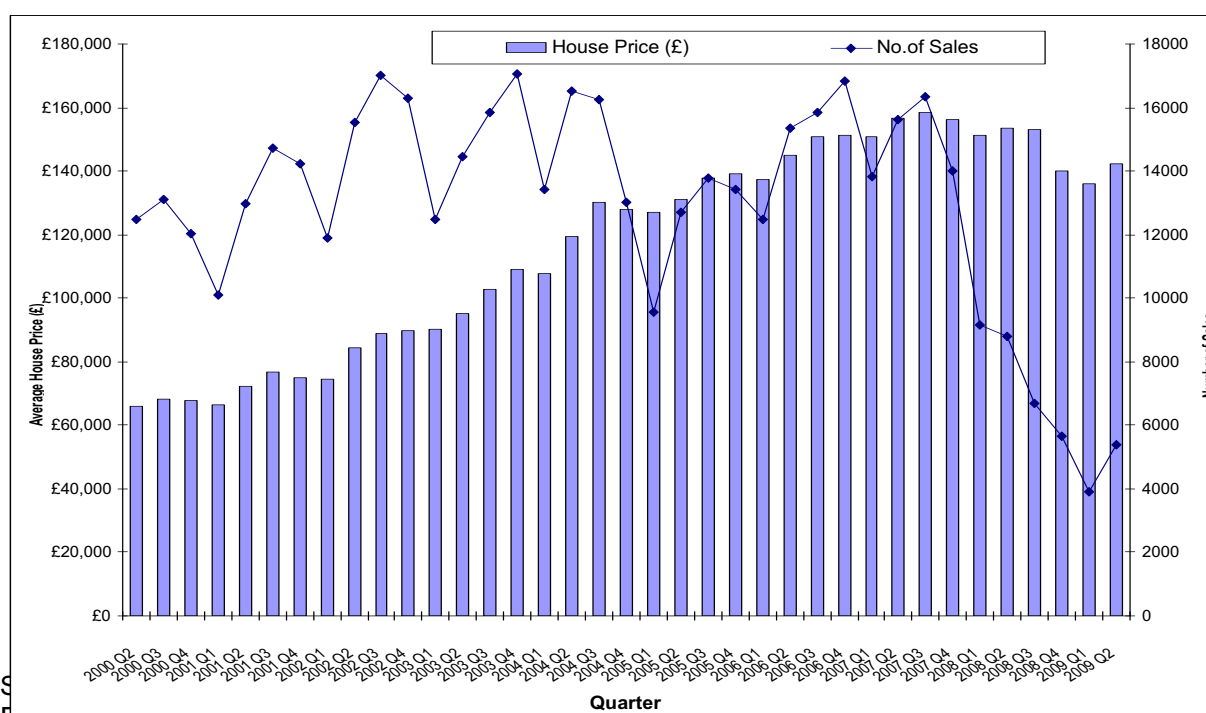
- 60% of property sales in Oldham and 50% in Rochdale were of terraced properties, an illustration of the imbalance of housing types on the market across much of Greater Manchester (see Figure 2);

**Figure 2 House Sales by property type in Greater Manchester 2008**



- The recession has had a dramatic effect on the number of house sales, but the impact on values is also apparent (see Figure 3). With concerns about access to finance affecting both householders and the development industry, the depth and longevity of the recession's impact on housing markets remain uncertain.

**Figure 3 Quarterly House Price and Sales in Greater Manchester**



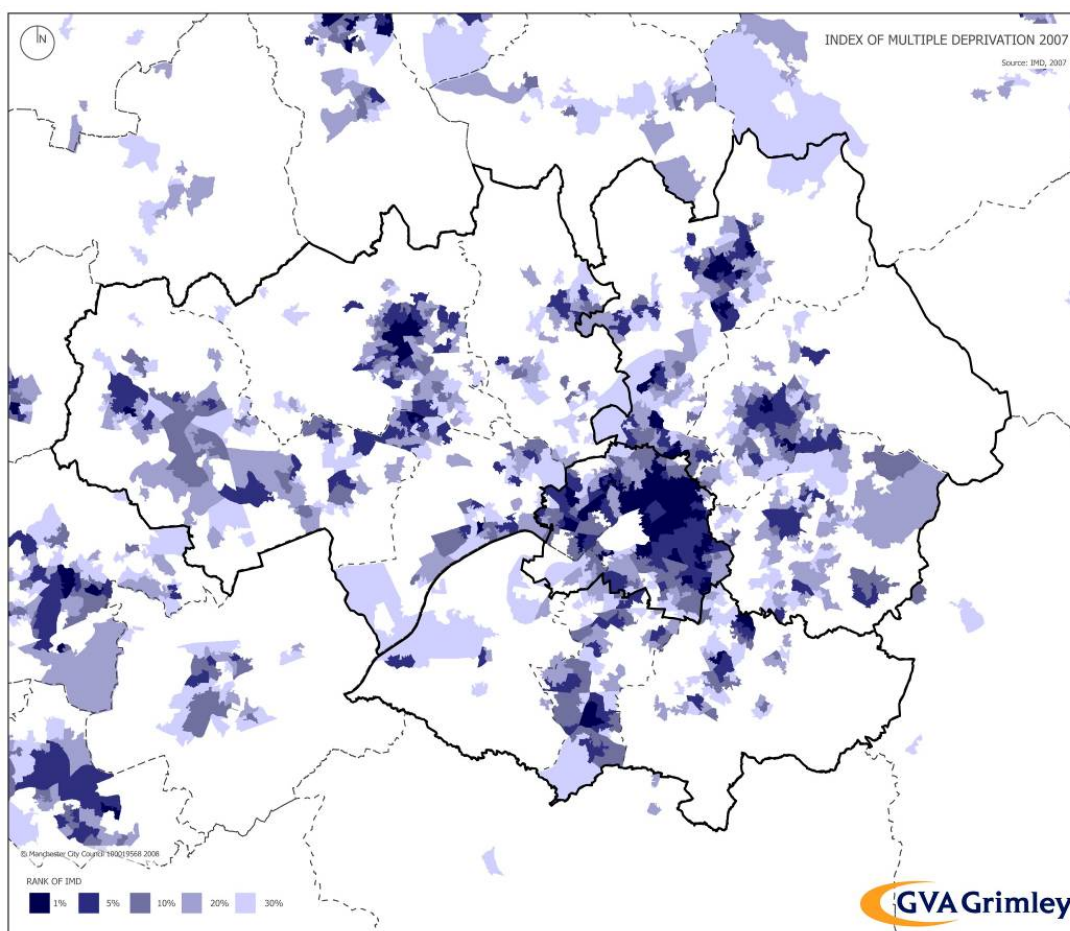
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## Deprivation

