

GREATER MANCHESTER BUSINESS BOARD (LEP)

DATE: Wednesday, 31 May 2023
TIME: 4.00 - 6.00pm
PLACE: Boardroom, GMCA Offices, Churchgate House, M1 6EU

AGENDA

Item	Pages
1. Welcome, Apologies & Introductions Lou Cordwell	
2. Declarations of Interest	1 - 2
3. Minutes and Actions of Previous Meeting To consider the approval of the minute of the meetings held on 18 January 2023	3 - 12
DEEP DIVE	
4. Innovation Greater Manchester Chris Oglesby	13 - 22
CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES	
5. Economic Intelligence & Business Analysis	
5.1 Government Policy Update (Verbal) Simon Nokes	
5.2 Cost of Living & Economic Resilience Simon Nokes	23 - 38

5.3 Board Economic Intelligence Feedback
All

5.4 GC Business Support, International & Marketing
Mark Hughes

39 - 78

MEDIUM TERM PRIORITIES AND DELIVERABLES

6. Board Member Feedback on Delivery/Affiliated Groups -

i.	GM Infrastructure Board	TBC
ii.	Digital	TBC
iii.	Health	TBC
iv.	Real Living Wage Campaign	Lou Cordwell
v.	Skills	Justin Kelly
vi.	Addressing Inequalities	Vimla Appadoo
vii.	Economic Resilience Group/GM BROs	Clive Memmott
viii.	GC International & Marketing Advisory Board	Mike Blackburn
ix.	GC Business Support Advisory Board	Vanda Murray
x.	Investment Finance/Investment Portal	Miles Rothbury
xi.	Bee Network Partnership Board	Steve Connor

7. GM Business Board Member Refresh (Verbal)

Simon Nokes

FOR INFORMATION AND VIEWS

8. Marketing and Communications

79 - 82

Lou Cordwell

9. Green City Region Update

83 - 84

Mark Atherton

10. Dates of Next Meetings

Simon Nokes

Agenda Contact Officer:

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Governance and Scrutiny

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

31 May 2023

(To be completed as necessary by all board members and advisors)

Name:

Minute Ref / Item No	Nature of Interest

COMPLETE THIS FORM IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN ANY PARTICULAR ITEM ON THIS AGENDA (SEE GUIDANCE OVERLEAF).

ANY COMPLETED FORMS SHOULD THEN BE HANDED IN TO LEE TEASDALE AT THE START OF THE MEETING

GUIDANCE ON DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AS PER DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE)

1. Subject to point 3) below, members (and advisors) must declare any interests (on the form provided), either at the **start of the meeting or as soon as any potential interest in an agenda item becomes apparent** during the course of the meeting.
2. Members must declare their interest when the business being discussed specifically relates to
 - Their business
 - Any body of which they are a member
 - Any person or body who:-
 - Employs them
 - Makes payments to them
 - Has a contractual relationship with them
 - Any land or property in which they have an interest

This also applies to any close member of their family or person with whom they have a close relationship.

3. For the purposes of the above:
 - An interest of which a member has no knowledge and of which it is unreasonable to expect him or her to have knowledge shall not be treated as an interest of his or hers.
 - In relation to a non-pecuniary interest, a general notice given to the LEP that a member is to be regarded as having an interest, of the nature and the extent specified in the notice, in any transaction or arrangement in which a specified person or class of persons is interested shall be deemed to be a disclosure that the member has an interest in and such transaction of the nature and extent so specified.
4. Members (and advisors) with a declared interest in an item of business would usually be required to leave the room. **BUT** the board may want such an individual to contribute their knowledge and experience to the discussion despite the interest so declared. If this is the case the affected member can remain in the room - functioning as a resource that can be drawn upon to assist the board in their deliberations. The affected member should then withdraw when the decision on the matter is being taken and must withdraw at the decision-making stage if the member has a pecuniary interest unless otherwise determined by the Chair of the meeting. In the absence of the Chair or where an item of business relates to the Chair or an interest of the Chair, the meeting shall be chaired by a nominated Vice Chair if there is any or by a member selected by the meeting for that purpose.



MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER BUSINESS BOARD (LEP)

The Greater Manchester Business Board (LEP) last held a public meeting in January 2023.

However, the Board was unable to meet formally in public until May 2022 and held regular meetings to ensure they remained informed of the latest developments and could help drive the recovery of the city region.

The Board met in March 2023 where a small number of emergency decisions were taken using the written procedure protocol as set out in the Terms of Reference where appropriate.

The Board agreed:

1. That Lou Cordwell was confirmed as Chair of the GM Business Board at the completion of the three year term
2. That the £250k 2023/24 Capacity Funding was approved including:
 - I. Delivery of GM Business Board (LEP) Priorities and Strengthened Capacity - £135k
 - II. Promoting Greater Manchester's Economic Vision and Assets - £75k
 - III. LEP Oversight and Governance - £40k

MINUTES FROM THE GREATER MANCHESTER BUSINESS BOARD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 16:00 ON WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2023 IN THE BOARDROOM, GMCA OFFICES, TOOTAL BUILDINGS, 56 OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER

Board Members:

Lou Cordwell (In the Chair)

Mike Blackburn, Mayor Andy Burnham, Marilyn Comrie, Steve Connor, Cllr Bev Craig, Lorna Fitzsimons, Justin Kelly, Clive Memmott, Chris Oglesby & Miles Rothbury.

Advisors:

David Rogerson (GMCA), Lee Teasdale (GMCA), Simon Nokes (GMCA), John Wrathmell (GMCA), Mark Hughes (The Growth Company), Oscar Lynch (GMCA), Diane Modahl (GMCA), Chris Barnes (TfGM), Ross Beard (TfGM) & Simon Elliott (TfGM).

Attending via Hybrid Link:

Cllr Amanda Chadderton (LEP Member), Cllr Eamonn O'Brien (LEP Member), Eamonn Boylan (GMCA), Joanne Roney (Manchester City Council), Sheona Southern (Marketing Manchester), Louise Latham (Marketing Manchester) & Mark Atherton (GMCA).

GMBB/23/01 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all present to the first meeting of the Board following its restructure as the GM Business Board (LEP).

Apologies were received from GM Business Board (LEP) Members Amanda Halford, Vimla Appadoo & Vanda Murray. Apologies were also received from Tom Stannard (Salford), Steve Wilson (GMCA) & Rhys Whalley (MIDAS).

The Chair advised all present that Amanda Halford would be stepping down as a member of the Board due to increased work commitments. However, Amanda remained fully committed to support the health innovation agenda within GM and would look to attend relevant working groups where time allowed. Members recorded their thanks to Amanda for her fantastic support during her tenure on the Board.

GMBB/23/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

GMBB/23/03

MINUTES OF MEETING OF 15 NOVEMBER 2021

Ratification was required for the minutes of a meeting held on 15 November 2021 along with a small number of emergency decisions made using the written procedure protocol when the Board could not meet in public due to ongoing challenges resulting from the Covid pandemic

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board agrees the minutes of 15th November 2021 as a true and correct record of the meeting and ratifies the emergency decisions.

GMBB/23/04

BOARD MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Simon Nokes was invited to provide an update on the refresh of the Board.

The Chair together with officers was looking at how best to fill current gaps in membership in terms of sectoral gaps – looking at large companies, SMEs and areas of specific interest. A mapping exercise was being undertaken before going out to the market to fill these gaps. The plan was to recruit up to four new members.

Members asked that the specific areas being sought be shared with them, so that they could use their contacts in aiding the mapping exercise.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board Membership Update be received.
2. That information about the sectoral gaps that needed to be filled be shared with Board Members.

GMBB/23/05

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

There were none.

CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

GMBB/23/06

ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE AND BUSINESS ANALYSIS

National Train Network Issues

The Chair agreed that, given how much the issue was impacting upon business in the region – that the section would open with an additional discussion of train network issues, particularly those on the Arriva Trains network. TfGM officers were invited to provide the latest update. Points highlighted included:

- Current challenges included the December 2022 timetable change, predicated on issues raised over the last few years. Following the disastrous timetable changes of 2018, the industry had put a mechanism in place to look at installing a reliable and high-performing timetable. This had led to increased services for some areas. However, there in turn had been difficulties with reduced connectivity from certain areas to the airport.
- Due to driver availability and training issues – Avanti Trains over the summer had reduced the number of trains between Manchester and London Euston from 3 trains per hour to just 1. This had now been stepped back up to 3 from December.
- Industrial relations continued to impact the ability to truly monitor Avanti Trains ability to meet their commitments. However, there had been a post-Christmas period without strikes – this provided a week and a half window to assess where Avanti, Transpennine and Northern stood in early 2023 in terms of performance. The results had shown some improvement in performance, though not a significant improvement. Avanti still clearly had some staffing challenges.
- It was requested that businesses in the region provide TfGM with any data they had collated to show the detrimental impacts upon their bottom line that had correlated with the train issues to aid in the development of an assessment of how much the transport failings were impacting the region.
- Members noted a claim that Avanti’s timetable was based on no ‘rest day working’ and that this was presumably a statement of intent rather than the reality. It was confirmed that this must be the case as driver training programmes took upwards of six months. TfGM would liaise with Avanti to ensure that they do not require reliance on rest day working at the present moment.
- Members expressed significant concern about the economic impact upon the Greater Manchester region – with drops in economic activity in Manchester during the Christmas period reflecting the public’s concerns about being able to get to and from Manchester via train.
- Members noted that the sustained length of the problems were now impacting upon longer-term business confidence in investing in the North. This was a huge worry and showed how fragile the situation was in terms of inward investment. Members were provided with an example of being asked to hold business seminars for international clients in Manchester but having to turn them down due to the lack of confidence in them being able to travel by train. This was hugely embarrassing for the region.
- Concerns around the impact on net zero ambitions were also highlighted. As people lost confidence in trains they increasingly turned back to

personal vehicles. There needed to be proof of a consistent reliable service to attract these people back to public transport.

- It will be important to keep engaging with Government to emphasise how much this issue was strangling the local economy. This needs to be a broad package of comments that did not just refer to concerns over one specific franchise holder.

Action – The Business Board (LEP) to explore with TfGM how to best highlight the ongoing economic impact of rail network issues with Government.

Government Policy Update

- Active conversations were ongoing with government on devolution deals. Gradual feedback was coming out from government, but crucial information remained outstanding around housing/housing quality; transport; skills/work programmes; and single pots of funding arrangements.
- It was hoped that the Trailblazer deal would be signed by February.
- Conversations remained ongoing about revisions to Investment Zone plans. Whilst the Government had withdrawn the original plans, it was advised they would look again as this initiative.
- Shared Prosperity Funding was now flowing into the region following agreement of GM's proposals.
- The Convention of the North would be taking place at Manchester Central on Wednesday 25th January. Almost 1000 people were currently signed up to attend, with a number of notable guest speakers in place to discuss the Levelling Up agenda.

Cost of Living & Economic Resilience

- Previous conversations had questioned whether GM may be reaching a tipping point in the labour market following surprisingly strong levels of performance in 2022. Data now received indicated that GM was 'still on the cusp' with unemployment marginally falling and employment marginally rising, but universal credit claims also raising slightly.
- With the labour market remaining relatively strong and pay having risen on average by 6.4% nationally – this pointed towards the Bank of England likely to continue in raising interest rates for now.
- A slight increase nationally had been seen in the CPI. Inflation had fallen by 0.2%

- Members expressed concern that the dashboard did not fully reflect the 'reality' of what was happening. It was queried whether other metrics could be added that would aid wider conversations – such as information pertaining to the number of rail journeys happening monthly within GM; or information from the three national credit agencies on how much less disposable income GM residents now had access to.
- Members referenced the drop in inflation but noted this did not reflect the reality of the most impactful areas of inflation – such as the huge amounts being seen in terms of food.
- It was agreed that to avoid a data overload – there needed to be discussion and agreement on the data that would be of most consequence to the Business Board (LEP) as a group.

Action – Officers will explore what additional data could be added to the dashboard.

Action – Officers to share the latest GMCA Cost of Living Dashboard with the Board

RESOLVED:/

1. That the updates and actions above be noted.

LONG TERM ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

GMBB/23/07 ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

Note: with agreement from the Board – the Chair re-arranged the agenda order so that Item 11(i) – GM Civic Leadership Programme, was taken as the next item at the meeting.

GM Civic Leadership Programme

The Chair invited Diane Modahl, the Chair of the Civic Leadership Programme Steering Group to provide an update to the Board on the inaugural Greater Manchester Civic Leadership Programme, commissioned by the GMCA and delivered by Operation Black Vote. The report highlighted how the programme would be strengthened in year two, and opportunities for the GM Business Board (LEP) to support delivery to maximise impact. Key points highlighted included:

- The Civic Leadership Programme was a key part of Greater Manchester's aspiration to reduce inequalities and maximise opportunity.

- The key focus of the Programme was to help young black and racially minoritised people to realise their leadership aspirations. The GM Independent Inequalities Commission had found in the course of its research that GM’s ability to get to grips with racial inequality issues was hampered by the lack of representation in leadership positions within the organisations that would have the power to act.
- 28 individuals had been recruited from across all of GM’s ten boroughs with an objective to be upskilled, be mentored by individuals who had reached senior leadership positions and wherever possible ‘de-layer’ the journey.
- Diane’s role as the Chair of the Programme was to engage with boards and leaders such as this one to encourage further collaboration with the programme – such as work experience days, providing talks to incoming cohorts and even possibilities around apprenticeship opportunities.
- Members emphasised the importance of sustainability following the initial flurry of activity in response to a programme. This needed to be a concerted effort properly monitored and working towards long term shifts with lasting impacts.
- The Board would consider how best to its engagement with the programme to provide continued support and business contacts.
- Members gave consideration to the evolving of the programme towards become a ‘civic and business leadership programme’ as it developed.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board notes the Programme’s first year outputs, outcomes and case studies.
2. That Board Members be asked to give further consideration to how they could support this year’s participants, and next year’s programme delivery and participants.

KEY GMS DELIVERABLES

GMBB/23/08	BOARD	MEMBER	FEEDBACK	ON
	DELIVERY/AFFILIATED GROUPS			

Digital

The Chair advised that the digital portfolio remained unallocated at the present time but would be resolved shortly as part of the Board refresh.

Real Living Wage Campaign

This continued to be a key focus for the city region – there had never been a greater need to have this conversation which has developed to take account of current challenges faced by business. Overall, the progress seen indicated that the campaign continued to be a success.

Skills

The biggest success in the last few weeks had been the confirmation that the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology had secured a licence and would open in September 2023.

It was hoped that the Institute would sit at the heart of a new innovative approach to the skills agenda. Lobbying continued to take place around devolution in this area – with an aim to create the country’s first integrated technical education system.

Innovation Greater Manchester (IGM)

The Innovation Accelerator is assessing the projects to be funded and wider consultation was taking place with stakeholders on the future of IGM with a focus upon how the innovation ecosystem would be developed across the city region.

Economic Resilience Group/GM BROs

The next meeting would be taking place next week – and would include a strong focus upon the impacts of the current travel challenges.

GC International and Marketing Advisory Board

SXSW and MIPIM were key upcoming international events to help showcase Greater Manchester on the world stage.

Investment Finance/Investment Portal

It was agreed that ‘access to finance’ was the biggest issue facing potential SMEs in the region and so a significant amount of work was being placed into signposting towards potential business support and funding. This could appear as a complex area and the plan was to demystify this and provide a platform that would signpost in clear English how to do this. The launch was planned for Summer 2023.

Bee Network Partnership Board

Business has a key role to play when the Bee Network went live to ensure that it can succeed and benefit all the people of Greater Manchester.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the board member feedback received be noted.

2. That the Board welcomed the progress of the Investment Portal and noted that a future funding source would need to be found to sustain the Portal if it proved successful.

It was agreed by the Chair that the Deep Dive items on Bee Net Zero and Digital Blueprint, plus the Time to Change report would be brought to the next meeting of the Board to allow sufficient time to dedicate to them.

GMBB/23/09 LOCAL GROWTH FUND UPDATE

A report was provided report that updated the Board on progress to deliver key elements of the Local Growth Deal (LGF) Programme (tranches 1, 2 and 3).

RESOLVED:/

1. That the progress made in relation to the Growth Deal Transport schemes as set out in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the report be noted;
2. That the progress made in relation to the Non-Transport Skills Capital and Economic Development and Regeneration (ED &R) programmes as set out in Section 5 of the report be noted;
3. That the use of returned Life Sciences funds to proceed with Life Sciences 2, as set out in Section 5.5 of the report be noted.

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GM BUSINESS BOARD

Date: 31 May 2023

Subject: Deep Dive – Innovation Greater Manchester

Report of: Chris Oglesby, Chair of Innovation Greater Manchester

Purpose of Report

This report sets out progress on Innovation Greater Manchester activity and the Innovation Accelerator pilot.

Recommendations:

The GM Business Board is requested to:

1. Note the content of the report.
2. See supporting slides as a prompt for discussion on Innovation Greater Manchester.

Contact Officers

Lisa Dale-Clough, Assistant Director, Economy – lisa.dale-clough@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Leila Mottahedeh, Innovation Policy Lead – Leila.Mottahedeh@greaermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

There are no expected negative carbon, equalities or sustainability impacts.

It is expected that projects funded through the innovation accelerator will have a positive impact on carbon emissions by accelerating business-led Research & Development (R&D) in this field.

Funded projects are required to make a positive contribution to equalities - projects are expected to increase the diversity of people and businesses undertaking R&D and innovation, and participating organisations including businesses are expected to commit to exploring joining the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and the Living Wage City Region pledge.

Risk Management

Risks are managed through the delivery of the programme. So long as relevant legislation is followed there are not expected to be any major risks to the organisation, delivery or finance of GMCA.

