

Tameside Independent

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SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE EDITION

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**“Housing Targets Revised –
But Where’s the Delivery?”**



**Revised Targets -
July 2025**

Tameside Council says it’s accelerating the delivery of social rent housing. But behind the headlines, there’s no published plan, no measurable targets, and no consistent data. Deputy Leader Andrew McLaren told Full Council in July that revised targets were in motion – yet no figures were released, no scrutiny followed, and no minutes recorded any challenge.

Meanwhile, Angela Rayner’s press office cites just 1,005 households on the waiting list. Jigsaw + our own data 7,000+. TMBC Internal files show over 6,000.

So which number is real — and why can’t the council reconcile its own story?

Full exposé continues on pages 2–3.

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“A Promise Made, A Plan Withheld”

On 15 July 2025, Councillor Andrew McLaren stood before Full Council and declared that revised targets for social rent housing were underway, and that delivery would be accelerated “in the short term.” But no figures were attached. No documents were published. And no councillor asked a single question.

The minutes confirm the statement. They also confirm silence. The Corporate Plan 2025–2026 repeats the ambition to “increase the supply of truly affordable homes.” But again, no delivery targets. No waiting list metrics. No performance indicators. Housing is a headline – not a tracked priority.

“Three Numbers, One Council”

Rayner’s press office claims just 1,005 households are waiting. Jigsaw + our own data, 7,000. Internal housing strategy files show 6,000+. These aren’t minor discrepancies – they’re narrative fractures. And they’ve never been explained.

The council has had multiple chances: FOIA requests, open letters, social media pressure. It has responded to none.

“What Gets Funded, What Gets Ignored”

While housing delivery remains untracked, other priorities surge ahead. The Wilko site in Ashton is being repurposed for post-16 education – 350 pupils. Hyde Town Hall gets £950,000 for roof repairs. Active Tameside’s lease is extended. Executive pay is quietly increased.

Housing? Still waiting.

“No Scrutiny, No Accountability”

“The Files They Forgot You’d Read”
This exposé draws from:

- **Full Council minutes (15 July 2025)**
 - **Corporate Plan 2025–2026**
- **Executive Cabinet minutes (25 June 2025)**
 - **Corporate Performance Q4 2024/25**
 - **Post-16 Sufficiency Report**
- **Senior Staffing Panel pay restructure**
 - **Internal housing strategy files**

Corporate performance reports track fly-tipping, recycling, and call centre volumes. Housing delivery is nowhere to be found. Scrutiny panels haven’t flagged the gap. No councillor has demanded clarity. And the public – thousands of households waiting – are left with spin.

No links. No shortcuts. If they want to check the receipts, they can dig – just like we did.

STRAIGHT TALK

“So What’s Really Going On?”

The council says it’s speeding up housing. They say new targets are in place. But when you look for proof — how many homes, where, when — there’s nothing. No plan. No numbers. Just talk.

They’ve given three different answers about how many people are waiting for housing:

- **Rayner’s office says just over 1,000.**
- **Jigsaw + our own data say’s more than 7,000.**
- **TMBC Internal files show over 6,000.**

That’s not a small mistake. That’s a mess.

While families wait, the council’s spending money elsewhere — fixing roofs, expanding colleges, bumping up executive pay. But housing? No updates. No tracking. No accountability.

They’ve made promises. They’ve held meetings. But they haven’t shown the public what’s actually being done. And when asked for answers, they stay quiet.

This exposé is built from council minutes, strategy papers, performance reports, and internal files.

We’ve done the digging. If they want to challenge it, they can show their own receipts.

Until then, the question stands:
Where are the homes — and where’s the truth?

FOLLOW THE MONEY

“They Say Housing Is a Priority. Their Spending Says Otherwise.”

Tameside Council has borrowed millions in recent years but housing isn't where the money's gone.

- **£950,000 allocated for roof repairs at Hyde Town Hall.**
- **Multi-million-pound lease extensions and asset reviews for Active Tameside.**
- **Capital reallocation to refurbish civic buildings and expand college space.**
- **Executive pay increases quietly approved some directors now earning £125,000+.**

Meanwhile, housing delivery remains untracked. No capital earmarked for new social rent builds. No published breakdown of how much has been spent or borrowed to meet the supposed “revised targets.”
If housing is urgent, why is the money going elsewhere?

THE VIABILITY EXCUSE

“Eccleston Homes and the Myth of ‘Unviable’ Housing”

One developer report Eccleston Homes, for the Clarendon Road site in Hyde claimed social rent units were “not viable” due to abnormal development costs. The council accepted it.

No challenge. No independent review. No public rebuttal.

But viability isn’t a fixed truth it’s a negotiation. And when councils don’t push back, developers walk away from obligations. Social rent gets replaced with “affordable” units priced out of reach. Or worse nothing at all.

This isn’t just about one site. It’s a pattern:

- **Viability used to dilute Section 106 obligations**
- **Planning approvals granted with reduced social rent quotas**
- **No clawback. No enforcement. No transparency.**

We’ve seen similar language in the viability justification for the Hyde Library redevelopment – a separate exposé already in our pipeline.

If viability is the excuse where’s the scrutiny?

Where’s the independent review? The public challenge? The accountability?