The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation and other key sources recorded the following deprivation statistics for Greater Manchester:

- 88,227 Greater Manchester residents are estimated to be living in LSOAs that are within the most deprived 1% in England and nearly 600,000 (23.4%) within the worst 10% nationally (see Figure 4).
- 374 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) ranked within the worst 10% nationally on the main index and rising to 505 LSOAs (30.7%) on the Health deprivation and disability domain.
- 82,591 people (5.1%) unemployed in September 2009 with the trend rising and long-term unemployment doubling in the past year. Also, youth unemployment rising by 64% in that time.
- Greater Manchester has the second highest mortality rate in the UK.

**Figure 4 – Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007**



## An ageing population

The ageing population is likely to be a major housing market issue going forward:

- The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by almost 40% between 2010 and 2030.
- In housing terms, the trend is for older people to remain in their own – disproportionately owner occupied - homes much longer, impacting on the choices available to other age groups.
- This will have significant implications for the provision of adapted and supported housing.

## How we consulted partners on this Strategy

In developing this Strategy, we have been careful to ensure key parties and bodies within the sub-region and region were consulted through a variety of methods. It is recognised that residents will have been consulted in the development of individual district housing strategies. Main means of consultation to develop the GM Housing Strategy included –

- A major consultation event held at the Urbis on 18th September. This was chaired by the Chair of the Planning and Housing Commission, Cllr Antrobus, with Roger Ellis, Chief Executive of Rochdale Council as key speaker. Included within approximately 100 attendees were members of the Planning and Housing Commission and other commission representatives, officers and elected members from the ten districts, developers, social housing providers and private landlords, the sub-region's two HMR Pathfinders, Government Office, 4NW and the Homes and Communities Agency.
- A formal consultation document which set out the context and outline details of strategic objectives and was widely circulated to districts and interested parties. This led to written responses from a number of districts and other stakeholders.
- Discussions held within districts at relevant Partnership boards.
- A presentation and discussion at the AGMA Scrutiny Pool meeting of 9th October.

## Stakeholder feedback

In general, stakeholders supported the five main strategic objectives highlighted within the consultation paper –

- Transform the quality of the city region's residential offer. There was seen as a need to avoid polarisation between areas, attract private investment, link development with wider social and economic regeneration, improve the quality of communities and existing stock and continue existing commitments.
- Put in place the conditions to support and accelerate delivery of housing growth. There was seen as need for districts to make best use of existing assets to generate growth, make areas outside the south of the conurbation more attractive to developers, develop sub-regional programmes for affordable housing, develop mixed tenure/ income communities, build quality new family homes which are sustainable, improve existing stock and work closely with other Commissions to plan necessary infrastructure.
- Radically improve the quality of private rented housing. This came up as a strong priority, with a recognised need to improve common standards and the supply through accreditation/ support and share skills/ resources to address poor quality landlords. Increasing access to the private rented sector was seen as crucial as well as developing the sector as a credible alternative to affordable housing.
- Focussed intervention in the most deprived areas. It was recognised that existing commitments needed to be continued, but adjoining areas also should be considered, with a focus on higher quality developments and improving social housing mix through addressing worklessness and use of allocation policies. It was considered that a consistent evidence base was required to assess future investment need in deprived areas based on housing need, health and other indicators.
- Understand the spatial implications of the GMS, including delivery of supporting infrastructure. There was seen as a need to ensure adequate land supply, ensure a more planned approach to supply across the sub region, develop better transport and increased investment from utilities to link existing housing to employment opportunities. A strong commitment was seen as crucial from Government as well as greater collaborative working around where investment was required to have greatest impact

for communities.