Legal Considerations

GMCA should ensure it follows relevant legislation when any decisions are made in relation to selection of projects for public funding.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The programme is expected to result in additional revenue and capital funding for innovation projects and assets for external organisations.

There are direct costs to GMCA for delivery of this programme. These are expected to be met through capacity grant funding from Government, via Innovate UK, in addition to utilisation of locally retained business rates.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no Financial Capital implications.

Number of attachments to the report:

Annex A: GM Innovation Accelerator project portfolio.

Annex B: GMCA and Innovate UK - Memorandum of Understanding press release.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

Innovation Greater Manchester Plan – Executive Summary:

https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/investmanchester/IGM_Exec_Summary_Nov_22_1_63d0f877-c7fa-4c0f-a328-04fc0cdbeae9.pdf

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

N/A

1. Background

1.1. Innovation Greater Manchester (IGM) was created in the pandemic to drive an economic recovery through a vision and blueprint for innovation-led growth in Greater Manchester, that also delivers on Levelling Up, generates the solutions we need to achieve net zero, and creates the conditions for more businesses in more places to benefit from global exporting and inward investment.

1.2. Since its inception the triple-helix partnership has had multiple successes including changing Government policy around place-based R&D&I investment leading to the £100m Innovation Accelerator Pilot and a local Innovation Plan; a portfolio of c.£33m new innovation investment in Greater Manchester; a MOU with Innovate UK and new working relationships with Government – including a new trailblazer Devolution Deal, and new ways of working across the city region led by Innovation Greater Manchester.

1.3. The IGM Board last updated the LEP Board on the 19 October 2022. This report sets out progress since the last update.

2. Key updates

2.1. Innovation Accelerator

1.1.1. Innovate UK announced on the 17 March 2023 that ten Greater Manchester projects will receive funding and support after being selected to become part of the city-region's Innovation Accelerator programme. The funding, awarded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), has been allocated to innovative projects in sectors where Greater Manchester has existing research strengths, including advanced materials, artificial intelligence (AI), diagnostics and health innovation, and net zero. Projects will support businesses with adopting new technologies and people developing new skills, while attracting private R&D investment, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.

1.1.2. As part of the programme, the Innovation Greater Manchester board, a business-led partnership that brings together the private sector, academia and local government, has worked with Innovate UK and DSIT to select projects and co-design an Innovation Plan. This approach has empowered local business, civic and academic leaders to effectively target R&D funding for the benefit of the local economy and communities.

- 1.1.3. The projects receiving Innovation Accelerator funding align with the four frontier sectors identified as key growth opportunities by the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy – sustainable advanced materials and manufacturing, health innovation and life sciences, digital and creative, and net zero – and focus on the three “Technology Families”, as defined by the UK Innovation Strategy, where the city-region has clear comparative advantages.
- 1.1.4. Greater Manchester will use the Innovation Accelerator pilot to begin to deliver broader aims outlined in the Innovation Greater Manchester vision for sustainable and inclusive economic growth through innovation.
- 1.1.5. The ten projects are completing a due diligence process with Innovate UK. The projects receiving funding are:
- **Future Homes Project** – a partnership between industry and academia to use the unique facilities at Salford Energy House and Energy House 2.0 to develop net zero technologies for homes.
 - **Greater Manchester Electro-Chemical Hydrogen Cluster** – building on the work of the Manchester Fuel Cell Innovation Centre to accelerate the development and adoption of clean and efficient electro-chemical hydrogen technologies.
 - **Pilots for the Sustainable Materials Translational Research Centre (p-SMTRC)** – building on the world-class advanced materials research in Greater Manchester to provide sustainable materials for manufacturing supply chains.
 - **Manchester Turing Innovation Hub (MTIH)** – linking businesses to cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) research and technologies to help enhance their productivity.
 - **MediaCity Immersive Technologies Innovation Hub** – exploring applications for immersive technologies in the entertainment, education, health, built environment, and manufacturing sectors, helping businesses to design, develop and test new solutions for the metaverse.
 - **DEVOTE Programme** – a collaboration between industry, universities and healthcare professionals to support the development and implementation of time critical genomic testing technologies.

- **Energy Accelerator for Non-Domestic Buildings** – developing, testing and deploying net zero innovations to help commercial and public sector buildings to decarbonise.
- **Centre for Digital Innovation (CDI)** – working across four technology strands – artificial intelligence (AI), cyber, industrial digitalisation (ID) and immersive technology (IT) – on R&D, skills development, business models for SMEs, and community outreach.
- **AR EdTech For Hydrogen Skills** – an education technology (edtech) platform providing hydrogen skills training content for the manufacturing, construction, transport and energy sectors.
- **GM Advanced Diagnostics Accelerator** – a series of projects looking at Greater Manchester’s major morbidities (liver, heart and lung disease including lung cancer) in which academic and industry excellence from advanced diagnostics, digital and data will be brought together to improve health outcomes for residents.

2.2. Memorandum of Understanding with Innovate UK

- 1.1.1. Innovation Greater Manchester, GMCA and Innovate UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the 12 December 2022. The MOU commits the parties to closer collaboration to support business innovation across the city region and seeks to strengthen research and innovation clusters across Greater Manchester and to accelerate investments around long-term innovation developments. The MOU is a further step in realising Innovation Greater Manchester’s vision for world-renowned innovation ecosystem.
- 1.1.2. Working with Innovate UK officials a workplan is being developed to implement activity around three initial areas of focus:
- Development of wider place-based innovation.
 - Innovative procurement tools and methods.

- Piloting novel delivery mechanisms.

2.2. Devolution Trailblazer

- 1.1.1. Greater Manchester Combined Authority signed a Trailblazer Devolution Deal with Government on the 15 March 2023. The deal reached across a range of functions and policy levers including a R&D deal.
- 1.1.2. Building on the Innovation Accelerator programme, a Strategic Innovation Partnership to give GMCA a new and influential role informing the national research and innovation ecosystem, a knowledge transfer programme focused on local strengths and a pilot to boost innovation adoption and diffusion by local businesses, transferring more autonomy to Greater Manchester's developing regional innovation ecosystem.
- 1.1.3. GMCA and Innovation Greater Manchester are working closely with Government to develop a Terms of Reference for the Strategic Innovation Partnership.

2.3. Future of Innovation Greater Manchester

- 2.3.1. In Winter 2022 the Innovation Greater Manchester Board initiated a process to steer the next phase of its development to build on its achievements and accelerate further progress towards its vision for 2030, including a review of Greater Manchester's Innovation Ecosystem, and an appraisal to arrive at a preferred option for the future model for the Innovation Greater Manchester Partnership.
- 2.3.2. A process of engagement with key stakeholders and partners, including Greater Manchester's universities, to test the possible options, followed with discussions with external experts including Sir Patrick Vallance (Government Chief Scientific Adviser), Professor Raquel Ortega-Argiles (Director of the Productivity Lab, University of Manchester), Daniel Zeichner MP (Chair of the Life Sciences APPG).
- 2.3.3. The Innovation Greater Manchester Board will make a decision on the preferred future model of the partnership at the 30 May 2023 Board meeting. The preferred option will then require approval from the GMCA.

2.4. Next Steps

The Greater Manchester Business Board discussion on Innovation Greater Manchester priorities.

Annex A: GM Innovation Accelerator project portfolio.

Project	Project Lead	Sector
Future Homes	University of Salford	Net Zero
Energy Accelerator for Non-Domestic Buildings	The Growth Company Ltd	Net Zero
Greater Manchester Electro-Chemical Hydrogen Cluster	Manchester Metropolitan University	Net Zero
AR Edtech for Hydrogen Skills	The Blair Project Ltd.	Net Zero
The Development and Validation of Technology for Time Critical Genomic Testing (DEVOTE) Programme	The University of Manchester	Health Innovation
GM Advanced Diagnostics Accelerator	Health Innovation Manchester, hosted by Manchester University NHS Foundation	Health Innovation
Pilots for the Sustainable Materials Translational Research Centre	Rochdale Development Agency	Sustainable advanced materials & Manufacturing
Manchester Turing Innovation Hub	University of Manchester	Digital and Creative
MediaCity Immersive Tech Innovation Hub	The Landing at MediaCityUK Limited	Digital and Creative
Centre for Digital Innovation	Manchester Metropolitan University	Digital and Creative

Annex B: GMCA and Innovate UK - Memorandum of Understanding press release.

Landmark agreement between Greater Manchester and Innovate UK to boost innovation and R&D in the city-region

- GMCA, Innovation Greater Manchester sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Innovate UK
- Agreement for parties to work together to strengthen research clusters and drive innovation in the region
- MOU a further step in realising Innovation Greater Manchester vision for world-renowned innovation ecosystem

Greater Manchester’s burgeoning innovation ecosystem has taken another major step forward with the signing of an agreement with the UK’s national innovation agency, Innovate UK.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Innovation Greater Manchester and Innovate UK commits the parties to closer collaboration to support business innovation.

The agreement seeks to strengthen research and innovation clusters across Greater Manchester and to accelerate investments around long-term innovation developments.

The parties have also agreed to work on a shared plan for the period to 2030, which will set out how the development of innovation assets in Greater Manchester will inform Innovate UK activities.

The agreement was signed by Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, Innovate UK CEO, Indro Mukerjee, and Chair of Greater Manchester Business Board (GM LEP), Lou Cordwell, at a special event held today (Friday 2 December) at the Graphene Engineering and Innovation Centre (GEIC) in Manchester. The GEIC is a facility which helps companies develop new technologies, products and processes that exploit the properties of graphene and other 2D materials.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, said: “This agreement will strengthen collaboration between Greater Manchester and Innovate UK, and in doing so help deliver a high-growth, high-wage economy powered by innovation.

“Going back to the first Industrial Revolution, Greater Manchester has a proud history of industry and innovation. More recently we pioneered the development of graphene, and have emerging strengths in areas like advanced manufacturing, health innovation and the digital and creative industries.

“Levelling up the country means rebalancing R&D spending so that regions can realise their potential. Innovation stimulates sustainable growth, which leads to better quality jobs and increased wages, raising the living standards of people across Greater Manchester.”

Indro Mukerjee, CEO of Innovate UK, said: “Innovate UK is building strong regional partnerships across the UK to support local innovation and commercialisation. The agreement with Greater Manchester is a good example of that and our commitment to levelling up the UK.

“I am pleased to be working closely with Mayor Andy Burnham, Chair of Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership, Lou Cordwell, and Leader of Manchester City Council, Bev Craig, to help deliver growth and productivity through innovation across Greater Manchester.”

Cllr Bev Craig, Leader of Manchester City Council and GMCA Portfolio Lead for Economy and Business, said: “Our agreement with Innovate UK will help businesses and residents in Greater Manchester benefit from the opportunities presented by innovation.

“Business innovation creates good jobs in more places. It drives economic growth, accelerates our transition to net zero, and helps reduce health inequalities. We look forward to working with Innovate UK to strengthen Greater Manchester’s innovation ecosystem.”

Lou Cordwell, Chair of Greater Manchester Business Board (GM LEP) and Innovation Greater Manchester board member, said: “The signing of this agreement is another significant step in our ambition for Greater Manchester’s innovation economy. By working with Innovate UK we can ensure the work done to create value through innovation responds to the strengths and opportunities unique to Greater Manchester.

“Our Innovation Greater Manchester vision is for the city-region to be a leader in the fourth Industrial Revolution and known globally as an innovation hub. To realise this, we are pioneering a new approach which brings together regional and national government with businesses, universities, investors and entrepreneurs.”

Through Innovation Greater Manchester, the city-region is pioneering a new approach to strengthening and broadening its innovation ecosystem – the network that comprises businesses of all sizes, universities, local and national government, funding providers and investors, and entrepreneurs.

Greater Manchester's [Innovation Plan](#) outlines how sustainable growth powered by innovation could deliver a £3.8bn economic benefit and over 100,000 jobs across Greater Manchester.

Greater Manchester was one of three areas in the country chosen to develop an Innovation Accelerator. Launched as part of the Levelling Up White Paper, Innovation Accelerators will support businesses and research in Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and Glasgow city-region with a share of £100m of Government funding.

This followed the [UK Innovation Strategy](#), published in July last year, which set out Government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035, and [Innovate UK's plan for action, *Building the future economy*](#).

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 26th May 2023

Subject: Cost of Living and Economic Resilience

Report of: Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy & Business.

Purpose of Report

To provide GMCA with an update on the cost of living pressures on residents and businesses in Greater Manchester, and some of the measures being put in place by the GMCA and partners to respond.

This report sets out the latest indicators and analysis on the Cost of Living and Economic Resilience. They include inflation and its direct impacts, but also some of the remaining impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and changes due to the UK's exit from the European Union. It also summarises some of the emerging responses to those insights. The assessment is based on two dashboards: on the Cost of Living, and on Economic Resilience.

Recommendations:

That the GMCA note:

- The latest assessment and emerging response and give views on the next steps in that response.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health	N/A	
Resilience and Adaptation	N/A	
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment		
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the Greater Manchester Carbon Neutral 2038 target.		

No direct impacts arising from this report

Risk Management

None

Legal Considerations

None

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None

Background Papers

None

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

N/A

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. HEADLINES FROM THE COST OF LIVING DASHBOARD AND OTHER FEEDBACK

- 1.1 Through collaboration across the GMCA Research team and NHS GM, the GM Cost of Living dashboard now includes further metrics related to health and wellbeing of Greater Manchester residents in relation to rising cost of living, including a focus on mental health and on excess deaths.
- 1.2 National mental health charity [Mind speak of the two way link between money and mental health](#), the notion that poor mental health means managing money is harder and that simultaneously worrying about money can make an individuals' mental health worse. This link led to the inclusion of mental health related metrics into the GM Cost of Living dashboard.
- 1.3 Firstly, the number of calls made to the Greater Manchester Mental Health Crisis Line is consistently around 4,000 calls per month, across all GM boroughs going back to April 2021. When looking at particular periods of interest in relation to the cost of living crisis, we can see that there are peaks in calls at these times. For example, in Spring 2022 (when the energy price cap rise was announced and discourse around rising cost of living became more prevalent), there is a simultaneous increase in the number of calls to the Mental Health Crisis Line. There were 5,444 calls made to the crisis line in May 2022, the highest number calls made in one singular month on record, and this represented an increase of more than 1,000 from the previous month and a 28% increase when comparing with May 2021.

- 1.4 There was an average of 21,000 referrals made into secondary mental health services per month in the pre-pandemic period. As would be expected, there is a drop in the number of referrals made in the first year of the pandemic, but by March 2021 the number of referrals had steadily risen culminating in a peak of over 28,000 referrals made in March alone. Between March 2021 – July 2022 the average number of referrals made per month was over 25,000 (an increase from the pre-pandemic period).
- 1.5 As well as the number of referrals made per month increasing, on average over this period. The proportion of those made for GM residents under the age of 18 also increased. In the pre-pandemic period 19% of all referrals made were for those under the age of 18, in comparison to the March 2021 – July 2022 period when this had risen to 23%. This aligns with [research conducted by national charity Young Minds](#), who found that in August 2022 concerns over money and the cost of living were prevalent amongst young people. The research found that the cost of living was a major worry for over half of young people (56%), causing disruption to daily life, particularly their diet and sleep. The findings also showed that this was not confined to older children, with 21% of 11 year olds stating that money worries caused them stress, anxiety, unhappiness or anger.
- 1.6 Whilst the increases seen in mental health crisis calls and mental health referrals cannot be attributed directly to rising cost of living, [recent findings by the Resolution Foundation](#) show that nationally, not only is there an increase in those reporting a decline in their health due to the cost of living crisis, the ways in which they have coped with the crisis also influence the extent to which they have experienced a deterioration in health. For example, 14% of respondents reported feeling unhappy or depressed much more than usual between December 2022-March 2023. This increases to 19% among those who used their savings during the crisis, 29% for those that fell into bill arrears and 45% for those in severe food insecurity. Similarly, 30% of all respondents stated that their health had been negatively affected by rising cost of living but this rises to 71% among those who report that their financial situation is a lot worse than it used to be and 77% among those finding their debt a heavy burden.
- 1.7 As well as reflections on mental health to understand the rising cost of living, research by the [Marmot Review Team explores the effects of cold housing and fuel poverty on](#)

[excess winter deaths](#). Excess winter deaths are understood to be a direct impact of cold housing and fuel poverty, key factors in the cost of living crisis. The Marmot Review Team state that around 40% of excess winter deaths are attributable to cardio-vascular diseases and 33% are attributable to respiratory diseases, both of which have strong relationships with cold homes. In relation to excess winter deaths in Greater Manchester, there were 555 deaths categorised as excess deaths in December 2022 and 483 in January 2023, considerably higher than seen in either of the previous December-January periods, despite these being periods of peak Covid-19 activity.

1.8 The Cost of Living dashboard is designed to specifically track the cost-of-living in GM in comparison to England and the North West on a monthly basis. It allows for comparison between each Greater Manchester local authority, the city region as a whole, the North West and the whole of England.

1.9 The data are divided into eight sections:

- Housing and Homelessness provides data on housing support, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation use in GM.
- Employment, Finances and Welfare provides leading indicators on personal finances, financial support and living costs.
- Food provides data on food poverty and support in GM.
- Fuel provides the latest data on fuel prices and energy costs.
- Crime provides data on domestic abuse incidents, acquisitive crime and shoplifting in GM.
- Fire provides the data on the number of cost of living related incidents recorded by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.
- Digital Exclusion provides data from the GM Residents Survey which focuses on the level of digital exclusion felt by Greater Manchester residents.
- Health and Wellbeing provides data from the GM Residents Survey focused on the wellbeing of Greater Manchester residents and the impact the rise in cost of living has on this. This section also has a direct focus on mental health for Greater Manchester residents, in relation to calls made to the Greater Manchester Mental Health crisis line and the number of referrals made into secondary mental health services across Greater Manchester. Finally, the Health and Wellbeing section also includes a metric relating to excess deaths

in the city region, i.e. the number of deaths considered to be in excess of the expected number had the Covid-19 pandemic not occurred.