Until councils stop treating developer spreadsheets as gospel, social rent will remain “unviable” – not because it can’t be built, but because no one insists that it must.

GMCA FUNDING & VIABLE SITES

“Brownfield First – But Who Decides What’s Viable?”

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has committed £115 million to unlock 92 housing schemes across the region all on brownfield land. Tameside is included. But which sites got the nod? And which ones didn't?

What We Found:

- **Funding comes from the £150m Brownfield Housing Fund, part of the 2023 trailblazer devolution deal**
- **Over half of homes are meant to be “affordable”, with 79% built to Future Homes Standard**
- **Sites were assessed for viability – but the criteria and scoring remain opaque**

Brownfield vs Green Space:

GMCA claims to prioritise brownfield land. But in Tameside, we've seen:

- **Green Belt land eyed for development (e.g. Ashton Moss West)**
 - **Viability used to sideline social rent**
- **No clear public scoring of which sites were rejected or why**

The Sites Mentioned in Reports:

The council and GMCA documents reference three to four “viable” sites in Tameside. These include:

- 1. Ashton Moss West** earmarked for removal from Green Belt, part of the Innovation Park plan
- 2. Ashton Moss East** formerly “Plot 3000,” now part of the employment-led cluster
- 3. St Petersfield** linked to mixed-use regeneration and office space
- 4. Possibly Hyde Library site** mentioned in viability contexts, but not confirmed in GMCA funding lists

Green Spaces Fund (Separate Pot):

GMCA also runs a Green Spaces Fund small grants (£2k–£40k) for community-led greening of brownfield or neglected land. But this is not housing funding it's for nature recovery and public access.

So where's the public list of funded sites?

Where's the scoring breakdown?

Where's the challenge to viability claims that block social rent?

We're building a receipts pack to track which sites got funding, which were deemed “unviable,” and which were quietly dropped. Ashton Moss may be the flagship – but it's also the test case.

THE FOI THEY TRIED TO BURY

“Housing Targets? Sorry, That’s Environmental.”

On 10 August 2025, we submitted a Freedom of Information request asking for:

- **The revised targets for new social rent housing**
 - **Any internal plans to accelerate delivery**
- **Minutes of meetings where these were discussed or approved**

The council responded but not with answers. Instead, they reclassified the request under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), claiming housing “affects the landscape.”

Let’s be clear:

We didn’t ask for tree surveys.

We asked for housing targets.

We asked for governance documents.

We asked for democratic records.

This was a deliberate dodge – a tactic used to dilute scrutiny, delay response, and avoid accountability. We issued a formal rebuttal. We cited ICO guidance. We reminded them of the statutory deadline under FOIA.

They’ve had every chance to correct course. If they don’t, the ICO complaint bundle is ready.

THE SILENCE FROM RAYNER

**“It’s Her Council. It’s Her Crisis. And
She’s Said Nothing.”**

Angela Rayner is the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party.

She’s also the MP for Ashton-under-Lyne.

And this is her council – under fire for housing suppression, FOIA
obstruction, and developer leniency.

We’ve sent open letters.

We’ve tagged her in social media posts.

We’ve published editorial bursts.

**We’ve raised urgent questions – backed by documents, minutes, and
receipts.**

Not one comment.

Not one reply.

Not one acknowledgement.

She might think we’re just online.

But we’re not.

We’re in the borough she represents.

And we’re not backing down.

If she won’t speak to the housing crisis in her own backyard, then we’ll keep
speaking louder – until the silence becomes the story.

RIGHT TO REPLY + INDEX

“We welcome transparency. We won’t chase silence.”

This publication contains serious concerns about housing suppression, FOIA/EIR misclassification, developer viability tactics, and political silence. Every claim is backed by documents, minutes, and statutory references.

We invite any party named or referenced – including council officers, developers, and elected representatives – to submit a Right to Reply addressing:

- **Clarification of any misreported or misunderstood statements**
- **Correction of any factual inaccuracies (with supporting evidence)**
 - **Response to public interest concerns raised in this issue**

Submissions should be sent to: editor@tamesideindependent.co.uk

We will publish verified corrections or clarifications in a future issue or online update.

INDEX OF FILES & CLAIMS

Referenced in this issue:

Page 3

- Document: “Tameside Housing Strategy Minutes – March 2024”
- Extracted claims vs actual delivery patterns
 - Highlighted gaps in social rent commitments

Page 5

- File: “Ecclestone Viability Statement – Godley Green Phase 2”
- Excuses accepted without clawback or challenge
 - Patterns of underreporting and council acquiescence

Page 7

- Request: “FOIA Submission – Social Rent Targets & Acceleration Plans (10 Aug 2025)”
- Reclassified to EIR without legal basis
 - Used to delay scrutiny and dilute statutory obligations

Page 9

- Letter: “FOIA Rebuttal – EIR Misclassification Challenge (14 Aug 2025)”
- Formal challenge citing ICO guidance
 - Statutory deadline reminder and escalation prep

Page 10

- Correspondence: “Open Letters to Angela Rayner – Housing Crisis & Accountability (May–Aug 2025)”
- Multiple public appeals via press and social media
 - No reply, no comment, no engagement