In addition, there was strong support for including the objective around Housing, Health and Wellbeing. The focus was seen as improving health through improving thermal comfort, developing and sharing specialist housing cross-boundary, making better use of adapted properties and ensuring investment from Health in addressing the quality of Private Sector housing.

Housing and climate change was also seen as an important additional objective, although some considered that it might be best led through the Environment Commission. There was seen as a need to have common standards to improve quality of new developments, address quality of existing stock through city region pilots and reduce carbon emissions and promote behavioural change.

It was considered that community cohesion and housing for the needs of emerging minority ethnic communities should be addressed as a cross-cutting element within objectives.

## Our priorities

This is the core of this Strategy, where we set out our shared priorities for action at the Greater Manchester level. Priorities are addressed through the three key themes in the 2009 North West Regional Housing Strategy<sup>7</sup>

- Achieving the right quantity of housing
- Continuing to raise the quality of the existing housing stock, and
- Connecting people to the improved housing offer.

These themes are also used in a number of the district housing strategies across Greater Manchester, and offer a helpful structure to build our Strategy around. It is recognised that there are many links and overlaps between these themes, so that actions under one heading will (and should) often help address other issues too.

There are also clear links to the Greater Manchester Strategy – including the strategic objectives beneath the main housing-focused strategic priority to Create quality places to meet the needs of a competitive city region.



## Key Theme 1 – Quantity

This theme encompasses two of the strategic objectives from the Greater Manchester Strategy, although the spatial implications go beyond the issues around new housing – for example how we manage the risks of flooding in our existing neighbourhoods as climate change continues to impact.

### GMS Strategic Objective 2

Put in place the conditions to support and accelerate delivery of housing growth

New housing development will play an important part in bringing our housing offer in line with aspirations of existing and potential new residents. Growing demand from new households also makes it imperative that the supply of housing expands, as does the need to tackle growing affordability issues across the city region. One of the key issues will be the need to ensure adequate infrastructure – including power, water, drainage and waste – for both new housing and regenerated neighbourhoods.

### GMS Strategic Objective 5

Understand the spatial implications of the GMS, including delivery of supporting infrastructure

Further work needs to be carried out to understand and manage the spatial implications and relationships between the different strategic priorities and objectives. While delivering housing growth is a key challenge, we also need to look at the demands of economic growth on the wider infrastructure of the city region, to ensure that we can deliver the plan's economic, social and environmental ambitions in the places that make up the Manchester city region.

## Challenges

Long term demographic trends nationally and in Greater Manchester show household growth continuing, even taking into account the current recession. National Housing & Planning Advisory Unit advice to Ministers in June 2009<sup>8</sup>, while acknowledging the short term impact of recession on both demand for owner-occupation and delivery of new homes, points to a need for planners to consider long term housing requirements at the same level – or in some regions higher than – their 2008 advice.

The latest Greater Manchester Forecasting Model update (Autumn 2009) shows the number of households expected to continue to grow by around 0.7% per annum, adding a further 83,000 households between 2008 and 2018, and a total of 221,000 by 2032<sup>9</sup>. To put this another way, we will need to look to build 'another Manchester' over the next 20 years in Greater Manchester. These increases are driven by natural population increase and a continued trend towards smaller households, with forecasts of migration showing slightly more people moving out of the city region than moving in over coming years. Our Greater Manchester Strategy looks to bring further long term economic growth to the city region. If we are successful, we would expect more people to want to stay in and move to Greater Manchester.

We have been working hard with our housing development partners across the city region to meet rising demand for housing. Recent years have seen strong housing growth, particularly (but not only) in and around the regional centre. However, in the last eighteen months a dramatic slowdown in residential development has seen construction rates fall far behind the requirements set out in Regional Spatial Strategy, with only 2,582 new homes started in

More homes for more people: advice to Ministers on housing levels to be considered in regional plans, National Housing & Planning Advisory Unit, 2009, available at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Oxford Economics, Greater Manchester Forecasting Model Autumn 2009 update

Greater Manchester during 2008-09, compared to a peak of 11,840 in 2005-06<sup>10</sup>. We know that it's important to keep the supply of housing flowing but recognise this is going to be a real challenge in the current economic climate. There is increased pressure to use public sector funds to underpin the limited delivery of housing still continuing, but it is also clear that overall public finances will decline as the impact of the financial crisis and increased borrowing feed through over the next few years. We therefore need to focus both on the short term issues holding back housing development and on the long term need for significant housing growth across the city region as a whole.

One of the key challenges will be understanding the implications of recession for the type, tenure, density and location of the new homes likely to be in demand, affordable and able to be delivered in the next few years as we move toward economic recovery. We know that the market for new homes has altered substantially over the last eighteen months, particularly in the rapid move away from the buy to let model which helped fuel the boom years of apartment development in the regional centre and elsewhere across Greater Manchester. The view from developers and others is clear – that part of the market is unlikely to return in the short or medium term – and we can expect further changes as the economy stabilises. We will need to find alternative models of development if we are to keep pace with the predicted level of household growth, with demand appearing most robust for good quality family housing. We will need to work through the consequences and lessons of recent patterns of development, and what this tells us about the sorts of new urban form we can hope to achieve in coming years. As always, we will need to strike the right balance between the viability of new development, and our requirements for housing development to help deliver our wider objectives. But we must also bear in mind the importance of new build as a tool to achieve better balance in housing provision and housing markets, as set out in the next Key Theme on Quality, and the demographic trends which suggest an ever greater requirement for homes which meet the particular needs of an ageing population.