1.10 The dashboard also contains two direct links to:

- Citizens Advice Greater Manchester dashboard which provides data on the issues presented to Citizens Advice services by Greater Manchester residents. This data covers from April 2020 to October 2022 and can be broken down by types of issue, client demographics and the channel through which the client has accessed support.
- Cost of Living analysis focused on data from CACI. This dashboard presents CACI estimated predictions data that focuses on GM average spending on gas, electric and oil and mortgages, as well as, mean net disposable income. This data is presented at LSOA level and is a snapshot in time from Spring 2022.

1.11 The latest version of the dashboard can be viewed live at this link (and is attached as a PDF report): [Workbook: Cost of Living \(gmtableau.nhs.uk\)](https://gmtableau.nhs.uk)

2. HEADLINES FROM GM ECONOMIC RESILIENCE DASHBOARD

2.1 The UK economy saw no growth in February, following growth of 0.4% in January according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The ONS said growth in construction and retail activity had been offset by the impact of strike action by teachers and civil servants. High energy prices and rising interest rates have also had an impact on growth.

2.2 The IMF has predicted the UK economy will shrink by 0.3% in 2023 and grow by 1% in 2024. The UK's economic performance is predicted to be the worst among G20 countries in 2023, however, the forecast is slightly better than the IMF's previous prediction of a 0.6% contraction. The IMF said high energy prices, rising interest rates and poor trade performance are the key reasons for the UK's weak economic performance. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) predicts the UK economy to contract by 0.2% this year but avoid a recession.

2.3 The IMF has also predicted that increases in borrowing costs are likely to be temporary once high inflation is brought under control but did not say when it

believes interest rates will begin to fall again. Interest rates are currently at 4.25% in the UK and the Bank of England has previously predicted they are likely to peak at 4.5%

- 2.4 The fall in economic inactivity appears to be consolidating. The inactivity rate in the North West was 22.6% in the three months to March 2023. Data for the three months to March 2023 shows that although the inactivity rate declined nationally, there was a very small increase in the North West (NW) of England. This disrupts the recent pattern of declines over recent months. However, further data releases will establish a clearer view.
- 2.5 There were more Universal Credit claimants in Greater Manchester (GM) than ever before in April 2023 (just over 327,000). Some GM districts – notably Bolton, Salford and Stockport – have witnessed increases in claims that are above both national and GM averages.
- 2.6 UK Consumer Confidence remains low as real wages are falling and high inflation continues to effect households. Consumer Confidence improved by 8 points to -30 in March.
- 2.7 The Economic Resilience Dashboard aims to provide up to date intelligence on the conditions in the Greater Manchester economy.

The data is divided into five sections:

- Labour Market provides leading indicators on employment and economic activity.
- Cost Pressures provides data on pay, debt and inflation.
- Business Outlook provides data gathered by GM based organisations on business sentiment and confidence.
- International Trade provides the most up to date information available on exports at different geographies.
- National Indicators provides leading indicators on the state of the economy nationally.

The latest version of the dashboard can be viewed live at this link (and is attached as a PDF report): [GM Economic Resilience Dashboard: About – Tableau Server \(gmtableau.nhs.uk\)](https://gmtableau.nhs.uk)

3. DEVELOPING RESPONSE TO THE IMPACT OF THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS ON RESIDENTS

Evaluation of the GM Warm Spaces Initiative Completed

- 3.1 A network of Warm Spaces was established across GM in recognition that the colder months would be challenging for some residents as we continue to tackle the rising cost of living. All Warm Spaces were free to access and designed to be a safe, warm, inclusive, and friendly environment.
- 3.2 During the period Oct- 2023 – March 2023, there were 481 participating venues across Greater Manchester provided by VCFSE, public and private sector organisations. A wide range of support and services were made available in the Warm Spaces ranging from Digital Skills, Benefit Advice, Free SIM cards, Hot Showers and Vaccinations.
- 3.3 The majority of venues were funded through the Household Support Fund and a number were bolstered with specific local grants. No standardised quantitative was data collated due to the Warm Spaces ethos of being a 'Dignified Space', The evaluation therefore focussed on qualitative insights drawing on experiences from those involved in the set-up and use of Warm Spaces across GM.
- 3.4 The most popular venues were those that provided food and drink and it was the gathering of a number of people in a community location that was referenced as a particular attraction. The best outcome cited by many organisations was the impact this offer had on tackling social isolation especially for older men and women. In the large majority of instances, the heat of the warm space was incidental to the social connectedness that they provided.
- 3.5 Localities are scaling back their offer over the Spring & Summer months with plans to review and potentially relaunch in the Autumn. However all of GM's Libraries, The Bread and Butter Thing and several other VCFSE organisations will continue to provide a welcoming and supportive space to sustain the positive impact they have seen on tackling social isolation.

Increasing Debt

- 3.6 The GM Money Advice Group Spring Survey has highlighted that debt is increasing considerably amongst residents. Of the Debt Advisors responding to the survey, 93% reported an increase in the number of people who cannot get their debt problems resolved with the top reason being no disposable income or a deficit household budget once essential bills have been paid.
- 3.7 The issue of debt was also highlighted in the 6th Wave of the GM Residents survey, particularly in relation to the mental health and wellbeing impacts of borrowing: around half (47%) of respondents who have borrowed more money are very or somewhat worried about being able to pay this back.

Parliamentary Inquiry on the Reach of Cost of Living Support Payments to those in Need of Help

- 3.8 The Parliamentary Work and Pensions Committee has launched a new inquiry into cost of living support payments. The aim of the inquiry is to explore whether these payments have met their intended policy objective of supporting the most vulnerable households, and whether the adequacy of support made available to eligible households was sufficient in helping them meet the basic cost of living.
- 3.9 The inquiry is predicated on concerns that the design and delivery of the support packages is unfair and may not provide sufficient support for all low-income families who need it. By linking cost of living support to existing benefits, the emergency measures risk missing those who aren't already claiming benefits they are entitled too. It can also act as a 'cliff-edge' where those who narrowly fail to meet eligibility criteria for a benefit will miss out on support entirely. This means that those earning £1 above the qualifying threshold lose out on hundreds of pounds of support.
- 3.10 The systems and processes used to make payments can also result in people missing out on payments, for example, people subject to sanctions for Universal Credit may effectively be punished twice by missing out on emergency support as a result.
- 3.11 A GM response to this inquiry is being collated through the GM Cost of Living Response Group and will be submitted as evidence.

Impact on Local Housing Options Services

3.12 Pressures have continued to mount on Local Authority Housing Options services, which manifest in a number of gradual, but significant ways. Data for 2022/23 shows:

- A steady rise in the number of families accommodated in Bed and Breakfast accommodation for 6 weeks or more. Measures are in place to reverse this trend, including mobilising a £9 million leasing scheme to provide 500 long term homes for families across GM
- On average, an increase of 30 people per month approaching Local Authorities in Greater Manchester for homelessness support as a result of a Section 21 eviction.
- A gradual increase in the number of children housed in Temporary Accommodation.

3.13 Notably, these trends do not appear to be as a result of a significant increase in the number of people presenting to their Local Authority for support to prevent or end their homelessness. The main challenge seems to be the growing difficulty in moving families and individuals out of Temporary Accommodation and other forms of emergency provision, due to the unaffordability of the housing market and lack of other available accommodation. A key driver of this trend is the diminishing number of properties in the private rental sector which are at or below Local Housing Allowance. This affordability bottleneck is not new, but its grip on homelessness services appears to be tightening as a result of the cost of living crisis and the wider economic impact.

4. DEVELOPING RESPONSE TO THE IMPACTS ON BUSINESSES

4.1 In response to the increased costs for businesses, partner organisations across Greater Manchester have mobilised activity and pivoted existing interventions in response, focused on helping businesses to manage increased costs and reduce their energy bills.

Cost of Doing Business

4.2 The Business Growth Hub has developed a suite of interventions to take a leading role in supporting businesses to manage the increasing costs of doing business. The creation of a dedicated website, the #HereForBusiness portal, provides businesses with a 'one-stop' central digital hub where they can find all the latest

news and resources to help them understand the current crisis, and to access practical support that is available. This support includes informing businesses of the Government's Energy Relief measure, energy related cost saving/ROI opportunities, along with wider cost of operations, access to finance, decarbonisation, restructuring, productivity, and leadership well-being support.

- 4.3 The campaign includes a series of webinars and workshops to help companies develop a plan to respond to the current economic situation. The sessions focus on areas including energy management, financial planning, and people and cost management. As part of the suite of activity, a series of drop-in clinics are being held in May across Greater Manchester, including in Salford, Oldham, Bury, and Trafford.

Good Employment and real Living Wage

- 4.4 Over 1,300 employers are engaged with the Charter Unit, with around 500 Supporters and 90 full Members. The Greater Manchester Good Employment Awards have been created by the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter to celebrate employment excellence and were held on Thursday 27 April at Whitworth Hall. The awards saw eight winners recognised for their achievements over the last year and was hosted by Michael Taylor, editor of The Business Desk North West attended by business leaders from around Greater Manchester and local politicians.
- 4.5 There are close to 650 Living Wage accredited employers in Greater Manchester who have made the public commitment to pay all their staff and first line suppliers at least the real Living Wage. Over 20,000 employees in Greater Manchester have seen a pay rise to the real Living Wage as a result of the accreditation of their employer. The national annual Living Wage Awards are due to be hosted in Greater Manchester this July, taking place at the National Football Museum.

Foundational Economy Innovation Fund

- 4.6 The 40 projects receiving the first tranche of funding from the Foundational Economy Innovation Fund were announced in May. The Fund is targeted at businesses and innovators operating in the foundational or everyday economy and starts with four sectors: Health and Social Care, Early Education and Childcare (0-5

years), Retail and Personal Services, and Hospitality and Leisure. The fund supports projects that aim to lower carbon emissions and contribute to net zero, delivering more effective services, and support the workforce. Activity supported via the fund is due to take place across Greater Manchester.

Economic Monitoring Dashboard

Please click the logo below to access the full dashboard:



Tracking the Greater Manchester Economy

The Economic Resilience Dashboard aims to provide up to date intelligence on the conditions in the Greater Manchester (GM) economy and emergent issues such as the rising cost of living.

This is a condensed version of the Dashboard divided into two sections:

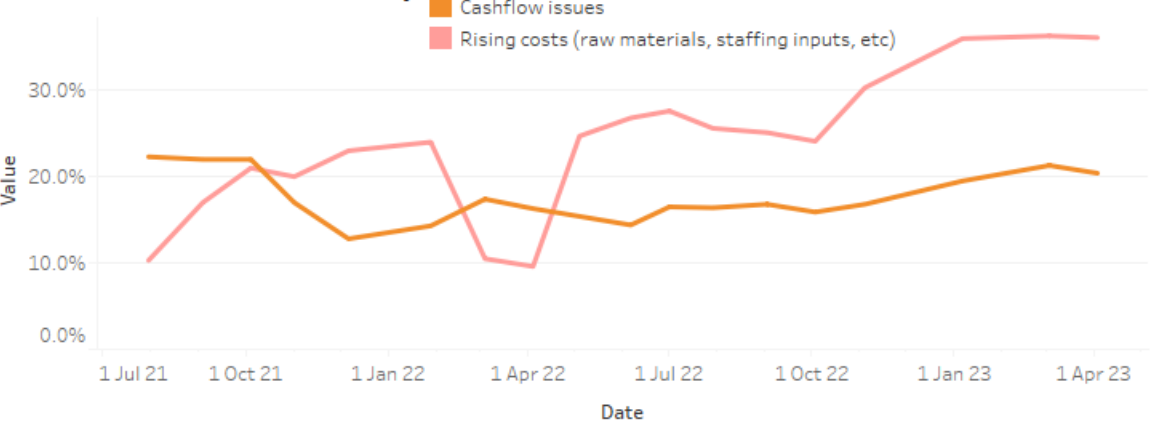
- **Greater Manchester Business Resilience** provides indicators on business resilience in GM.
- **Labour Market and National Indicators** provides indicators on the Labour Market and indicators on the state of the economy nationally.

To access the full version of the Economic Resilience Dashboard, please click the link in the top right.

The economic data in response to Covid-19 and other events is changing rapidly with new datasets becoming available and others being withdrawn on a regular basis. The dashboard will be updated with the best available data each month.

We would welcome feedback on alternative measures to be included in the dashboard or insights on the data provided. If you have any feedback please email jack.james@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk.

Business Growth Hub Survey



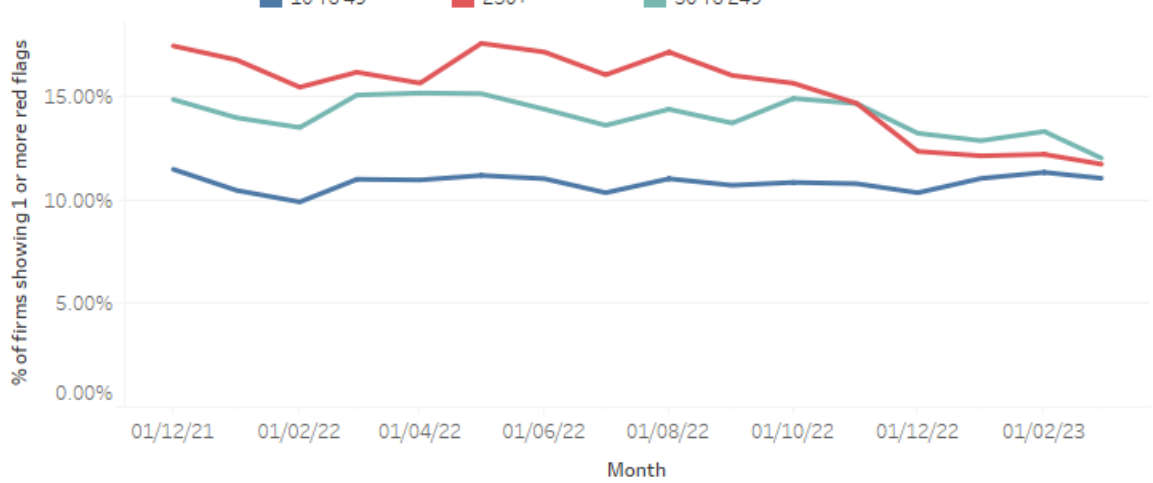
The proportion of businesses reporting rising costs remained consistent in data from the Growth Hub's most recent Business Survey (36%). This stabilisation followed a series of rises from October onwards. 20.4% of businesses reported cashflow issues in the most recent data, a slight decrease month on month following a series of rises since October.

GM Index (Quarterly)



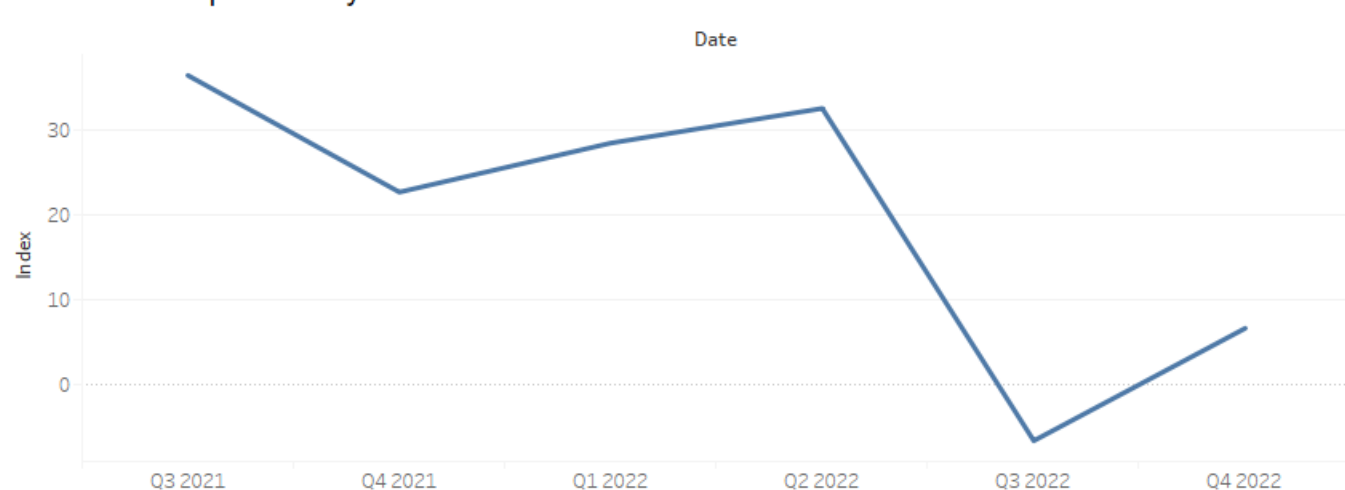
Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce's GM Index increased from 13.5 in Q3 2022 to 17.8 in Q4 2022. The index brings together a range of indicators from the Chamber's Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) to provide a measure of business confidence.