Where we do deliver additional housing, we will face familiar challenges. A whole range of infrastructure – water and energy supply, transport, access to employment, schools, community and retail facilities, good quality green space, etc – must be in place if new homes are to become part of successful communities. But our work to address other priorities in this strategy – such as improving the quality of existing neighbourhoods, or dealing with climate change – will also need to influence what we should build and where we should build it.

## Ambitions

Our ambitions for growth in the housing sector take both the current economic context and longer term need for homes into account. We intend to work together across Greater Manchester to:

Plan for short, medium and long term housing growth to reflect household growth and while also improving both the quality of our housing stock as a whole and the quality of the places where new homes are built.

Ensure that we maximise the delivery of new homes in the short to medium term, including through our New Growth Point, despite difficult economic circumstances.

Provide a better match between the size, location and cost of new homes and the varied needs and ability to pay of existing and potential new residents of Greater Manchester, while also ensuring the identified needs for new specialist housing provision are addressed.

Help achieve our carbon reduction targets and mitigate the consequences of climate change by intelligent planning and design of new homes and the infrastructure needed to support them

## Actions

To realise our ambitions we will work together, and with our local housing partners, to:

Develop a Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, complementing and co-ordinating the ten district Core Strategies. This would resolve strategic issues at city region scale around the location and future development of housing, employment and key infrastructure, and to influence the development of the next Regional Strategy and the future strategy for housing provision in the North West as a whole and within Greater Manchester.

Further strengthen our joint working on transport, energy, flood and water supply issues at Greater Manchester level. This would help deliver growth, working in partnership with infrastructure providers, regulators, other Commissions and Government to better understand existing capacity and our ability to meet growing demands.

Through the Single Conversation process with the Homes and Communities Agency, develop new and existing models for development in the light of changing economic circumstances. These would focus on the impact of recession and the ability of both private sector developers and individual households to finance existing models of house building.

Develop programmes for the delivery of good quality, sustainable new housing as part of mixed tenure, mixed income cohesive communities, including provision of affordable housing and bringing empty homes back into use. This would be undertaken through the Single Conversation and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, district housing and regeneration strategies and Core Strategies.

## Key Theme 2 – Quality

Under this theme we examine the overall quality of our residential ‘offer’ as a city region, and two more specific aspects of that offer – the private rented sector and the need to address the climate change impact of Greater Manchester’s housing stock.

### GMS Strategic Objective 1

Transform the quality of the city region’s residential offer

The city region has to be known as a place that offers high quality housing in places where people at all levels of the market, including the highly skilled and talented, will choose, and can afford, to live and invest. To deliver that we must take a long term view of the potential and challenges for individual neighbourhoods, and make flexible and creative use of planning, regeneration and housing investment tools to deliver balanced and cohesive communities.

We know that many areas offer little variation from dominant housing types or tenures. The structure of the existing housing stock shows a huge concentration in the lowest Council Tax bands, the legacy of historic patterns of growth and investment. We need to use our leverage and partnership networks to create a climate where investment will be attracted to help transform the quality and nature of places in the city region, and those places help us to attract and retain the workforce our growing economy needs.

In the city region as a whole, we need to enhance the mix available to expand the choice and quality of homes, by investing in both existing and new homes. All new housing needs to enhance the quality of the housing offer, to create a better mix of house types, sizes and tenures in line with people’s aspirations, and to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

## Challenges

Improving the quality, range and choice of Greater Manchester’s existing housing will be essential if we are to meet rising demand for housing and the raised aspirations of residents for a quality housing offer. The challenges faced across the city region are many. We have:

- Major concentrations of lower priced housing in Greater Manchester, coupled with a perceived lack of balanced supply for the more affluent;
- Concentrations of areas with little housing choice due to dominant house types and tenures;
- Relatively poor housing conditions; and
- Concerns over wider environmental and neighbourhood quality issues.

In summary the existing housing supply or wider neighbourhood offer does not match present or future aspirations. Traditional approaches that have often looked at improving housing conditions and delivering new housing development within separate programmes are not adequate in meeting these challenges. It should be stressed that, for housing markets to be fully transformed, other related issues will also need to be addressed – access to jobs, reductions in crime and disorder, improvements in educational attainment and consistently high standards of amenity – if we are to secure sustained progress.

While our next Strategic Objective focuses specifically on the private rented sector, large numbers of households at the lower end of the owner-occupied sector are similarly vulnerable to problems of low quality housing stock, often concentrated in poor quality neighbourhoods with limited choice in terms of different types and sizes of property.