Credit Risk



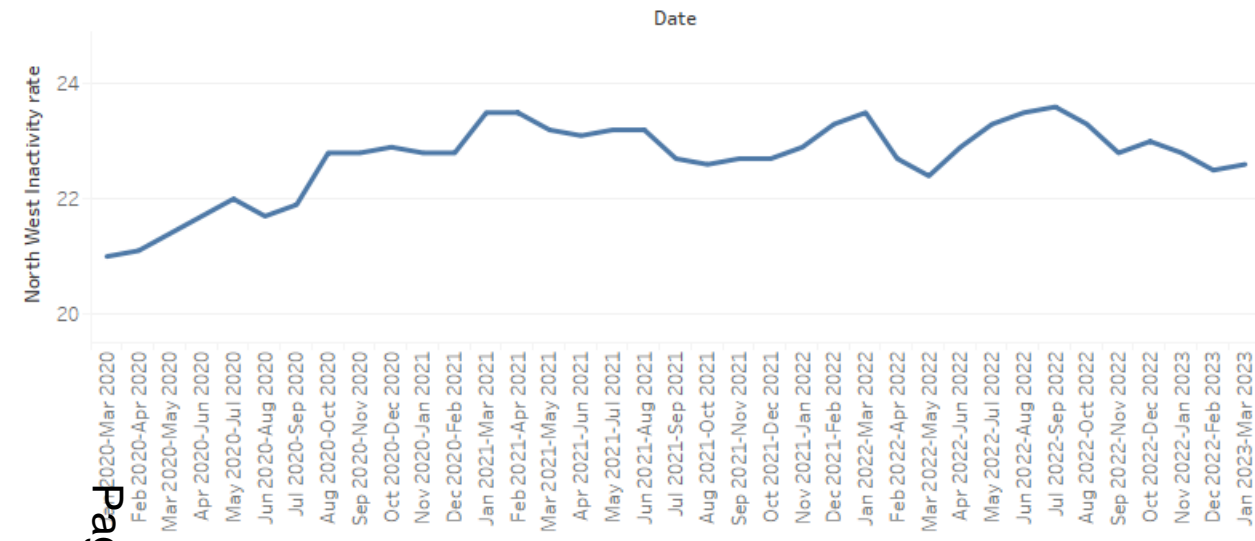
11.3% of all firms with 10 or more employees in GM had 1 or more red flags in the month to 1st March, compared to 10.2% for the North West and 10.6% for the UK as a whole. Previously, 11.7% of firms in GM had 1 more red flags in the month to 1st February. Since August 2022, credit risk among small firms (10 – 49 employees) has remained stable at 11.0. However, the risk has reduced among large firms (250+), decreasing by 5.4 percentage points over the period.

Confidence in profitability



GM businesses' confidence in their profitability, as measured in the Chamber of Commerce's QES, increased from -6.7 in Q3 2022 to 6.6 in Q4 2022. Confidence in the Manufacturing and Construction sectors declined between Q3 and Q4 2022, while Services improved.

NW Economic Inactivity Rate



UK Inflation



Total economic inactivity was 1,016,000 (22.6% of the working age population) in the NW in the three months to March 2023. This compares with 21.0% across the UK as a whole. Data for the three months to March 2023 shows that although the inactivity rate declined nationally, there was a very small increase in the North West (NW) of England. This disrupts the recent pattern of declines over recent months. However, further data releases will establish a clearer view.

UK inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index was 10.1% in the 12 months to March 2023. This was a 0.3 percentage point decrease from the February figure of 10.4%. The largest upward contributions to the annual CPIH inflation rate in March 2023 came from housing and household services (principally from electricity, gas and other fuels), and food and non-alcoholic beverages.

<p>Claimant Count</p>	<p>94,570 residents claimed unemployment benefit in April 2023.</p>	<p>+2.9% month on month</p>	<p>The increase in GM was more than the national average (+2.7%).</p>	<p>UK Sectoral PMI's</p>	<p>Construction PMI: 51.1 Manufacturing PMI: 47.9 Services PMI: 55.9 A score above 50.0 indicates growth.</p>	<p>Construction PMI: +0.4 points Manufacturing PMI: +0.1 points Services PMI: +3.0 points</p>	<p>All three sectoral PMI's have remained within 6 points of the 50.0 threshold that indicates growth for the last 12 months.</p>
<p>Job Vacancies</p>	<p>There were 44,209 new job postings in April 2023</p>	<p>-12% month on month</p>	<p>New postings made up 35.8% of total job postings. New Job Postings were up 9% compared to April 2022.</p>	<p>UK Consumer Confidence</p>	<p>The Consumer Confidence Index was -30 in April 2023</p>	<p>+8 points month on month</p>	<p>Consumer Confidence has improved in 6 out of the last 7 months.</p>

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GM Business Board

SUBJECT: GC: Business Support, International and Marketing Update

DATE: 31st May 2023

FROM: Mark Hughes, Group Chief Executive, Growth Company

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the business situation in Greater Manchester and how, in response, The Growth Company (GC) is providing support to GM's economy. The report focuses on GC's Business Growth Hub, Business Finance, Marketing Manchester and MIDAS, and presents key activities. More detailed activities are provided in **Appendix 1**.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GM Business Board is requested to: Note the contents of the report.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Mark Hughes MBE – Group Chief Executive, The Growth Company

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

GC is committed to putting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at the centre of its services. The activities which are updated upon within this report are delivered with the recognition of the importance of supporting a diverse range of businesses and individuals and providing equal opportunities. Programmes are designed and monitored for EDI. Engagement and support levels with ethnic minority led businesses are on par or better than diverse communities' composition in the GM business base or resident population. This positive position needs continuous development, and more research is needed to understand any differentials in impacts and future business trajectories post-delivery of support.

GC also supports and delivers services which contribute towards GM's ambition to achieve carbon neutral living in the city-region by 2038. This includes specific projects such as the Low Carbon programme and the newly launched online business support platform beenetzero.co.uk alongside the GM Business Board. GC also provides a focused development programme for 'Green Economy' businesses. GC will move from its current position of Carbon Neutral to scope 1 & 2 with gold standard offset to Net Zero (Scope 1-3) with residual GHG offset through neutralisation measures in line SBTi guidance by 2035.

Risk Management:

N/A

Legal Considerations:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital:

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 1

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A

BUSINESS SURVEY

- **GC Business Survey.** Completed between the 04 April 2023 to 03 May 2023. Previous month's results are provided in brackets. Highlights provided below, more detail in Appendix 1.
- **The GC Business Confidence Index (GC-BCI).** A ranking of how confident businesses are on their growth prospects for the year ahead, currently stands at 7.3 out of 10, (no change).
- **Sales and profits.** 21% (vs 26% previously) of firms reported that they experienced an increase in sales in the last month, and 66% expect profits to increase (vs 68%), and slightly higher than the same time last year. Just 2% (vs 3%) expect profits to decrease.

- **Investment.** 41% (vs 47%) of firms expect to increase Capex spend in the year ahead. 45% (vs 55%) of firms expect to increase their allocation towards investing in workforce development/skills, business model change (43% vs 52%), innovation (42% vs 54%).
- **Impacts.** Rising costs (36% vs 34% previously), decreased sales (21% vs 25%), and supply chain - minor issues (14% vs 18%). The hospitality, tourism, & sport sector and other personal services / support activities were most likely to report decreased sales. Rising costs remain the key impact facing businesses in Greater Manchester, however the impact has remained stable over the last 5 months affecting 33% (lowest) -35% (highest) of businesses during this time.
- **Cash reserves.** 75% (vs 81%) of firms report that they have cash reserves to last over 6 months (last 2 years ranging from 69% to 81%). 85% of SMEs with 50-249 employees have cash reserves to last over 6 months, and reserves were highest in retail and wholesale (87%), BFPS (83%), and manufacturing (74%).
- **Cashflow.** 22% (vs 18%) of firms said they had cashflow problems. Cashflow risk has risen sharply in the last 8 months from 14% of firms in July 2022 to 22% of firms (latest). Micro-size firms (<10 employees) were more likely to report cashflow issues this month compared to SMEs (10-249 FTEs). The 'other services' sector, retail and wholesale, and hospitality, tourism, and sport were the most likely to report cashflow problems than other sectors.
- **Innovation activity.** 32% (24% previously) have invested in new / significantly improved services, 23% (vs 19%) implemented new business practices, 17% (22%) had invested in advanced R&D activity, and 20% (19%) of firms introduced new/significantly improved goods.
- **The main pressing challenges facing business.** Access to new domestic sales opportunities (61% vs 52%) previously and continuing to rise, (highest impacts in construction and retail and wholesale services), developing the business model (42% vs 46%), managing overall business finances (39% vs 39%), developing new products/services (34% vs 34%), general workforce development & skills (27% vs 33%).
- **Recruitment.** 19% (vs 21% previously, and 31% 12 months ago) of firms are currently recruiting new staff, 15% (vs 12%, and 55% 12 months ago) said they had difficulties recruiting. The main occupational groups recruiting are customer facing roles (35% vs 23%, 48% 12 months ago), managerial roles (12% vs 17%, 14% 12 months ago).
- **Workforce skill gaps.** 56% (vs 59% previously) of firms said that their workforce skills are only 'partly' at the level to meet business objectives, slightly above the level reported (50% 12 months ago). The main technical skill gaps identified: specialist technical skills (33%), complex problem resolution (11%), knowledge of products/services (7%), advanced specialist IT skills (8%). The main people and personal skill gaps identified

are: sales (15%), customer handling (12%), HR/training people (9%), and supporting better team working (9%).

- **Social Value.** Guarantee at least 16 hours of work per week for employees – 65% (62% previously) said this currently applies, and 12% likely to include in future. Pay the Real Living Wage – 63% (65%) said this currently applies, and 13% likely to include in future. Actively look to increase the diversity of the workforce (through recruitment and progression) – 49% (50%) currently applies, and 21% likely to include in future.
- **GM Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey** (Q1 2023 published April 2023) shows that domestic sales decreased in Q1 2023. However, there were overall increases in cash positions, business confidence and export sales in Chamber members. Recruitment activity remained stable, though recruitment difficulties persist (despite easing overall since mid-2022). Business investment improved in the latest quarter, and concerns around inflation are starting to ease, but half the respondents expect to increase prices in the year ahead.
- **FSB North West Index Q1 2023** business confidence amongst, remained negative in Q1 2023. But significant reduction from -48 Q4 to -11. Net revenue in the North West remains negative in Q1 2023, but shows a stronger performance versus previous quarters reflecting nationwide trends. Investment intentions for small businesses have improved since the previous quarter, standing at net 18% from the net 12% recorded in Q4. General economic conditions (49%), utility costs (43%), and consumer demand (36%) are the main barriers to growth over the next 12 months.

GC SUPPORT SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

COMMISSIONING/FUNDING UPDATES

GM Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). During April, GMCA released an open tender for £7.5m of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) for a contractor to deliver a holistic GM wide business support programme. We are awaiting notification of the results of this process. There may also be further local authority level opportunities within GM as the implementation plan develops, particularly around SME workspace. Marketing Manchester (MM) has been included in the tender for tourism sector development, and GC Angels for assist companies in preparing for early-stage finance.

Foundational Economy Funding. BGH is now mobilising two new projects for delivering innovation support to the foundational economies (retail, night-time economy, care) across Greater Manchester. Whilst small scale (Page 42), they are strategically important and will

provide specialist innovation advice and create a community eco system for recipients of innovation grant until March 2025.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT) – Review of Government’s approach to attracting foreign investment. Discussions being had with the department on the review initiated in April and due to conclude Sept 2023.

Department for Business and Trade (DBT) – Made Smarter. Discussions are in train to re-instate the Digital Transformation Internships element of the programme to support SME manufacturers to acquire the skills they need to support digital adoption projects.

National Growth Hub Role. GC’s role as the Business Growth Hub national lead has been confirmed by DBT with funding confirmed for the 2023/24 FY, as well funding for Growth Hubs in England for next 2 years. DBT will also be launching an Advanced Manufacturing plan in the summer, which will be launched at what are being called ‘Manufacturing Moments’. More details are awaited.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Cost of Doing Business. GC Business Growth Hub (GC BGH) completed the delivery of a series of activities across Greater Manchester in March 2023, which supported businesses in responding to the increased costs of doing business, under the banner of a #HereForBusiness dedicated media/comms campaign. The programme has achieved a strong response, with 1,517 businesses attending the seminars, webinars, workshops, and drop-in clinics, provided through the programme. A further 184 businesses have received dedicated support to address individual needs.

GM Providers Forum. Growth Hub has established a GM Providers Forum as a regular forum through which nationally publicly commissioned/financed providers can co-ordinate and align through the sharing of activity, insights, and best practice. The Forum aims maximise impact and reach and the identification of opportunities for collaboration in line with Greater Manchester business demands and needs with a view to increasing the number of joint B2B events, cross referrals and sharing of best practice amongst members.

Good Employment Charter. The Good Employment Awards for 2023 were held on the evening of 27th April 2023. Around 250 attendees gathered to recognise employers across a number of categories. The Employer of the Year was awarded to Anchor Removals, based

in Salford. Peter Cheese, CEO, CIPD, was the guest speaker and praised Greater Manchester in its leading efforts on the good employment agenda.

The Charter will also hold a GM Good Employment Week (19th – 24th June), which will be the first week of its kind in the country; focus will be on employees and the employee voice, reflecting the need to empower employees to understand and be able to demand ‘good employment’.

Social Value Support. Growth Hub have commissioned a research project, working with the Black United Representation Network and Aston University (Time to Change Report in 2022) focused on ‘Barriers to Innovation for Ethnic Minority Business Owners’ and findings are due in September 2023. GC BGH has also delivered a marginalised communities business support programme with delivery partners which include: Flourish Together CiC, On the Level, Elevate GM and Upturn Enterprise, which has engaged 70+ businesses.

The team’s work with the VCSE (Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise) sector has seen involvement in the development of the GM Inclusive Ownership Hub (formerly known as the Community Wealth Hub), which will be hosted by GC. GC continues to be involved in the design and implementation of the Inclusive Ownership Hub and will support its launch over the summer.

EnterprisingYou (EY). Since the programme began (March 2020), the programme has seen 8,286 enquiries, with 2,941 people starting on the programme (62% female, 38% male, 25% ethnic minority leaders, and 22% aged 50+). Growth within the programme has remained steady with 32% of those that have completed the programme reporting an increase in pre-tax profit to £4.7M. 55% of those who have completed also reported an increase in their current turnover levels to £12.7M, and 16% report no longer being reliant on benefits.

Skills for Growth SME Support. The SFG programme continues to be on profile and all 5 critical success factors are at 100% or above. 7,373 businesses have been engaged, 3,577 SME Productivity Plans completed, 4,507 referrals have been made to GM Bridge and Good Employment Charter, 238 new apprenticeships, 9,464 individual skills plans created, and 2,170 completions claimed. We have now focused on individual skills plans as we move into the projects’ last 5 months.

Leadership and Management - GM Leadership Hive. Since January 2022, the BGH

leadership programmes have intensively supported 352 SMEs, with 477 leaders from those businesses on the Executive Development Programme (EDP) and Mentoring programme accessing leadership development. The programme will be supporting a further 56 individuals between May and June this year, exceeding the assist target by 62. The team continues to focus on the impacts of support and the collection of these through to the end of September 2023.

Access to Finance. The Access to Finance team is currently heavily focused on finalising ERDF Business Assists; 863 completed since Oct 2015, with just 3 remaining to achieve the overall target of 866. In addition, the team have helped businesses to create 378 new jobs and generated 533 Funding Offers, totalling £62.8m (£34m debt-based products and £26m in equity investments).

Innovation. For the 22/23 financial year, 220 individual SMEs were engaged and supported in the Northwest by the Innovate UK EDGE team. We have helped these companies attract over £10M in external investment, created over 150 new jobs, and have increased turnover by over £17M, with approximately 100 of the companies flagged as having “High Growth” potential. We continue to hit our target of signing up new clients (~30/month). We have had our new contract offer from Innovate UK for the current financial year, confirming the renewal of the grant, which has risen slightly to £755k, with the creation of a new Investment Readiness, Ecosystem Specialist role.

Green Economy. The Green Economy team have recently launched the de-mystifying green tech webinar series and kicked off with a session on solar PV. Speakers included local GM suppliers ENSPEC and KAST renewables, the Pilot Group, the solar trade association and had a great range of attendees from businesses looking to procure solar, to those that supply it, looking to better understand their customers. The next session looks to de-mystify green finance solutions. Building on this theme, the team facilitated a green tech panel of experts at the pro-manchester green tech conference to bring awareness to supply chain capabilities. The team also partnered with Electricity NW to run an interactive clinic on grid connections.

Create Growth (CG). The DCMS Create Growth Programme has successfully completed its first cohort with strong feedback of 9.5 out of 10. 20 creative sector businesses participated from a variety of subsectors, such as design, publishing, performing arts and production. The curriculum for the SME’s was centred around investment readiness but also

included inclusive leadership, product innovation, sales and marketing, IP and trademark strategy as well as value-based pricing.

BUSINESS FINANCE

Angel & Innovation Finance. GC Angels invested £475k in four Companies in the quarter Jan-Mar 2023, unlocking £1m of private capital investment. Three companies are pre-revenue where the innovation is high but the investor appetite low. Molyem and Vector Homes are Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) based and focused on commercialising graphene-based technologies in sustainable and advanced materials to support clean water filtration and green housing, respectively.

The GC Angel portfolio now stands at 36 investments with total value of £3.1m, which has attracted direct co-investment of £16.8m and follow on investment has been received by 40% of the portfolio companies, who have raised a further £13.5m. Over 40% of the companies are female founded and 25% founded by ethnic minorities. We are expecting a realisation in Q1 of our investment in a cyber security training business. It will be our second return of capital which provides the evidence and track record required to begin the journey of raising a dedicated £30m fund to sustainably support growth in GM for the next 10 years.

Our pipeline and partnerships have broadened in anticipation of this capital visibility. We now have over 200 GM opportunities that we are tracking and an integrated suite of partner advice for companies not yet ready to receive external funding.