### Ambitions

Our key ambition over the long term is to create places that offer a high quality housing offer for all its residents, both at the individual neighbourhood level and across the city region as a whole. We will work together to:

Enhance the choice and quality of housing available by investing in both existing and new homes in an integrated way.

Ensure all interventions are balanced and help create a better mix of house types, sizes and tenures in line with people's aspirations – including the aspirations of our black and minority ethnic communities.

Relate our initiatives under this and other priorities to economic, environmental, transport, urban design and wider community investment, to ensure that we contribute to the wider 'place-shaping' work needed to create more sustainable communities.

### Actions

Using the Single Conversation with the Homes and Communities Agency as one of the mechanisms to further develop, prioritise and deliver work to:

- Continue the pioneering long term approach to transforming neighbourhoods in our Housing Market Renewal areas;
- Identify opportunities to develop and adopt similar long term co-ordinated regeneration action to transform the housing offer of selected neighbourhoods elsewhere in Greater Manchester. This would involve integrating improvements in the existing housing stock and the development of appropriate new housing to help deliver fundamental change; and
- Explore with private sector partners and financial institutions how we can create a climate where private investment is attracted to help transform the nature of places in a context where public sector resources will become increasingly limited. This will need to take account of the scope for innovative investment vehicles utilizing local resources such as public sector land holdings.

Ensure these approaches are also linked to related housing objectives such as the quality of the private rented housing, climate change and wider objectives such as the spatial implications for Greater Manchester and economic benefits.

Continue to work with social housing providers to maintain decency standards and put in place clear performance monitoring and management systems to capture their contribution to achieving wider sustainability improvements on their estates.

|  |
|--|
| GMS Strategic Objective 3<br>Radically improve the quality of private rented housing |
|--|

Housing choice is polarised between owner occupation – increasingly difficult for many households to afford, and the social rented sector – which is under increasing pressure from growing demand and declining supply. As a result, the private rented sector has a crucial role to play in offering a range of flexible housing across the market as a whole, as it does in many European countries. However, problems of poor physical condition and poor management are not uncommon, and mean the potential for private renting to become a tenure of choice is not being fulfilled.

We need a range of measures to support landlords in developing and maintaining high quality private renting options and seek greater investment in the private sector from institutional investors. These should help to create affordable housing choices for middle income households, a high-end flexible offer to mobile workers, and an additional supply of quality homes to complement the social rented sector. This could make a real contribution to the renewal of many of our communities, and reduce the often relatively high carbon impact of the sector.

## Challenges

Much of the existing private rented sector performs well and provides a versatile, well-managed asset within the Greater Manchester housing market. However, some accommodation is of poor quality, operated to maximise profit with insufficient regard for the diverse needs of tenants or the neighbourhood in which the property is situated, while some is characterised by single property landlords with little knowledge of statutory requirements.

Our statutory city region agreement with Government contains elements aimed at both support and encouragement to build on the strengths of the sector, and at improving our ability to tackle problems at the poorer end of the spectrum. The poorer element not only leads to inadequate accommodation for tenants but also can be a source and focus for anti social behaviour, which detracts from the creation of successful, sustainable places and communities. In parts of the conurbation, concentrations of poorly managed private rented stock have developed, highlighting the importance of the private rented sector in both helping to create but also potentially destabilise balanced communities.

One of our key challenges is to support poorer landlords to improve their practices and the quality of housing that they offer or face enforcement action on a consistent and coordinated basis. We also need to improve the support and information available to encourage the many good landlords that operate in Greater Manchester to maintain and improve their standards. Through increasing their capacity to provide a quality alternative tenure choice, the private rented sector can help to deliver housing growth at all levels of the market, as well as supporting economic mobility into and within the conurbation.

## Ambition

It is our ambition to have a wide range of appropriate, suitably located private rented accommodation to meet both housing need and demand, which facilitates and contributes to developing a housing offer which supports economic growth in the sub region, and makes a positive contribution to 'place making'.

We want to see increases in the satisfaction of private rented sector tenants brought about by improvements to the condition of homes and increased opportunities for households in housing need to obtain suitable accommodation in this sector. We want to provide an environment where quality private landlords thrive and prosper, and poor landlords are encouraged to improve or leave the market.

## Actions

To achieve these ambitions we will work in partnership with private landlords to:

Build positive working relationships with landlords and their organisations at a district level, engage formally with regional private landlord fora and develop a consistent, transparent and fair approach to working with landlords across Greater Manchester. This will include a regular and informative bulleting for private landlords and piloting shared service centres to evaluate their impact on raising standards in the sector and reducing administrative costs.

Implement an accreditation scheme across all districts. This would maximize the number of landlord and dwellings participating as a minimum, and to look to converge policies, procedures and criteria.

Agree with Government a more responsive approach to selective landlord licensing, to enable faster action to effectively address concentrated local problems.

Explore the possibilities of access to quality private sector rented accommodation via the sub regional choice based lettings system, building on current experience at district level.

Consider the need for research of the private rented sector at a sub regional level to strengthen our strategic understanding of the sector.

## Strategic Objective – Housing and Climate Change

The Greater Manchester Strategy includes a strategic priority to

Achieve a rapid transformation to a low carbon economy

While this has many implications, including for the standards applied to new homes being built, perhaps the key housing-related issue is captured in this part of the strategic priority:

Apply cross cutting sustainability principles to procurement, transport, spatial planning and investment activities, and prioritise the retrofit of existing domestic and commercial stock to underpin the transition to a low carbon economy, which is resilient to a changing climate.

### Challenges

The Government published its Low Carbon Transition Plan in July 2009, part of a comprehensive national strategy to tackle Climate Change. It is due to publish its Heat and Energy Saving Strategy in late 2009. This strategy will set out the Government's main mechanism for reducing carbon emissions from domestic buildings in order to meet the UK's Carbon Reduction Commitment, which is to reduce household carbon emissions by 29% of the 2008 figure by 2020.

By harnessing the scale of the social housing sector across the Manchester city region, we have the potential to develop the skills, intelligence, and financial products necessary to boost demand and to ensure that locally-based companies are able to supply some of the products and services needed to 'retrofit' our home, giving Greater Manchester a real competitive advantage. This is one of the key elements of the designation of Greater Manchester as a 'Low Carbon Economic Area for the Built Environment'. While the achievement of carbon reduction targets is clearly a crucial driver, this can be done while also securing significant improvements to the overall quality of the homes being retrofitted.

In order to make real progress, we will need to work on a number of fronts - encouraging developers to achieve high standards of environmental sustainability in building new homes, while still building sufficient volume, attracting resources to the city region to have a significant impact on carbon emissions in existing domestic properties, devising investment models which encourage quick take-up of low carbon technologies by homeowners and landlords, and developing strategies to influence and incentivise the behaviour of householders. Some of these areas will be the focus of work coming from what might be termed mainstream national, regional or city region level climate change interventions and programmes. We should make sure we focus on adding value where we can, rather than duplicating effort.

### Ambition

To create a housing offer which provides thermally efficient homes, that sustainably provide an affordable, warm environment for all sections of our communities, and are able to adapt to inevitable climate change over coming years.

To achieve the 2020 household carbon emission reduction target of 29%

### Actions

Promote the adoption of the key aims of the Heat and Energy Saving Strategy by districts as part of their local strategies.



Build on the low carbon sub regional pilots and wider cross authority approaches to deliver improvements to existing homes above and beyond traditional insulation measures. We should aim to secure a scale of intervention which will have a significant impact on carbon emissions and help drive the growth of the domestic retrofitting sector in the city region.

Work with the private sector energy companies and investors to develop long term sustainable finance schemes, which overcome the large capital costs and pay-back periods of 'whole house' retrofitting measures.

Work with housing providers, employment, skills and training agencies to create opportunities to upskill and retrain the existing workforce, and to maximise opportunities to move people from benefits and into newly created jobs in the domestic retrofitting sector

Promote sub-regional approaches to planning policy to deliver a consistent approach to achieving the highest possible standards of environmental sustainability in new build across Greater Manchester.

## Key Theme 3 – People

While the Greater Manchester Strategy is a deliberately economically focused strategy, the Manchester Independent Economic Review made clear that we cannot achieve our economic aims if significant proportions of the population remain excluded from the opportunities and benefits of economic growth. Under this theme, we consider how housing can help address the challenges faced by our most deprived communities, and contribute to improving health and well-being.

### GMS Strategic Objective 4

#### Focused intervention in the most deprived areas

The most deprived areas undoubtedly have a negative impact on the economic performance of the city region. People within those areas have often benefited least, and in some cases not at all, from recent economic growth. Deprived areas face different combinations of problems and opportunities, and we must ensure that investment decisions are based on a sound understanding of individual neighbourhoods and integrate with broader service delivery and neighbourhood management in each area. This does not mean we focus all our investment into the most deprived neighbourhoods — we must look to invest where sustained transformation can be achieved.

Diversifying the housing mix through physical investment will be part of the solution, as will developing and piloting tailored local lettings policies for predominantly social rented areas. Overall, improved commissioning of supported housing services across the city region should form a key part of the integrated support packages for households envisaged in our strategic priority around improving life chances.

### Challenges

The most deprived areas in Greater Manchester have a negative impact on the economic performance of the city region and have benefited least from recent economic growth. Investment in housing must link residents to the wider regeneration of communities in terms of offering access to improved education and skills, a quality environment and access to employment opportunities.

Greater Manchester as a whole has a high supply (47.3%) of Council Tax Band A homes, high levels of worklessness in social housing, high levels of terraced properties and relatively poor housing conditions. Despite the economic downturn and the consequent cooling in house prices, low income levels mean that affordability and access to housing remain a key issue for many residents. It is recognised that intervention needs to be targeted at our most deprived communities.

Investment through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders in Manchester/Salford and Oldham/Rochdale has shown the benefit of sustained, targeted investment in new and existing homes and integration with wider regeneration strategies. It is recognised that other parts of Greater Manchester are affected by poor housing, deprivation and health inequality and it will be necessary to ensure investment is targeted in the future at areas where there will be greatest impact in terms of addressing deprivation and inequality whilst sustaining existing commitments.