Business Lending. In the year to the end March 2023, GCBF invested £11.6m into GM SMEs, including £9.9m in loans to 743 GM start-ups and £1.1m of growth businesses loans into 18 more established SMEs, despite delays with RLS3 government backed guarantee accreditation process with BBB. The business loan WIP is consistent, with £1.2m across 21 businesses applications. The lending team continue to monitor the cost-of-living crisis, however, current provision levels within the loan books remain in line with prior year expectations. Pro-active support is offered to borrowers affected by both post-Covid market change and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Start Up Loans. GCBF recently secured two 3-year BBB/Start Up Loan contracts to deliver loans for the North West and also as a National Business Support Partner. These commenced on 1st April and offer a significant scale up of direct GCBF lending nationally,

with an additional £30m per year and 3,000 jobs. These awards cement the key role of GC in the UK Government's approach to start-ups across the UK. In GM, for the year to 31st March 2023, GCBF issued 743 Start-Up Loans to the value of £9.9m, and continue to work closely with the Growth Hub, integrating workshops and one 2 one support.

INTERNATIONAL, MARKETING, AND INWARD INVESTMENT

Marketing Manchester

Local Visit Economy Partnership. In April, Marketing Manchester (MM) received confirmation of VisitEngland Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status, joining 14 other DMOs, including neighbouring Cumbria Tourism, Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and Marketing Cheshire. The new national portfolio of strategic and high-performing LVEPs will support collaborative working locally and nationally on shared priorities and targets to grow the local visitor economy.

Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID). The ABID Company started on 1 April and the City Visitor Charge came into force on that date. There was extensive media coverage which was overwhelmingly positive for the introduction of the new charge. Manchester was hailed as a "trailblazer" for being the first UK destination to introduce a visitor charge. ABID businesses have not reported any significant pushback from their guests against the City Visitor Charge. The current focus for the ABID Manager is the development of the delivery plans for the four workstreams, which will be carried out in May and June with input from ABID businesses, and finalising the operating arrangements with MCC for levy calculations and collections which will commence in May.

Business Conferences and Events. In Q4 (Jan-March 2023), 13 bids were submitted with a potential for 14,440 delegates and an economic impact of £30m. 7 bids were won in Q4 with an economic impact of £16m (£10m of which is the Davis Cup in September 2023) bringing 1,660 delegates/participants to Greater Manchester. Currently the pipeline is buoyant with 146 live opportunities, 19 bids are required and 39 bids are pending decisions. At this point last year, there were only 62 live opportunities in the pipeline (84 less than this year), 11 bids were required and 23 had been submitted.

The Sports Bidding Unit continues to bid for and support several high-profile events including support for Rugby League World Cup and future tennis and cycling events. For 2022/23, the Convention Bureau submitted 72 bids with a potential for 55,815 delegates and an economic

impact of £129.9m. The Bureau won 28 bids bringing a potential 31,080 delegates and an economic impact of £42.8m.

SXSW – 11-15 March

- As year 1 of a 3 year SXSW strategy, activity exceeded expectations and plans for year 2 are already underway to build on the success of year 1.
- Manchester Day Takeover of UK House on 13 March included 6 Sessions: Culture, Music Talent, E-sports, Digital City, Beyond the Music followed by Manchester DJ Mix.
- Tourism meetings with US sales & marketing teams were held to strengthen the partnership for future joint B2B and B2C activity. Consul General Texas is supporting with introductions to DMOs in Texas: Austin, Houston & San Antonio with aim of joint activity.
- Meetings were also held to scope out options for GM's future presence at SXSW, and building relationships with UK House, DIT teams, German House and Vancouver House organisers.
- MIDAS focused on GM digital and tech offer. A particular success was a cyber roundtable in partnership with the Austin incubator space, Capital Factor.

Business Mission to New York – 16-17 March: Strategi Partner programme

- VisitBritain International team, Aer Lingus and NYC & Company. VisitBritain International Director and US team to strengthen relationship and discuss potential for involvement in agent/influencer fam trip and Co-op B2C campaign US-wide; and Visit Wales team re: US B2C and B2B campaigns, activity around MUFC tour in US.
- NYC & Company (NY DMO) to re-initiate our city-to-city tourism partnership, agreed in principle to work with Aer Lingus on tourism partnership and launch with an event in NYC in 2023.
- Networking reception in partnership with Trade Commissioner and DIT - 61 guests attended including a mix of inward investment/trade, airlines, tourism, media and travel trade. Focus of speeches was on culture, connectivity, trade & investment, and visitor economy.
- The business meetings particularly useful from an Inward Investment perspective. It encompassed announcement that BNY Mellon had chosen GM as one of its key international growth locations, and further investor meetings re fintech growth in GM.

Place Partnership Programme

MIPIM – 14-17 March. A delegation of 75 delegates from 39 companies including 34 private partners and five Local Authorities. There were 36 events that partners were invited to join as part of the programme, including 16 off stand sessions. The delegation was led by Joanne Roney, Eamonn Boylan and Paul Dennett. The overarching theme was ‘Generation Manchester’ supported by four golden thread themes: Innovation, Green, Smart and Fairer. 2.9m social media reach, 58 pieces of coverage and 25.9m opportunities to see in the media were achieved.

UKREiiF – 16-18 May. GM exhibited in partnership with Opportunity London to deliver a joint city presence at The Canary, a prime location venue at the event. 29 partners joined the partnership from across public and private sectors. A total of 24 speaking opportunities for the GM delegation, including sessions such as Atom Valley, Devolution, Transforming Transport, and Levelling Up.

Inward investment: MIDAS

- Year to date, there have been 5 successful inward investment projects and 96 jobs. This is a stronger start to the year than 2020/21 and 2021/22 although lower than 2022/23 YTD position which benefited from Covid pent up demand.
- Successes include 1 R&D project (see Holiform below).
- 79% of jobs will be /paid above the real living wage. 50% will be paid above £35,000.
- There have been 21 new projects added to the pipeline with 693 corresponding jobs. The MIDAS pipeline currently shows a further 37 projects and 2,631 jobs with a strong-very strong chance of successfully closing this financial year. This includes 7 R&D, 31 HQ and 8 low carbon projects.

Recent successes:

- Holiform – an innovative chemicals business who have outgrown their initial space at Manchester Science Park, now taken larger site on Trafford Park, creating 60 new jobs and safeguarding the initial 15, involving the consolidation of their R&D and Manufacturing teams. R&D is focused on the development of a fermentation process to support the manufacturing of chemical and cosmetic products.

- MI-GSO | PCUBED – a French Project Management Consultancy growing their Advanced Manufacturing / Lean offering, creating 100 new jobs over 3 years.
- Cellerate – a business established by former UoM / GEIC teams developing battery technologies that MIDAS supported to secure premises for their expansion, creating 10 new jobs.
- Scitech – a Life Sciences consultancy business opening a Northern office to service clients in the region with the creation of 17 new jobs.
- Ecolab – a US Account Managed company who have made an acquisition and are expanding their presence in Rochdale to produce generic/branded hygiene wipes - 7 new jobs
- City Law Practice – an Indian owned law firm expanding their UK presence to enter the Northern market. Starting small with 2 jobs.

Sector Programmes:

Detail of Financial & Professional Services, Creative Digital & Tech, Life Sciences & Healthcare, and Advanced Manufacturing and Materials initiatives are set out in Appendix 1.

Manchester China Forum

- Manchester China Forum (MCF) has hosted a number of senior visits: British Embassy Beijing (HM Business and Trade Commissioner, Head of Export Strategy) and British Consulate-General Guangzhou and Wuhan to progress discussions around future plans and priorities for bilateral/regional engagement, trade and investment, and education/culture links.
- In partnership with the British Embassy Beijing and the Tianjin Foreign Affairs Office: hybrid Greater Manchester – Tianjin Green & Low Carbon Session included senior representatives from FCDO, TfGM, EIA, and the GMCA as well as senior government and industry partners in Tianjin and to nurture collaboration opportunities on net zero ambitions.
- On May 15th, MCF, MIDAS and GMCA hosted a group of Chinese Infrastructure delegation in Manchester ahead of UKREiiF for an overview of GM investment landscape.

Manchester India Partnership

- Manchester India Partnership (MIP) is working on a DBT delegation of tech firms from India in partnership for 21 June. This 25 firm delegation are interested in setting up in the UK and will visit Manchester on the back of the London Tech Week.
- MIP is working with India's premier business association for tech companies NASSCOM to offer 10 free desk spaces for their members for a year to be based out of the 4M building at the Manchester Airport. A NASSCOM delegation of companies will be visiting Manchester on 28 June for the signing of a tripartite MoU between NASSCOM, MAG, and MIP/MIDAS.

Japan Steering Group

- Following on from the visit by Osaka officials and businesses in January, dialogue has continued, with MIDAS working on a confidential project with a low carbon product manufacturer.
- We are working with GMCA on a GM Mayoral delegation visit to Osaka and Tokyo in late 2023 and planning continues.
- MIDAS are commencing mapping of key Japan stakeholders, Japanese companies already invested in GM, target companies, and are liaising with DBT colleagues in market on this.
- Initial discussions have been held with the UK team planning the UK's presence at Expo 2025 in Osaka, for GM to consider involvement.

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BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

- **GC Business Survey.** The following sections relate to the 132 responses completed between the 04 April 2023 to 03 May 2023. The survey has over 9,000 responses since its launch in March 2020. Previous month's results are provided in brackets. The profile is broadly representative of the GM business base - but for an over-representation of SMEs, and manufacturing and DCT businesses, and under-representation of retail and tourism and hospitality businesses.

Growth, business confidence and investment

- **The GC Business Confidence Index (GC-BCI)**, a ranking of how confident businesses are on their growth prospects for the year ahead, currently stands at 7.3 out of 10, the same as the previous month.
- **Sales and profits.** 21% (vs 26% previously) of firms reported that they experienced an increase in sales in the last month, and 66% expect profits to increase (vs 68%), and slightly higher than the same time last year. Just 2% (vs 3%) expect profits to decrease.
- **Investment.** 41% (vs 47%) of firms expect to increase Capex spend in the year ahead. 45% (vs 55%) of firms expect to increase their allocation towards investing in workforce development/skills, business model change (43% vs 52%), innovation (42% vs 54%).

Main impacts from the current situation and financial resilience

- **Impacts.** Rising costs (36% vs 34% previously), decreased sales (21% vs 25%), and supply chain - minor issues (14% vs 18%). The hospitality, tourism, & sport sector and other personal services / support activities were most likely to report decreased sales.
- **Cash reserves.** 75% (vs 81%) of firms report that they have cash reserves to last over 6 months and this has remained fairly stable over the last 2 years ranging from 69% (low) to 81% (highest last month). 85% of SME's with 50-249 employees have cash reserves to last over 6 months, and reserves were highest in retail and wholesale (87%), BFPS (83%), and manufacturing (74%).
- **Cashflow.** 22% (vs 18%) of firms said they had cashflow problems. Micro-size firms (<10 employees) were more likely to report cashflow issues this month compared to SMEs (10-249 FTEs). The 'other services' sector, retail and wholesale, and hospitality, tourism, and sport were the most likely to report cashflow problems than other sectors.

Employment, skills and workforce development

- **Recruitment.** 19% (vs 21% previously) of firms are currently recruiting new staff, 15% (vs 12%) said they had difficulties recruiting. The main occupational groups recruiting are for customer facing roles (35% vs 23%), managerial roles (12% vs 17%), and other roles (14% vs 44%).
- **Workforce skill gaps.** 56% (vs 59%) of firms said that their workforce skills are only 'partly' at the level to meet business objectives. The main technical skill gaps identified are: specialist technical skills (33%), advanced specialist IT skills (8%), computer literacy/basic IT skills (4%), knowledge of products/services (7%), and complex problem resolution (11%). The main people and personal skill gaps identified are: sales (15%), customer handling (12%), HR/training people (9%) and team working (9%).
- **Workforce development.** 45% (vs 55%) of firms said they are looking to increase investment in workforce development in the next 12 months, 50% (vs 43%) said they thought investment levels would remain the same, and 2% (vs 2%) were unsure.

Research, development, and innovation (new questions added to survey)

- **Innovation activity.** 32% (24% previously) have invested in new / significantly improved services, 23% (vs 19%) implemented new business practices, 17% (22%) had invested in advanced R&D activity, and 20% (19%) of firms introduced new / significantly improved goods.
- **Digital innovation.** 7% (vs 8%) Invested in the acquisition of digital products or digital services specifically for innovation; and 4% (5%) had made investments in the acquisition of advanced machinery or equipment - specifically for innovation.
- **Main sources of innovation.** The top 3 sources of innovation within firms were 40% (vs 46%) said staff within their own business, 23% (vs 17%) said clients / customers; and 11% (vs 8%) suppliers of equipment, materials and services.
- **The main barriers to growing innovation.** 17% (vs 15%) cited direct innovation costs are too high, 10% (vs 11%) stated lack of available finance, 7% (vs 10%) cited lack of qualified personnel, 15% (vs 8%) said finance costs is too high, and 30% (vs 34%) of firms said they faced no barriers to innovation.

Social value and good employment practices (new questions added to survey)

The GC survey now asks about businesses' approach to social value. This includes the extent to which companies have the following:

- **Guarantee at least 16 hours of work per week for employees.** 65% (62% previously) said this currently applies, and 12% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Pay the Real Living Wage.** 63% (65%) said this currently applies, and 13% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Offer flexible working options to employees.** 41% (48%) said this currently applies, and 18% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Actively look to increase the diversity of the workforce** (through recruitment and progression practices). 49% (50%) said this currently applies, and 21% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Actively promote healthy work practices.** 41% (45%) said this currently applies, and 22% said they were likely to include in future.

Other challenges and future support needs

- **The main pressing challenges facing business.** Access to new domestic sales opportunities (61% vs 52%) previously and continuing to rise, (highest impacts in construction and retail and wholesale services), developing the business model (42% vs 46%), managing overall business finances (39% vs 39%), developing new products/services (34% vs 34%), general workforce development & skills (27% vs 33%).
- **The main areas of future support.** Business planning (45% vs 38%), marketing (41% vs 38%), innovation (34% vs 30%), workforce development (33% vs 43%), and financial advice (19% vs 25%). 13% (vs 11%) are looking for extra support to manage their environmental impact.
- **International trade.** 3% (vs 9%) of firms undertaking overseas trade said they were looking to expand in current markets. 17% of small SMEs (10-49 employees) are looking to expand in new markets - and mainly firms within the manufacturing sector.

Business Organisation Surveys

- **GM Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey** (Q1 2023 published April 2023) shows that domestic sales decreased in Q1 2023. However, there were overall increases in cash positions, business confidence and export sales in Chamber members. Recruitment activity remained stable, though recruitment difficulties persist (despite easing overall since mid-2022). Business investment improved in the latest quarter, and concerns around inflation are starting to ease, but half the respondents expect to increase prices in the year ahead.

- **FSB North West Quarterly Small Business Index Q1 2023** which measures confidence amongst businesses, remains negative in Q1 2023. It currently stands at -11, whereas in Q4 2022 it was -48. Despite the recent improvement, North West small businesses continue to face low confidence levels. Net revenue in the North West remains negative in Q1 2023, but shows a stronger performance versus previous quarters reflecting nationwide trends. Investment intentions for small businesses have improved since the previous quarter, standing at net 18% from the net 12% recorded in Q4. General economic conditions (49%), utility costs (43%), and consumer demand (36%) are the main barriers to growth over the next 12 months.

Insolvency

- **Insolvency.** Nationally the number of registered company insolvencies in April 2023 was 1,685, 15% lower than in the same month in the previous year (1,988 in April 2022). However, this was higher than levels seen while the Government support measures were in place in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and higher than pre-pandemic numbers.
- **Insolvency risk data for Greater Manchester** shows that 11.3% (11.7% previously, & 1.2 percentage points higher than pre-C19) have a 1-3 flag risk rating (a measure of insolvency risk), compared with 10.6% nationally (10.9% previously). Insolvency risk has increased in small firms in GM by 2.2 percentage points compared with pre-covid - however the latest data shows that risk is highest in medium size firms.

GC SUPPORT SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

COMMISSIONING/FUNDING UPDATES

GM Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). During April, GMCA released an open tender for £7.5m of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) for a contractor to deliver a holistic GM wide business support programme. The Hub has created a strong proposal based on the various GM and local priorities, BPIIG best practice and evaluation learnings. We are awaiting notification of the results of this process. There may also be further local authority level opportunities within GM as the implementation plan develops, particularly around SME workspace. Activity will be delivered primarily in years 2 and 3 of the SPF programme (April 2023 to March 2025). Marketing Manchester (MM) has been included in the tender for tourism sector development, and GC Angels for early-stage finance support.

GM Providers Forum. The Greater Manchester Providers Forum has been created to establish a regular forum through which all publicly commissioned or publicly financed advisory and service providers, with activities relevant to Greater Manchester businesses, can co-ordinate and align through the sharing of activity, insights and best practice. The Greater Manchester Providers Forum aims to ensure co-ordination and alignment of business support activity across Greater Manchester to maximise impact and reach and the identification of opportunities for collaboration in line with Greater Manchester business demands and needs with a view to increasing the number of joint B2B events, cross referrals and sharing of best practice amongst members

Business Rates Funding. GC submitted five business rate proposals for 2023/24 funding to support the continuation of key programmes, these were approved at the end of March, and we are now awaiting the contracts for each of these:

- GC BGH - £6,005,000
- Support for Growth & International Engagement - £930,000
- Support for Net Zero - £550,000
- Good Employment Charter - £545,000
- GM Frontier Sector FDI Inward Investment Attraction & Promotion Programme - £1,750,00

Foundational Economy Funding. BGH is now mobilising two new projects for delivering innovation support to the foundational economies (retail, night-time economy, care) across Greater Manchester. Whilst small scale (£170,000), they are strategically important and will provide specialist innovation advice and create a community eco system for recipients of innovation grant until March 2025.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Cost of Doing Business. The Business Growth Hub completed the delivery of a series of activities across Greater Manchester in March 2023, alongside partners including other business representative organisations and Local Authorities, to support businesses in responding to the increased costs of doing business, under the banner of a #HereForBusiness dedicated media/comms campaign. The support that was delivered included informing businesses of the Government's Energy Relief measure, energy related cost saving/ROI opportunities along with the cost of operations, access to finance,

decarbonisation, restructuring, productivity, and leadership well-being support. The programme has achieved a strong response, with 1,517 businesses attending the seminars, webinars, workshops, and drop-in clinics, provided through the programme.

A further 184 businesses have received dedicated targeted support to address the clients' individual challenges with the cost of doing business. This further support includes a dedicated executive development programme, marketing strategy and planning workshop, sales strategy workshop, and advice and guidance around managing finances. The Hub will continue its focus on businesses with growth ambition to ensure these opportunities are utilised.

Good Employment Charter. Over 1,500 employers are engaged with the Charter Unit, with c.500 supporters and some 90 Full Members. There is an increasing pipeline of employers seeking to become full Members of the Charter and the Unit will be utilising associates to help assist in delivering membership assessments. The impact of the linkages between public procurement, the Charter and employment standards more generally has seen an uplift of interest from employers who are interested in delivering public services. Significantly, one of the recently appointed bus franchise holders, Diamond Buses, have recently become Charter Members, largely driven by contract conditionality.

In partnership with the GMICP, a member of staff has been seconded to work specifically to engage with and develop a 'community of practice' across health and social care providers. This is already bringing benefits, as a number of health care providers and GP practices are coming forward as Supporters of the Charter with a keen interest to becoming full Members. This approach of developing a community of practice has also been attempted with the Early Years Sector. However, current pressures on this sector have meant this is difficult to develop at this time. An alternative approach of working with potential champions in the sector is being developed to raise awareness and best practice in the sector.

The Good Employment Awards for 2023 were held on the evening of 27th April 2023. Around 250 attendees gathered to recognise employers across a number of categories. The Employer of the Year was awarded to Anchor Removals, based in Salford. Peter Cheese, CEO, CIPD, was the guest speaker and praised Greater Manchester in its leading efforts on the good employment agenda.

The Charter will also hold a GM Good Employment Week (19th – 24th June), which will be the first week of its kind in the country; **Page 58** on employees and the employee voice,

reflecting the need to empower employees to understand and be able to demand 'good employment'. A number of local authorities and Charter partners are planning events across the City Region during the week. A high-profile public awareness campaign utilising social and mainstream media is planned to promote the week and activities through MCC & TfGM assets as well as partners and charter members.

The principal tool to engage people will be a dedicated Good Employment Week microsite <https://goodemploymentweek.co.uk> which will also be mobile friendly. Directed via QR code, visitors will be directed to take a quiz to establish how good their job is. The concept is that in 21 questions, participants will be provided with a rating on their job, and information and advice provided on where it could be improved. The feedback will be provided so that individuals can share their results to encourage others to take the quiz.

Social Value Support. The team's work with diverse communities has continued with several business support providers being commissioned to engage and support LGBTQ+, ethnic minority and female-led businesses. Providers are supporting over 80 businesses within GM, which has built both trust and understanding with diverse communities accessing mainstream business support services. This work has also helped shape our ongoing service provision across the Business Growth Hub and wider GC services. This work continues through a research project being commissioned by the Business Growth Hub, working with the Black United Representation Network, and Aston University who produced the Time to Change Report in 2022. The research will be focused on 'Barriers to Innovation for Ethnic Minority Business Owners' of which findings will be produced in September 2023.

The Social Value Team continue to deliver its core programmes of support and in April, added the introduction of 'Maximising Growth for Social Enterprises' which is now the Hub's primary social enterprise offering. The Hub continues to deliver themed cohort programmes and workshops that cover: Understanding Social Value, Legal Governance re: Social Enterprise, a VCSE/Private Sector Partnership panel event, and the BGH Match – Value in Volunteering Network event. These sessions, alongside Bespoke Bids' Tender Readiness workshops, now provide a suite of vehicles to support organisations on various themes under the banner of Social Value.

The team's work with the VCSE (Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise) sector has seen involvement in the development of the GM Inclusive Ownership Hub (formerly known as the Community Wealth Hub), which will be hosted by GC. GC continues to be involved

in the design and implementation of the Inclusive Ownership Hub and will support its launch over the summer.

EnterprisingYou (EY). Since the programme began (March 2020), the programme has seen 8,286 enquiries, with 2,941 people starting on the programme (62% female, 38% male, 25% ethnic minority leaders, and 22% aged 50+). A range of events have taken place over the last quarter including our unique 'Olderpreneurs' Networking event aimed at the over 50s, which 30 people attended, generating 3 new sign ups to the programme on the day. The EY Spring Networking event, which offered a variety of learning workshops with the opportunity to network, was a huge success with 45 attendees and 7 new sign ups on the day.

Growth within the programme has remained steady with 32% of those that have completed the programme reporting an increase in pre-tax profit to £4.7M. 55% of those who have completed also reported an increase in their current turnover levels to £12.7M, and 16% report no longer being reliant on benefits.

Skills for Growth SME Support. The SFG programme continues to be on track against profile and all 5 critical success factors are at 100% or above. To date, 7,373 businesses have been engaged, 3,577 SME Productivity Plans completed, 4,507 referrals have been made to GM Bridge and Good Employment Charter, 238 new apprenticeships, 9,464 individual skills plans created, and 2,170 completions claimed. We have now moved into the contract extension profile, where we are on track to achieve our targets, with more focus now on the individual skills plans as we move into the last 5 months of the contract.

Leadership and Management - GM Leadership Hive. GMCA, the Business Growth Hub, and the four GM business schools are working together to deliver the £2M programme of executive coaching, targeted programmes and mentoring to GC BGH/University participants. The Leadership Hive is comprised of 4 main programmes: Executive Development (EDP), Workforce Development, Mentoring, and OPEN SME.

Since January 2022, the BGH leadership programmes have intensively supported 352 SMEs, with 477 leaders from those businesses on the EDP and Mentoring programme accessing leadership development. A further 60 are predicted to be supported in Quarter 1. The programme will be supporting a further 56 individuals between May and June this year; exceeding the assist target by 62. The team continues to focus on the impacts of support and the collection of these through to the end of September 2023.

iMentor continues to receive new applications for mentors and mentees daily, necessitating an increase in new mentors to meet the increase in mentee referrals. The Grow Your People – Grow Your Business cohort programme relaunched in April 23 with 8 sessions planned till the end of June 23.

Access to Finance. The Access to Finance team is currently heavily focused on finalising ERDF Business Assists; 863 completed since Oct 2015, with just 3 remaining to achieve the overall target of 866. In addition, the team have helped businesses to create 378 new jobs and generated 533 Funding Offers, totalling £62.8m (£34m debt-based products and £26m in equity investments). The team supported a total of 38 businesses through the Here for Business campaign funded via UK SPF. The team continues to deliver via two cohort programmes (Pathway 2 Equity, and Finance Simplified); the content of which is currently being updated, pending transition to UK SPF funding in late 2023. Work is also ongoing to support the Create Growth Investment Readiness programme managed through the DCT team.

Growth Hub Innovation Service. Since 2019, the Innovation service has generated circa 876 business assists, 107 collaborations, 126 new to firm products, 66 new to market, and a total of 334 new jobs created. Programme collaborations continue between SMEs and the GM Universities across technology areas, including rapid prototyping, eco/environmental, advanced materials/chemistry, manufacturing, digital and creative, and AI/machine learning. The innovation voucher scheme has offered/awarded circa £300k in grant funding to support GM SME investment in R&D and has now committed all grant funding to SMEs.

Innovate UK EDGE. This financial year, 220 individual SMEs were engaged and supported in the Northwest by the Innovate UK EDGE team. We have helped these companies attract over £10M in external investment, created over 150 new jobs, and have increased turnover by over £17M, with approximately 100 of the companies flagged as having “High Growth” potential. We continue to hit our target of signing up new clients (~30/month).

We have had our new contract offer from Innovate UK for the current financial year, confirming the renewal of the grant, which has risen slightly to £755k, with the creation of a new Investment Readiness, Ecosystem Specialist role.

We have supported two separate bids and consortia for the national facility and a regional hub for the UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) (Arts and Humanities Research Council) call in the Digital and Creative space, for Convergent Screen Technologies and performance

in Realtime (CoSTAR). This is for the creation of a national facility and a series of regional spokes to ensure the UK stays at the forefront of the motion capture and virtual performance area. GC's role will be to support the planned ecosystem of SMEs that will be working with, and in, the facility and sector. Both bids have now progressed to formal interview stage, and we will be supporting the MMU bid for a regional spoke.

Green Economy. The Green Economy team have recently launched the de-mystifying green tech webinar series and kicked off with a session on solar PV. Speakers included local GM suppliers ENSPEC and KAST renewables, the Pilot Group, the solar trade association and had a great range of attendees from businesses looking to procure solar, to those that supply it, looking to better understand their customers. The next session looks to de-mystify green finance solutions. Building on this theme we facilitated a green tech panel of experts at the pro-manchester green tech conference to bring awareness to supply chain capabilities. We also partnered with Electricity NW to run an interactive clinic on grid connections which was really well received by our members.

The team's recent month has achieved a total of 172 company profiles in the marketplace, 21 new sales opportunities have been shared with members. This month 394 engagements have been received through the website and social media platform and 83 searches of our marketplace. We now have 2,049 subscribers to our Green Intelligence newsletter.

ERDF Carbon Reduction. Contract achieved 98% Enterprises Supported and 63% Carbon Savings at April 2023 month end against full contract targets. Pipelines are strong and the team anticipate concluding the contract at 18 over target for Enterprises Supported and 540 tonnes of carbon savings over contract target.

Made Smarter. The Made Smarter programme successfully delivered all its KPIs for digital transformation workshops, specialist advisor support, student placements, Leading Digital Transformation programme delegates, and funded projects in 2022/23. Delivery of the Made Smarter Adoption Programme for 2023/24 has now started following a necessary team restructure following the 25% budget reduction for the year.

Programme spend delivered the full budget and a further £190k of additional support from DBT allowed the funding of 5 additional adoption projects, additional marketing spend, and the procurement of some sensors to allow the team to show the power of low-cost tech.

The programme budget and KPIs for 2023/24 have been confirmed by DBT. Additional spend of £180k on top of the £1.8M core budget has also been agreed by DBT, and this will

cover national marketing activity, including maintenance and development of the Made Smarter website. DBT have asked for a proposal to re-introduce the Digital Technology Internship (DTI) programme (student placements) which has been provided. The re-introduction of the DTI programme would be a welcome change of policy if it were to receive ministerial and treasury approval.

Manufacturing Sectors Service. The GM Manufacturing Sectors Service have achieved 92% of Enterprises Supported, 88% Jobs Created, 90% New to Market Products, and 65% New to Firm Products against full contract targets. The team have 30 enterprises to support in the pipeline against the remaining target of 28 to be achieved by June 2023 quarter end. The Made for Manufacturing Service had achieved 112% Enterprises Supported at April 2023 month end against full contract target.

Create Growth (CG). The Create Growth Programme has successfully completed its first cohort with strong feedback of 9.5 out of 10. 20 creative sector businesses participated from a variety of subsectors, such as design, publishing, performing arts and production. The curriculum for the SME's was centred around investment readiness but also included inclusive leadership, product innovation, sales and marketing, IP and trademark strategy as well as value based pricing. A BDM has been recruited, and recruitment for a Programme Coordinator is still ongoing. Advertising and recruitment for the second cohort to start in July has commenced and 20% of places have already been filled.

Global Scaleup (GSU). The GSU team have delivered a series of masterclasses around international market penetration and sales in cultures outside of the UK. The target audience for these sessions has been more closely aligned with early-stage exporters and smaller SME's. This activity has generated interest from a wide variety of SMEs across GM and will inform the development of GSU service design going forward. Alongside this delivery, the team has driven forward the collaboration with DISH (Manchester Digital Security Hub) to be part of their Cyber SME support programme. The GSU team will be delivering another internationalisation sprint and international IP support for their 2nd cohort in June.

BGH Match. BGH Match continued to grow across the local authorities as the team visited Oldham, Tameside, Manchester, and Salford, following respective themes of International Women's Day, economic plans, volunteering, and low carbon. The team have also hosted their second 'Value in Volunteering' event which is aimed at connecting the third sector with the private sector to encourage private organisations to engage with the charity sector. This

edition was well received, and the team will look to deliver this again later in the year to support our commitments to the third sector.

BUSINESS FINANCE

Angel & Innovation Finance. GC Angels invested £475k in four Companies in the quarter Jan-Mar 2023, unlocking £1m of private capital investment. Three companies are pre-revenue where the innovation is high but the investor appetite low. MolyMem and Vector Homes are Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) based and focused on commercialising graphene-based technologies in sustainable and advanced materials to support clean water filtration and green housing, respectively.

The GC Angel portfolio now stands at 36 investments with total value of £3.1m, which has attracted direct co-investment of £16.8m and follow on investment has been received by 40% of the portfolio companies, who have raised a further £13.5m. Over 40% of the companies are female founded and 25% founded by ethnic minorities. We are expecting a realisation in Q1 of our investment in a cyber security training business. It will be our second return of capital which provides the evidence and track record required to begin the journey of raising a dedicated £30m fund to sustainably support growth in GM for the next 10 years.

Our pipeline and partnerships have broadened in anticipation of this capital visibility. We now have over 200 GM opportunities that we are tracking and an integrated suite of partner advice for companies not yet ready to receive external funding.

Business Lending. In the year to the end March 2023, GCBF invested £11.6m into GM SMEs, including £9.86m in loans to 743 GM start-ups and £1.1m of growth businesses loans into 18 more established SMEs, despite delays with RLS3 government backed guarantee accreditation process with BBB. The business loan WIP is consistent, with £1.2m across 21 businesses applications. The lending team continue to monitor the cost-of-living crisis, however, current provision levels within the loan books remain in line with prior year expectations. Pro-active support is offered to borrowers affected by both post-Covid market change and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Start Up Loans. Prior to contract start on 1st April 2023, GCBF successfully recruited and trained 11 new staff to deliver the two 3-year contracts for both the North West and national. This offers a significant scale up of Direct GCBF lending nationally, will increase loan

volumes with an additional £30m per year and 3,000 jobs. These awards cement the key role of GC in the UK Government's approach to start-ups across the UK. In GM, for the year to 31st March 2023, GCBF issued 743 Start-Up Loans, to the value of £9.9m continuing to work closely with the Growth Hub, integrating workshops and one 2 one support.

GM Bounce Back Loan Fund. Arrears on the GCBF book currently sits at just under 30% and reflects the more vulnerable customers the GM BBLs scheme targeted and the on-going impact of energy/cost of living crisis on these smaller businesses. While identification of initial fraudulent applications continues to be a key concern across the wider scheme, no further cases have been identified within the GM scheme at this time. Performance reflects the high risk of both the Scheme and the GM targeted SMEs, but is in line with expectations/tolerances as it stands.

GM Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans – All loans are now in the repayment phase, with 1 of the 9 GM funded CBILS loans in default. The current provision against this loan represents 13% of the total loan book, with the defaulting loan in the hospitality sector and experiencing key pressures.

INTERNATIONAL, MARKETING, AND INWARD INVESTMENT

Marketing Manchester

Local Visit Economy Partnership. In April, Marketing Manchester (MM) received confirmation of VisitEngland Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status, joining 14 other DMOs, including neighbouring Cumbria Tourism, Visit Peak District and Derbyshire, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and Marketing Cheshire. The new national portfolio of strategic and high-performing LVEPs will support collaborative working locally and nationally on shared priorities and targets to grow the local visitor economy. The creation of LVEPs was part of the UK Government's response to the recommendations of 'The de Bois Review: an independent review of DMOs in England', to reshape destination management across England, to reduce fragmentation, and to bring coherence to its DMO landscape.

Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID). The newly elected ABID Board has met twice since March to agree the company's Articles of Association and to approve the first year workstream plans. The ABID Company started on 1 April and the City Visitor

Charge came into force on that date. There was extensive media coverage which was overwhelmingly positive for the introduction of the new charge. Manchester was hailed as a “trailblazer” for being the first UK destination to introduce a visitor charge. ABID businesses have not reported any significant pushback from their guests against the City Visitor Charge. The current focus for the ABID Manager is the development of the delivery plans for the four workstreams, which will be carried out in May and June with input from ABID businesses, and finalising the operating arrangements with MCC for levy calculations and collections which will commence in May.

Business Conferences and Events. In Q4 (Jan-March 2023), 13 bids were submitted with a potential for 14,440 delegates and an economic impact of £30.1m. 7 bids were won in Q4 with an economic impact of £16m (£10m of which is the Davis Cup in September 2023) bringing 1,660 delegates/participants to Greater Manchester. The Sports Bidding Unit continues to bid for and support several high-profile sporting events that align with Manchester’s sports strategy, including support for Rugby League World Cup and future tennis and cycling events. For the full 2022/23 financial year, the Convention Bureau submitted 72 bids with a potential for 55,815 delegates and an economic impact of £129.9m. The Bureau won 28 bids bringing a potential 31,080 delegates and an economic impact of £42.8m.

Currently the pipeline is buoyant with 146 live opportunities, 19 bids are required and 39 bids are pending decisions. To continue to raise the profile of Greater Manchester as a destination for business visits and events, the team are preparing to attend IMEX Frankfurt on the VisitBritain stand week commencing 22 May, and have a full diary of appointments over three days and will also be attending a Corporate and Incentive MICE Buyer dinner with up to 50 senior buyers in attendance and an Association Breakfast with up to 20 senior Association organisers. The team are also preparing to attend The Meetings Show at the end of June with 5 business tourism partners attending on the Manchester stand.