The high levels of worklessness within social housing means districts are developing new models of housing management and considering local lettings policies to ensure mixed communities and improve the aspirations of communities. Improved commissioning of supported housing services and advice on issues such as debt management will assist in

improving the life chances of residents in the most deprived areas.

## Ambitions

Our key ambitions are to:

- Work in an integrated way to improve the life chances of people living in the most deprived areas on issues such as worklessness, improving education and training and improvement to health.
- Adopt a sustained approach to continuing existing commitments to addressing housing in the most deprived areas through the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders and other programmes.
- Use flexible approaches in areas where regeneration can have the greatest impact, with a focus on communities isolated from economic opportunities and inequality, including disadvantaged black and minority ethnic communities.
- Diversify deprived neighbourhoods to generate communities with a greater mix of tenure and income levels.
- Improve housing management within estates and communities, and the continued availability of appropriate and affordable housing related support services for vulnerable residents

It is recognised that a number of these areas are best dealt with at a local level, however, there will be benefits to sharing best practice and skills across the city region.

## Actions

Develop a robust evidence base, that takes account of residents' changing economic, health and support needs, to identify future priorities for investment in deprived areas across Greater Manchester.

Develop and deliver a Single Conversation between AGMA and the Homes and Communities Agency that highlight immediate and future investment priorities incorporating existing support and care investment.

Support development of the Enhanced Housing Options model across districts to ensure that housing provides a linkage to a range of support services, including employment and health.

Develop shared approaches to allocations, debt management and financial inclusion across the city region.

## Strategic Objective – Housing, Health and Well-Being

The Greater Manchester Strategy views health as one of the issues which cuts across several of the strategic objectives it sets for the city region. For example, as part of the strategic priority to

Improve life chances in the most deprived areas by investing in lifelong skills development and providing other forms of support, including accessible employment opportunities, so that people can compete and engage in the modern labour market

the Strategy looks to...

Improve the economic prospects of adults in our most deprived communities by reducing the number of people with limiting illnesses and out of work due to ill health

Similarly, within the strategic priority to

Radically improve the early years experience for hard to reach groups, particularly in the most deprived areas

one of the key components is to...

Improve key health outcomes for mothers and children in the most deprived areas.

The many links between poor housing conditions and poor health are firmly established. We need to provide the right housing offer for a population with a wide range of needs and aspirations. We know – for example - that older people make a huge contribution to sustainable balanced communities, and that our population profile will continue to age in coming years. We will need to be smarter about how and when we intervene if we are to continue to meet care and support needs at a time when public finances are tight and becoming tighter. Investing in preventative measures and support can drastically reduce future costs and provide better outcomes for individuals and families.

Providing homes more suited to everyone's needs is part of our wider Strategic Objective to transform the quality of the city region's residential offer, and the physical and mental health benefits of investing to ensure homes are dry, warm and secure should not be underestimated. Here, however, we focus on housing interventions made with the needs of particular groups within the community in mind.

## Challenges

Long-term demographic trends in Greater Manchester show household growth forecasts in the order of 20% in the next 20 years, driven by an ageing population and other factors such as divorce and separation. This increase will exacerbate health and social problems currently experienced with a consequent increase in financial and social costs.

Housing has a key role to play in managing the impact of household growth and reducing the financial burden. Research shows that Supporting People Programme investment of £1.6 billion delivered £3.41 billion in net financial benefits to reduce costs in homelessness, health services, tenancy failure, crime and residential care<sup>11</sup>. Even ten years ago it was recognised that £20,000 of investment in an older person's home can make savings of £6,000 a year in home care costs if they enable that person to live independently in their own home<sup>12</sup>, which a wealth of evidence tells us is the preference of the great majority of older and vulnerable people. Support and prevention services must be designed to ensure a range of services are available, not only to ensure people are able to choose to live in a decent home of their own, but also to assist them living active, happy and healthy lives.

As a city region we can respond to these significant challenges more effectively by greater networking and collaboration to establish commonality of approach, service standards and looking for economies of scale, where practical, in providing preventative measures.

Research into the financial benefits of the Supporting People programme, Capgemini for CLG 2009, available at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Home Alone: The Role of Housing in Community Care, Audit Commission, 1998, available at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

## Ambitions

To meet these challenges, and building on the approach set out in the Regional Strategic Framework for Housing Support<sup>13</sup>, we will:

Provide homes that meet current and future needs and recognise the diversity of our communities, taking into account the well understood demographic trends.

Improve the joining up of preventative services and strategies across housing, health, and social care to deliver preventative and personalised solutions to health issues.

Promote independent living through continuing to invest in home adaptations, support, prevention and re-enablement services, to reduce the need for home care, residential and nursing care, maintain independence and reduce the use of costly 'crisis' services.

Achieve a better understanding of current and future needs and develop more consistent responses across Greater Manchester utilising the voluntary sector and existing best practice, whilst retaining local knowledge and the ability to apply solutions tailored to the individual and locality.

## Actions

Alongside work under other priorities in this Strategy to improve the quality of our homes, action to help achieve our ambitions will include:

Work with the Health Commission and National Health Service colleagues to establish a dialogue between housing, health, and adult services across Greater Manchester, building on the commitments to breaking down professional barriers included in the Healthier Horizons for the North West<sup>14</sup> report. One aspect of this will be to develop and improve our use of intelligence on current and future health and well-being related needs, bringing together available data to ensure our development programmes are meeting the needs of local people.