SXSW – 11-15 March

- Manchester Day Takeover of UK House on 13 March included 6 Sessions: Culture, Music Talent, E-sports, Digital City, Beyond the Music (new music conference and festival scheduled 1-14 Oct in Manchester) followed by Manchester DJ Mix. Significant media and social coverage of the evening Manchester music showcase at the Moody Theatre including The Orielles, Loose Article and New Order. There was also significant

positive interest in Beyond the Music showcase on 14 March and New Order panel on 15 March which was included in the main stage programme.

- Significant promotion and awareness was achieved as a result of Manchester Day - listings in main SxSW programme, comms by UK House team, social media coverage by home team in-market and media coverage generated by home team.
- Singapore Airlines sponsorship was secured including flights between Manchester and Austin for the delegation. Meetings with US sales & marketing teams were held to strengthen the partnership for future joint B2B and B2C activity. Consul General Texas is supporting with introductions to DMOs in Texas: Austin, Houston & San Antonio with aim of joint activity. Meetings were also held to scope out options for GM's future presence at SXSW, and building relationships with UK House, DIT teams, German House and Vancouver House organisers.
- MIDAS focused on GM digital and tech offer. A particular success was a cyber roundtable in partnership with the Austin incubator space, Capital Factor, and chaired by Cllr Bev Craig. We also established relationships with other economic development agencies in Texas.

Business Mission to New York – 16-17 March

- Discussion with Visit Wales team in NY re: US B2C and B2B campaigns, activity around MUFC tour in US and co-op B2B/2C campaign with GCS and Visit Wales. Met with VisitBritain International Director and US team to strengthen relationship, gain an overview of new VisitBritain structure and four priority pillars, and discuss potential for involvement in agent/influencer fam trip and Co-op B2C campaign US-wide.
- Met with NYC & Company (NY DMO) to re-initiate our city-to-city tourism partnership that kicked off in Jan 2020 pre-Covid and agreed in principle to work with Aer Lingus on a three-way tourism partnership and launch with an event in NYC in 2023. We were joined by Manchester Airport Strategy Director to meet Aer Lingus Sales & marketing team to strengthen our relationship and agreed in principal to a tourism partnership with MM and NYC & Co.
- Supported the networking reception in partnership with Trade Commissioner and DIT - 61 guests attended including a mix of inward investment/trade, airlines, tourism, media and travel trade. Focus of speeches was on culture, connectivity, trade & investment and visitor economy.
- The business meetings in New York were particularly useful from a MIDAS and Inward Investment perspective. It allowed us the opportunity to announce that BNY Mellon had chosen Greater Manchester as one of its key international growth locations, and to take further meetings with investors to discuss the potential for fintech growth in GM.

Place Partnership Programme

MIPIM – 14-17 March. Marketing Manchester coordinated GM's presence at MIPIM 23. A delegation of 75 delegates from 39 companies including 34 private partners and five Local Authorities to MIPM. There were 36 events that partners were invited to join as part of the programme, including 16 off stand sessions. The delegation was led by Joanne Roney, Eamonn Boylan and Paul Dennett. The overarching theme was 'Generation Manchester' supported by four golden thread themes: Innovation, Green, Smart and Fairer. 2.9 million social media reach, 58 pieces of coverage and 25.9m opportunities to see in the media were achieved.

UKREiiF – 16-18 May. Marketing Manchester coordinated GM's presence at UKREiiF taking place in Leeds 16-18 May 23. GM exhibited in partnership with Opportunity London to deliver a joint city presence at The Canary, a prime location venue at the event. 29 partners joined the partnership from across public and private sectors. A total of 24 speaking opportunities for the GM delegation across the 3-day programme, including sessions such as Atom Valley, Devolution, Transforming Transport, and Levelling Up. The partnership was led by Bev Craig, Andy Burnham and Eamonn Boylan.

London Real Estate Forum (LREF) - 28-29 September. Greater Manchester aims to return to LREF for a second time in 2023 and a partnership proposal is being reviewed and our presence will be confirmed in May.

Domestic Marketing

JC Decaux Out-of-Home Campaign. Throughout the months of January - March, MM delivered a short break campaign across key OOH sites throughout London. These in-kind OOH placements delivered over 10.2m impressions, with an in-kind value of £400K. Call to Action was visitmanchester.com

International Marketing

Ryanair France and Germany Campaign. A short break campaign was delivered in partnership with Ryanair targeting key routes/cities within France and Germany. The campaign was live between 23 February – 13 April. The campaign utilised a mix of display advertising, social, e-newsletters and push notifications encouraging consumers to take a

short break in Manchester, focusing on key messages for GM – events, shopping, football, food and drink and gateway. The paid media campaign generated 2.9million impressions, delivering an average click-through rate (CTR) via web banners of 0.29% and an average CTR via ECRM of 0.29%. The campaign generated an uplift across 6 French routes of 8%, with Beziers standing out with a huge 28% uplift in bookings. Across the two German routes (Berlin and Cologne), there was an uplift in bookings of 8%. Direct booking figures show that overall, the campaign delivered £808K of economic impact and a ROI of 14:1.

Travel Trade

- **ExploreGB.** MM participated in the annual ExploreGB event, from 27 Feb – 2 March. The virtual event enabled MM to meet with 52 buyers from around the world, with particular focus on our priority markets of the US and Europe. In addition, MM had meetings with VisitBritain reps from offices around the world to hear market updates and discuss opportunities for collaboration.
- **ITB Berlin.** MM exhibited at ITB Berlin, the world’s largest travel trade show, 8-10th March. Over the course of three days, the team met with over 45 buyers through meetings and walk-ups to the Manchester pod on the VisitBritain stand. The team also attended a networking event hosted by VisitBritain, held at the British Embassy in Berlin, where they met and networked with German buyers.
- **ETOA’s North American Marketplace.** This one-day virtual event in March, saw MM have 13 appointments with US tour operators. The appointments focussed on sharing updates on what’s news and upcoming in Greater Manchester in 23-24, alongside the gateway message.

Aer Lingus MICE FAM trip. In March, MM hosted a FAM trip for five meetings and events professionals from the East Coast of the US. The 3-day itinerary was delivered in partnership with MeetEngland and Aer Lingus. It included highlights of Greater Manchester’s conference and incentive product including Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, Manchester City Football Club, The Monastery, RHS Garden Bridgewater, Manchester Central, and The Edwardian Manchester. In total across 2022/23, MM engaged with 842 global travel trade, attended 12 B2B events and hosted 43 travel trade on familiarisation visits to Greater Manchester.

PR and Content. MM ended the 2022/23 financial year with a total OTS of 1.3 billion and 337 media engagements. A high proportion of these media engagements were a result of the team attending IMM UK in March 2023. On the place promotion side, the team supported with press and content for MIPIM 2023 in March as well as preparations for UKREiif in

May. MM is currently developing a new website for Innovation Greater Manchester. Two campaigns have been created to support Bee Net Zero. Event films have been produced for MIPIM, SXSW and UKREiiF.

Digital. Unique visitor numbers to the destination sites for 22/23 was just over 4 million with social reach at 14 million. The digital campaign delivered in the final quarter was Chinese New Year 2023. The total reach across all digital campaigns for 22/23 was over 30 million.

Sector / Thematic Campaigns

- **Digital in our DNA.** Digital in the DNA Campaign delivered a Cyber campaign across social platforms reach 540,000 impressions. In addition a Fintech campaign was delivered across social platforms with reach 1.1m.
- **Greener Greater Manchester (GGM).** The 2022/23 partnership with Edie.net has continued - OTS of 2.2m. GGM has a total of 834 LinkedIn followers and 624 followers on Twitter. Online content published on GreenerGreaterManchester.com in Q4 includes stories about a new task force established to help the city-region's textiles and fashion sector, new orchard planting in Stockport to support biodiversity, Rochdale Council's solar farm plans in Heywood, and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grants for GM. Overall, 73 stories were posted in 2022/23.
- **Powering Innovation Campaign.** Robotics campaign launched in the NY Times, and Manufacturing Global reach 600,000 impressions. Oncology and smart energy campaigns in FT.com reach to date 800,000 impressions.

Sector media and PR. In Q4, the PR reach totalled 2.1m and focused on three key announcements. This was achieved through active engagement with local stakeholders including GMCA, Greater Manchester leadership figures and businesses. The appointment of Joe Manning as MIDAS new MD was combined with the results of the FDI International Investment Rankings published by the Financial Times. The US mission also gained coverage and was followed by the announcement of Starling Bank's expansion in Greater Manchester and BNY Mellon's interest in investing in the city.

Inward investment: MIDAS

- Year to date, there have been 5 successful inward investment projects and 96 jobs. This is a stronger start to the year than 2020/21 and 2021/22 although lower than 2022/23 YTD position which benefited from Covid pent up demand.
- The project successes so far involve 1 R&D project (see Holiform below).
- Of the total job creations, 79% will be paid above the real living wage. 50% will be paid above £35,000. While both salary related targets are currently behind target, it is expected that this will be corrected with the creation of further jobs in the coming months.
- There have been 21 new projects added to the pipeline with 693 corresponding jobs. The MIDAS pipeline currently shows a further 37 projects and 2,631 jobs with a strong-very strong chance of successfully closing this financial year. This includes 7 R&D, 31 HQ and 8 low carbon projects.

Recent successes:

- Holiform – an innovative chemicals business who have outgrown their initial space at Manchester Science Park, and MIDAS have supported their relocation to a larger site on Trafford Park, creating 60 new jobs and safeguarding the initial 15. This was an R&D project, involving the consolidation of their R&D and Manufacturing teams. R&D is focused on the development of a fermentation process to support the manufacturing of chemical and cosmetic products, as well as product development.
- Ecolab – a US Account Managed company who have made an acquisition and are expanding their presence in Rochdale to produce generic/branded hygiene wipes with the creation of 7 new jobs.
- MI-GSO | PCUBED – a French Project Management Consultancy growing their Advanced Manufacturing / Lean offering, creating 100 new jobs over 3 years.
- City Law Practice – an Indian owned law firm expanding their UK presence to enter the Northern market. Starting small with 2 jobs.
- Scitech – a Life Sciences consultancy business opening a Northern office to service clients in the region with the creation of 17 new jobs.
- Cellerate – a business established by former UoM / GEIC teams developing battery technologies that MIDAS supported to secure premises for their expansion, creating 10 new jobs.

Examples of Current Project Pipeline:

- Project Manor – a Cyber Company looking to expand in GM creating circa 60 jobs.

- Project X – a confidential multi-million investment by a global business into an R&D facility which would create 20 high value R&D roles in very advanced technology.
- Project Innovate – a confidential project with an account managed company looking to create an AI centre of excellence which would create 200 jobs.
- Project Scanner – a European proptech software company looking to open first UK presence in GM, creating circa 5 jobs initially.
- Project Site – A European Account Managed consultancy / software company looking to grow significantly at their GM site creating 40 jobs.
- Project Swell – a German logistics business looking to invest and grow their GM presence with the creation of 15 new jobs.

ERDF Sectors Programme. There has been progress in recording jobs from foreign-owned SMEs that have landed in GM. We have currently claimed 125 jobs and aiming to reach 150-170 jobs by end of September. As part of the sectors programme, the City to Scale film was launched in April 2023 and the social media campaign is ongoing. The aim of this film is to showcase Greater Manchester as the destination for SMEs to be based, to grow, and to expand. Through creative film execution, Manchester is positioned as a vibrant city region and a market leading destination with a mature scale-up ecosystem that helps firms drive productivity and profitability.

Innovate Manchester Programme. From September 22 until January 23 three workshops and follow-on pitches sessions were successfully completed, with very complimentary feedback from the large companies and SMEs. The large companies involved were musicMagpie, Syngenta and Accenture. Syngenta collaboration has progressed to the pilot stage, while Accenture and musicMagpie collaborations are finalising the terms of their collaboration and working on the solution. No university engagement has been identified, but both MIDAS and BGH Innovation Team are working to support the collaborations between large companies and SMEs.

The Innovate Manchester filming that will promote the collaborations developed during phase 2 and phase 3 of the programme, is going to be finalised and launched during Spring 2023. The film will highlight the different stages of Accenture, Syngenta and musicMagpie collaborations, including Chiesi from phase 2.

Financial & Professional Services (FPS):

- 17/04/2023 - 18/04/2023 Innovate Finance Global Summit: Annual event at Guildhall, London that brings together leading figures from the fintech industry, investors, policymakers, and regulators. It serves as a platform for discussions, collaborations, and knowledge-sharing to drive innovation and advancement in the financial sector. MIDAS attended to promote the Greater Manchester Fintech offer, meet key clients and intermediaries and for information to inform propositions.
- 10/05/2023 - 11/05/2023 - BIBA conference in Manchester hosts 8000+ attendees and more than 220 exhibitors including insurers, service providers, brokers and software houses making it a leading insurance networking event, where building relationships and doing business are a priority. MIDAS attended to meet key accounts, previous investors and identified two projects.
- 06/06/2023 - 08/06/2023 - Money 20/20 Leading global event in Amsterdam that brings together professionals from the fintech and payments industry. It serves as a platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing among industry leaders, innovators, and disruptors. MIDAS will be attending on a DBT stand alongside other Northern Cities as part of Fintech North's campaign 'Move Your Fintech North'. This is a key event for the FPS team where we will be targeting large FS firms as well as innovative FinTechs.
- 12/06/2023 - Northern Sustainability Summit Conference on the topic of Sustainability/ESG/Green held at Manchester Central where attendees will hear from business leaders about the challenges and the opportunities of the green revolution and levelling up. The FPS team will be attending and taking a Green Finance view as well as bringing an interested FDI client from the travel industry.
- 13/06/2023 - PA@Manchester sponsored by KPMG Popular networking reception for Payment Association members. This will be the first one in the north (they're usually hosted in London) and will be hosted at KPMG's offices in Manchester and partnered with Sky Parlour.
- The Whitecap Fintech [review](#) was launched in April 2023 and findings for Greater Manchester demonstrate the city region maintaining its stronghold over other regional cities with FinTech GVA expected to reach £1bn by end 2023, and a workforce exceeding 10,000 across 237 firms.

Creative, Digital and Tech (CDT):

- 27/04/2023: CDT sectoral update to MIDAS property partnership quarterly event.
- 23/05/2023: MIDAS delivering webinar with techUK, GMCA & Microsoft on implications of devo deal for business.

- 24/05/2023 – 25/05/2023: MIDAS attending International Retail Expo (IRX) in Birmingham as part of eCommerce business development strategy.
- 24/05/2023 – 25/05/2023: MIDAS in London meeting with clients/multipliers/stakeholders
- 31/05/2023 – 01/06/2023: MIDAS attending Dublin Tech Summit in Ireland as part of international business development plan. MIDAS working closely with DBT and have a series of FDI meetings set up.

Life Sciences and Healthcare (LS):

- 07/04/2023: Invited account managed company, Chiesi, to a meeting with the Italian Ambassador as he visited Manchester, building upon the strong AM relationship we have with local companies and adding value. The LS team also assisted the visit on the day with hosting and logistics.
- The team have been working on its first formal approach into the Japanese market which we've anchored around the MedTec Japan conference 19th - 21st April which resulted in 3 amber/green projects being added to the pipeline including a T20 target.
- 27/04/2023: Attended the new office opening of ProteinTech Europe, an account managed company for us and were personally thanked by the international Group CEO for our support over the years. Further press releases and content generation to come.
- 23/05/2023: 24/05/2023. World Digital Health Congress. MIDAS attending for lead generation, including our T20 companies and cross sector CDT targets.
- 06/06/2023: Greater Manchester Health Inequalities Roundtable with the Mayor, local community leader and a large American Pharmaceutical company. MIDAS have arranged this invite only event with GMCA as part of a wider investment project.
- 14/06/2023 – 15/06/2023: June NHS Confed Expo. Hosted in Manchester Central, MIDAS are hosting 2 international delegations and supporting DBT on their stand at the conference. Starting to target and arrange meetings with attendees.

Advanced Manufacturing and Materials (AM):

- JEC World, Paris 24/04 – 27/04//203: MIDAS joined Composites UK stand at one of Europe's composites show. The team set up c.40 meetings with key targets ahead of the conference, which resulted in some strong projects and leads from companies looking to benefit from Greater Manchester's Advanced Materials ecosystem.
- Battery Show Stuttgart 22/05 – 27/05/2023 – a show for battery manufacturers, suppliers, engineers, thought leaders and decision-makers for a conference and battery

tech expo focused on the latest developments in the advanced battery and automotive industries. This is the first year MIDAS will be attending and will be targeting exhibitors and speakers ahead of the event as well as gaining insights to help develop the region's proposition.

- Advanced Materials Show, Birmingham 28/06 – 29/06/2023 – MIDAS will be joining the Graphene and Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) at their stand at the show in Birmingham. The show will be an opportunity to meet with target companies and catch up with some live projects.
- The Graphene Conference, Manchester 27/06 – 30/06/2023 – the Graphene Conference is taking place in Manchester this year, which provides a spotlight on the region to the global graphene community. MIDAS will be participating in the business-focused activity with a view to identifying new inward investment opportunities.

Manchester China Forum

- MCF has hosted a number of senior visits to Manchester over the past few weeks from the British Embassy Beijing (HM Business and Trade Commissioner, Head of Export Strategy) and British Consulate-General Guangzhou and Wuhan – reflecting the uptick in activity since China's reopening. These visits have helped to progress discussions around future plans and priorities for bilateral/regional engagement, trade and investment, and education/culture links. MCF have also been involved in supporting City Football Group (CFG) with arrangements to tour the Premier League trophy in-market.
- In partnership with the British Embassy Beijing and the Tianjin Foreign Affairs Office, MCF co-organised the hybrid Greater Manchester – Tianjin Green & Low Carbon Session. Speakers and attendees included senior representatives from FCDO, TfGM, EIA, and the GMCA as well as senior government and industry partners in Tianjin and was focused on nurturing collaboration opportunities focused on both city-region's respective paths to net zero.
- For other city-to-city engagement, MCF has hosted the visits of InvestHK, Invest Shanghai, as well as chief representatives of Shenzhen European Office UK and Qingdao International Centre for Business & Commerce for exploring wider collaboration opportunities in key areas.
- MCF has continued to work closely with Hainan Airlines, MAG, and relevant partners to push for resumption of direct connectivity between Manchester and Beijing. Hainan Airlines will resume pre-pandemic frequency (4 flights per week) from 22nd April onwards.

- Executive Director of MCF was invited to the Celebration of the United Nations International Chinese Language Day 2023 in Paris, France, who presented alongside the Vice Minister of China, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO for China as well as senior UNESCO and international representatives on the importance of language and cultural exchange in today's increasingly polarised world.
- Manchester China Friendship Programme has continued its success in student engagement and integration. Over the past few months, the programme successfully organised several social events – Chinese New Year celebrations, Lord Mayor of Manchester Afternoon Tea event, Tour of Etihad Stadium, badminton competitions, and informal gatherings at local restaurants.
- On May 15th, MCF and MIDAS hosted a group of Chinese Infrastructure delegation in Manchester ahead of UKREiiF. The delegation met with Eamonn Boylan, Joe Manning, and Rhys Whalley for overview of GM investment landscape and potential opportunities.
- Separately, MCF was awarded the “Special Contribution Award for Cross-border Cultural Exchange and Collaboration of the Year” at the 3rd China-Europe Cross-Border E-Commerce Forum.

Manchester India Partnership

- Manchester India Partnership is working on a Department of Business and Trade delegation from India of tech firms in partnership with MIDAS sector team for 21 June. A delegation of 25 tech firms which are interested in setting up in the UK will travel to Manchester to gauge investment opportunities in the city region. This will be on the back of the London Tech Week.
- Manchester India Partnership is working with India's premier business association for tech companies NASSCOM to offer 10 free desk spaces for their members for a year to be based out of the 4M building at the Manchester Airport. A NASSCOM delegation of potential tenant companies will be visiting Manchester on 28 June for the signing of a tripartite MoU between NASSCOM, Manchester Airport and MIP/MIDAS. They will also meet key city-based stakeholders and network with other tech firms in the city region.

Japan Steering Group

- Following on from the visit by Osaka officials and businesses in January, dialogue has continued on both streams with MIDAS working on a confidential project.

- MIDAS have also been developing the relationship with Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry with a view to running at least one webinar for their members in the coming months.
- The Steering group met in February to update on activity, and to discuss draft Terms of Reference with the group.
- Discussions have been ongoing about the potential for a GM Mayoral delegation to visit Osaka and Tokyo in late 2023 and planning continues.
- MIDAS are commencing mapping of key Japan stakeholders, Japanese companies already invested in GM, target companies, and are liaising with DBT colleagues in market on this.
- Initial discussions have been held with the UK team planning the UK's presence at Expo 2025 in Osaka, for GM to consider involvement.

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GM Business Board (LEP)

SUBJECT: GM Business Board (LEP) Strategic Communications

DATE: May 2023

FROM: Lou Cordwell, Chair GM Business Board

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the GM Business Board with an overview strategic communications activity undertaken on its behalf by Marketing Manchester and GMCA communications colleagues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the report
2. Provide input on future stories and themes
3. Consider supporting strategic communications through their own channels (regular columns etc)

CONTACT OFFICERS:

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

The strategic communications work being undertaken is intended to increase awareness of GM Business Board's role in encouraging and celebrating diversity and inclusivity, supporting the Board in tackling inequalities and encouraging economic growth by championing equal opportunities. Care is taken to ensure that

communications outputs are representative of a diverse population and encourage inclusivity.

The strategic communications work being undertaken is intended to increase awareness of Board's role in encouraging work to address, and mitigate against, the impact of climate change, supporting the Board in championing measures that will enable Greater Manchester to achieve its ambition of carbon neutrality by 2038. Care is taken to utilise sustainable work practices in executing this activity.

Risk Management:

Changes in Government policy and other external factors pertinent to Greater Manchester's reputation could have a bearing on the successful outcome of strategic communications activity. All activity is routinely reviewed and subjected to internal sign-off processes to mitigate risk.

Legal Considerations:

There are no specific legal considerations relating to this work apart from contractual obligations and reputational risks relating to media and communications activity. All activity is routinely reviewed and subjected to internal sign-off processes to mitigate risk.

Financial Consequences – Revenue: There are no specific financial consequences in terms of revenue associated with this work.

Financial Consequences – Capital: There are no specific financial consequences in terms of revenue associated with this work.

Number of attachments to the report: Background Papers: N/A

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of strategic communications activity on behalf of GM Business Board from March to May 2023.

2.0 UKREiiF

MM coordinated a delegation of 27 partners and 49 delegates from the public and private sector across GM led by Andy Burnham GM Mayor, Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive of Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Bev Craig Leader of Manchester City Council. Speakers from Greater Manchester took part in the wider UKREiiF programme including dedicated sessions for Bolton, Stockport and Atom Valley. Manchester shared a stand with Opportunity London which acted as a space for networking and meeting with investors. MM established media partnerships with Place North West and Estates Gazette. The total social media reach for the event was 2.4 million with 36 pieces of coverage in the media providing approximately 14.5 million opportunities to see.

3.0 Technical Education City Region

Plans for a Greater Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc), a new education pathway for young people choosing their GCSE options focused on technical education, was launched by the Mayor at a special event in May. As part of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal, Greater Manchester will have further oversight of post-16 technical skills, allowing local leaders to better shape how the city-region supports the one in three young people who do not want to go to university and match them into the skilled jobs being created in the local economy. Representatives from business and members of the Business Board were in attendance at the event, with former Co-Chair Mo Isap speaking. GMCA issued a press release and co-ordinated broadcast media, securing coverage across regional news, the Today programme, Sophy Ridge on Sunday.

4.0 Innovation Greater Manchester

Following the announcement about the selection of Innovation Accelerator projects made in March, GMCA and MM continue to work with project partners and the national IA comms group to develop plans for a continued drumbeat of activity supporting the IA and wider IGM aims. MM developed the website www.innovationgreatermanchester.com

5.0 Bee Net Zero

Bee Net Zero comms activity to connect with businesses across GM includes direct outreach to high-emitting businesses and a survey of their current actions, awareness content and editorial for Green Finance and promotion of the Journey to Net Zero programme from GC Skills for growth. Ongoing activity includes sharing Green Economy Demystifying Net Zero webinars, sharing surveys to support partner initiatives, and creating blogs explaining partner offers and topical issues. The website has also been updated to promote the Journey to Net Zero programme and the Green Intelligence newsletter.

6.0 Digital Blueprint

Stakeholders and communities from across the city-region's digital and tech sector, including Lou Cordwell, have contributed to refreshing Greater Manchester's Digital Blueprint for 2023-26. A press release was issued by GMCA and the Blueprint has been promoted across Business Board social channels, after the Mayor unveiled the strategy at the DTX tech conference.

7.0 Business Board refresh and rebrand

The call for applications for new Business Board members has been published on the website and shared through social media channels. MM is continuing work on the rebrand as the transition from LEP to Business Board completes.

8.0 Digital Stats

Twitter: Tweets from @GMLEP earned over 15k impressions during April and May. The page has 3,578 followers.

LinkedIn: Content during the period received 927 likes/reactions, 86 reposts and made 44k impressions. The page has 4,159 followers, up by 189 during the period.

9.0 MEDIA COVERAGE

UKREiiF

[Greater Manchester unveils UKREiiF 2023 programme - Place North West](#)
[UKREiiF | Why Manchester is the UK's leading city for investment - Place North West](#)
[Greater Manchester returns to UKREiiF – North West Business Insider](#)
[UKREiiF | Burnham weighs transport options for Atom Valley - Place North West](#)
[Themes from UKREiiF 2023 - Place North West](#)

Technical Education City Region

[Greater Manchester Baccalaureate will give choice, mayor says - BBC News](#)
[Pupils encouraged to do engineering and computing GCSEs to get jobs without going to uni - Mirror Online](#)
[Mayor Andy Burnham reveals how the new Manchester Baccalaureate will work - Manchester Evening News](#)
[Manchester mayor's 'MBacc' to rival EBacc to boost technical education - feweeek.co.uk](#)
[Burnham calls on business to offer work placements to young people on technical pathway - TheBusinessDesk.com](#)

Digital Blueprint

[Greater Manchester unveils digital blueprint at DTX - businesscloud.co.uk](#)

Business Board refresh and rebrand

[Business Board seeks professionals to shape the future of GM - TheBusinessDesk.com](#)
[The LEP is dead, long live the Business Board - TheBusinessDesk.com](#)

Hello and welcome to the April 2023 GCR Member's Brief.

The Government's annual budget (15 March) brought some excellent news for the region, that will help deliver a greener and fairer more prosperous city-region, the announcement of a trailblazing devolution deal for Greater Manchester. In our negotiations with Government, we have sought to secure additional powers and responsibilities over adult skills and education, transport, employment, housing and regeneration - all which allows greater flexibility, and responsibility, to focus resources where they're needed most. Green City areas of work benefitting from the deal include Retrofit and Net Zero Funding, Strategic Energy Planning, Nature Recovery and Adapting to Climate Change. [Read more.](#)

Within the same week as the budget, it was also [announced](#) that over 5,000 social homes across Greater Manchester are to receive energy efficiency improvements after the city-region was granted £37m from Wave Two of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The Government funding – granted by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero with an additional £60m contribution from the 18 social home providers, will see 5,438 social homes benefit from measures such as improved insulation, air source heat pumps, solar panels, draughtproofing, ventilation and heating controls in the programme worth £97m. Work will commence in April and be completed by September 2025, with social housing improvements being made across all districts.

Net zero featured heavily in the ten Greater Manchester projects to receive funding and support after being selected to become part of the city-region's Innovation Accelerator programme. Greater Manchester was asked by UK Government to pilot the Innovation Accelerator programme alongside Glasgow city-region and the West Midlands. The programme provides a total of £100m shared across the three regions, as well as support for developing each area's innovation ecosystem. [Read more.](#)

Should you want further information on any of the projects taking place in your area or city-region wide, either click on the hyperlink or contact the [GMCA Environment Team](#) who would be happy to help with detail.

Mark Atherton, Director of Environment, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Five Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester 2024 to 2029 - Update

Planning has commenced on the next reiteration of the Five Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester. Our objective to be carbon neutral by 2038 is still considered achievable, but the pathway towards that is likely to exceed the carbon budget, and by a considerable margin unless decarbonisation is accelerated, as recently [reported by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) (20 March)

GM's ambition and priority remains rapid decarbonisation, with a desire to remain within or as close to the budget as possible. The upcoming refresh of the Five Year Environment Plan presents a significant opportunity for GM to focus and push-on in order to meet the 2038 target.

With a planned launch at the October 2024 Green Summit, the contents of the new plan will include: Introduction/overall vision, 2024-2029 targets, Action plan, Thematic Sections, Conclusion, glossary, annex. To find out how we're managing the development process, [view the GCR Partnership presentation.](#)

Finally, we will be seeking feedback on our plans from everyone who lives and works in Greater Manchester, we'll be providing updates on when and how on all our communications channels.

NEW GREATER MANCHESTER ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES:

A **Community Fridge pilot** has launched in Oldham by Greater Manchester Food Security Action Network, Hubbub and Coop, which brings people together to eat, connect, learn new skills and reduce food waste. This builds on the successful pilots delivered through Manchester's In Our Nature campaign. [Read more](#)

Power in the City by Carbon Coop, featuring authentic voices, places and stories showing the everyday, on-the-ground ways that people are responding to the climate emergency in their own neighbourhoods. The first series, has five episodes on topics including transport, solar and wind power, warm and affordable housing, and green jobs. [Listen to the episodes here.](#)

GREATER MANCHESTER ENVIRONMENT EVENTS:

New fully funded **Eco Innovation programme** (Eco-FORCE) launched by Business Growth Hub to support Greater Manchester businesses to move to more circular practices, reduce waste and carbon emissions. From 21st March – 18th April this is a 3 day in-person programme that will guide SMEs step-by-step towards new 'eco' commercial opportunities, equipping them with the tools to eliminate waste and grow. [Link to register interest](#)

Powering Our Communities - Electricity North West are hosting a Community Connects Webinar on the 11 May 23 (10am to 11:30) to launch the next round of their award-winning Powering Our Communities fund. [Find out more and register for the event.](#)

Energy

Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) – GM has been awarded £70k from Innovate UK's Net Zero Living programme to help accelerate delivery of the city-region's Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). Project partners include Bruntwood, Regen, Electricity North West, Carbon Co-op, Green Longbow and Graham Oakes, with advisors Daikin, EY, Green Finance Institute, SSE Energy and Local Energy North West Hub.

DEEP Phase 3 (Heat and Energy Network Opportunity Areas) – Currently pending decision from Department for Energy on Stockport Centre project design for delivering net zero heat through sewer fed and geothermal. Oldham has commenced minewater-led detailed project design.

Go Neutral Smart Energy – Rochdale and Stockport Councils have shortlisted 4 schools for roof-mounted solar PV using unallocated ERDF grant, estimated circa 700kW installed capacity and £800k project value.

Smart Energy – A Solar PV Guide for schools has been developed and circulated for final comments. Currently asking districts to confirm the best methods for sharing with their schools.

Energy Innovation Agency (EIA) – Work continues to support innovators, with client agreements being signed to generate private fees. A dedicated subgroup of the Board has been set up to develop and implement a new finance model.

Buildings

Retrofit GM (Your Home Better) – New pricing structure has been developed to reflect the delivery cost of a dedicated solar survey offer and a comprehensive whole house retrofit plan. Your Home Better offer has been promoted to GMCA staff with encouraging results. Metrolink advertising planned for the end of March 2023.

ECO4 flex scheme (support for fuel poor/low-income households with home energy efficient upgrades) – Now appointed 3 approved [ECO4 installers](#): Improveasy Ltd, Next Energy Solutions Ltd and PHS Home Solutions Ltd T/A 0800 Repair, who will work directly with a dedicated Local Authority.

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) – SSE appointed to provide Measurement and Verification support to the PSDS 3a programme with first deliverables expected before end March 2023. £1.78m grant secured for the PSDS 3b programme (circa £5.5m total project value).

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) – All 10 registered providers have commenced installations, with most of the 900+ retrofits to be completed by end of March 2023. The Department of Energy have provided a 3-month project extension to the end of June 2023.

Natural Environment

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) - The Trailblazer devolution deal set out that the Mayor will be responsible for developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester. This is expected to start later this spring, once the government publishes regulations and guidance. Resource and project management planning has started, in conjunction with Natural England and Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

Natural Course Phase 3 – A Greater Manchester planners survey has been completed to assess the barriers to delivering the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). An EU

Mission visit was successfully held in January 2023, with a focus on projects delivered in Greater Manchester.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - Workshops have been held with Districts to disseminate the results of the BNG Needs and Supply assessment. Defra additional burdens funding has been announced for the Districts and GMCA and a plan is being developed as to how to deploy this most effectively.

Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) - Five prospective BNG sites moving forward through baselining. GMEF offer has been promoted to all Districts to increase the number of sites being brought forward.

Greater Manchester Green Spaces Fund - Round 2 received 76 applications and a total of [31 projects have been awarded funding](#). Round 3 has [now been launched](#) and open for applications. A new Grant Manager and Communications officer have been appointed to the GMEF.

Green Social Prescribing – A request to extend funding has been unsuccessful. Alternative options are being currently being assessed by the Integrated Care System.

Sustainable Consumption & Production

Recycle for GM Community Fund - For the 3rd year, community groups can apply to access £220,000 for projects which help to reduce waste. [Apply online](#) from now until to noon on Friday 26th May.

Textiles and Fashion Working Group - A series of workshops have been held to underpin a feasibility study for a national sorting and recycling infrastructure demonstration. [Read more](#).

One Bin to Rule Them All - A workshop was held on 29th March 2023 to disseminate the findings of the project aimed at improving plastics recycling practices across Greater Manchester and the UK.

Reconmatic - 4-year project commenced to increase sustainability in waste management across the built environment. UK partners include University of Salford and University of Manchester.

GM Consumer Behaviour Insights - Procurement to commence (by end of March 2023) on work to identify low carbon solutions and levers to drive change.

Renew Hub - An Education pod for schools and community groups is now open to raise awareness of circular economy principles including repair and reuse.

Transport

The Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund projects (with final funding approval up to January 2023) will deliver approximately 55km of new Bee Network routes, of which 33km were completed as of January 2023.

The Bike Hire Scheme - Work continues to increase the number of stands, stations, and bikes on the street with a full fleet (1500) expected by May 2023.

E-Scooters - Trial continuing with a much higher use this winter. December 2022 had 25,834 trips compared to 12,126 in December 2021.

Clean bus fund - Currently 92% of buses awarded retrofit funding have been upgraded. Overall, the Greater Manchester based bus fleet will be circa 92% compliant once all planned retrofits and replacements have completed in the next 6 months.

General

View the [5-Year Environment Plan dashboards](#) for a more in-depth analysis of our progress.

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

General enquiries [email](#) / Twitter: [@GreenCity](#) / GMCA Environment [Webpage](#) /

Green City Region news [Website](#)



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