Development of technology and communications systems to assist vulnerable people to live independently. We will seek to develop partnerships and economies of scale in the development, implementation and monitoring of technology-based housing support services, including home security and telehealth services.

Assess the nature and scope of Home Improvement Agencies across Greater Manchester to seek to develop and deliver some common standards. This will involve review and identification of areas where service quality and efficiency can be improved through greater collaboration at a Greater Manchester level.

## Developing an action plan to deliver Greater Manchester's housing ambitions

Achievement of Greater Manchester's housing ambitions relies upon the contributions and leadership of the ten Councils individually and collectively. We are committed to putting words into action.

The impact that we have will depend upon our success in harnessing the contribution that our key partners in regeneration and planning, health and social care and private and public sector housing can make towards the aims and objectives laid out in the strategy. We recognise the importance of working together.

The outcome of this cooperation across Greater Manchester will be a better quality housing offer across the city region, enjoyed by a more mobile, economically active and healthy resident population. We know that what counts is the difference we make, on the ground, for Greater Manchester residents.

### How will we know if its working

A high level action plan will capture planned activity under each of three key themes Quality, Quantity and People, and will provide a clear link to each of the Greater Manchester Strategy objectives. It will be a public, living document, updated regularly in the light of our collective progress, amended where it is clear that the plan is not delivering the ambition that we all have for the city region.

Residents of Greater Manchester will be able to track progress, and suggest improvements, by visiting or contacting any of the ten Greater Manchester Councils' Strategic Housing websites and teams, and can expect a consistent and clear account of activity and outcomes for residents across the city region.

Delivery against the action plan will be monitored and challenged by AGMA's Planning and Housing Commission, and will be performance managed on a quarterly basis by Greater Manchester's Housing Officer Group.

Each authority will assess their contribution to the Greater Manchester action plan at a local level. This will be achieved by integrating the plan into their established strategic housing, place and Community Strategy performance management systems. This will have the added benefit of allowing the contribution made by local partners to be identified.

### What will the plan look like?

The plan will simply and clearly identify each of the responses to the challenges articulated in the strategy and list planned activity to deliver against each, and consider the resources potentially available to districts and their partners to support that activity. In recognition that not every authority will be actively working on every objective it will identify lead and support authorities.

The activity listed within the action plan will include high level housing commitments made by the city region to Government. For example commitments to maximise the contribution that local allocation policies, private rented sector licencing, and domestic carbon reduction activity can make to "Creating quality places to meet the needs of a competitive city region."

The plan will recognise the contribution that specialist groups working within AGMA will make to the achievement of the ambition in the strategy. It will identify those housing activities where we believe that we can make better progress and achieve better value for money by working

together across the city region. For example, we will build on work already underway on sharing ideas and experience on models for delivering housing development in the face of economic uncertainty and financial barriers.

The plan will describe the difference we expect to make by working cooperatively, the pooled resources required to realise change, and the measures we will use to check and drive progress. We will combine long term performance measures looking at outcomes with shorter term milestones to guide interim progress. Examples of long term performance measures will include resident satisfaction in place surveys, and overall improvement in housing conditions. Other shorter term performance measures will include percentage of residents in fuel poverty, the numbers of affordable homes delivered, new homes provided and percentage of non decent homes (public and private).

When will the plan be ready?

The plan will be in place from April 2010, with reports on progress produced at the end of each quarter. This timetable recognises the importance of allowing each authority time to identify and gain the commitment required for the action plan within their authority and from local partners.

Greater Manchester Housing Officers Group will hold a series of workshops in January to develop the plan. The aim will be to minimise bureaucracy whilst maximising accountability and transparency. To this end simple traffic light , direction of travel and risk management systems will be used to communicate performance to residents and the Planning and Housing Commission, with highlight reporting systems in place to assist the rapid sharing of information between authorities.

## Annex A

### Greater Manchester Strategy

#### Strategic priorities

**EARLY YEARS:** Radically improve the early years experience for hard to reach groups, particularly in the most deprived areas.

**BETTER LIFE CHANCES:** Improve life chances in the most deprived areas by investing in lifelong skills development and providing other forms of support, including accessible employment opportunities, so that people can compete and engage in the modern labour market.

**THE HIGHLY SKILLED:** Increase the proportion of highly skilled people in the city region.

**ATTRACTING TALENT:** Attract, retain and nurture the best talent

**TRANSPORT:** Significantly improve transport connectivity into and within the city region

**THE ECONOMIC BASE:** Expand and diversify the city region's economic base through digital infrastructure

**INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY:** Increase the international connectivity of the Manchester city region's firms, especially to the newly-emerging economies

**A LOW CARBON ECONOMY:** Achieve a rapid transformation to a low carbon economy

**THE HOUSING MARKET:** Creating quality places to meet the needs of a competitive city region.

**EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE:** Review city region governance to ensure effective and efficient delivery mechanisms.

**SENSE OF PLACE:** Building the city region's Sense of Place