

GM LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SUBJECT: LEP Funding Update

DATE: 24 February 2021

FROM: Simon Nokes, Executive Director, Policy and Strategy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the 2021/22 LEP core funding and sets out the proposed priorities for its allocation in the forthcoming year in line with the GM Economic Vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The LEP is asked to note and approve the allocation of the 2021/22 LEP Core Funding.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The GM Economic Vision provides a blueprint for remodelling the city-region's economy. It includes a range of long-term initiatives to help businesses innovate more effectively and become more productive, creating a greener and more resilient Greater Manchester.

This includes a clear commitment to tackle inequalities, embrace diversity and recognise the importance of civil society with actions aiming to encourage diversity in company leadership with a focus on women and BAME groups, promote better health and wellbeing support and turn Greater Manchester into a living wage city-region.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The GM Economic Vision reflects the GM Local Industrial Strategy and its Clean Growth Mission while recognising the shift in attitudes among people, businesses and investors caused by the coronavirus pandemic. As such, it builds on GM's bold target of carbon neutrality by 2038 and will support Greater Manchester in driving the UK as a global leader in low carbon innovation

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership is a private-sector led, voluntary partnership sitting at the heart of the city region's governance arrangements, ensuring that business leaders are empowered, working with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to shape the strategic course, determine local economic priorities and drive growth and job creation within the city region.
- 1.2 GMCA and GM LEP form an integrated partnership underpinned by the shared vision set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS), GM Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and GM Economic Vision providing an effective model of governance and decision making.
- 1.3 Together they are supported by the GMCA Executive Team allowing joint access to the comprehensive GM evidence base and the capacity to provide the necessary governance, strategy and delivery functions.
- 1.4 The Cities and Local Growth Unit confirmed in January 2021 the availability of £500,000 core funding to deliver LEP priorities. As with previous years, LEPs are required to match fund this locally to a minimum of £250,000 and this report sets out a proposed allocation for 2021/22 to support delivery of the GM Economic Vision.

2. DELIVERING LEP PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The Executive Director, Policy and Strategy, acts as the LEP Chief Executive and leads the GM secretariat in bringing together key officers and partners to deliver shared GMS/LIS priorities and implement the GM Economic Vision: Building a Greater Manchester, Making a Greater Britain. He is supported in the management of the LEP by his Executive Assistant and a dedicated LEP Principal Officer.
- 2.2 In addition, it is important to recognise that delivering the priorities of the LEP is supported by a wide range of staff within thematic teams within GMCA/TfGM, working with districts and partners, as follows:
 - **Work and Skills:** Developing an integrated employment and skills ecosystem through projects focused on Apprenticeships, Young Person's Guarantee, GMACS, Bridge GM and Employ GM
 - **Investment:** The GM Investment Fund is a series of investment funds (including Local growth Fund and Get Building Fund) aimed at encouraging business growth and investment in property and infrastructure.
 - **Digital:** Realising the ambition for GM to be recognised as a world-leading digital city region through the Digital Blueprint and its key priorities and enablers
 - **Low Carbon:** Driving the Five-Year Environment Plan and its long-term environmental vision to be carbon neutral by 2038
 - **Culture:** Overseeing the development and delivery of an ambitious, overarching strategy for culture, arts and leisure
 - **Transport:** Working with partners in TfGM to develop an integrated public transport network

- **Economy & Business:** Delivering the Local Industrial Strategy and other economic and business priorities, working with partners at the Growth Company to support local business and bring trade, investment and growth to Greater Manchester
 - **Governance:** GMCA acts as the LEP's Accountable Body, maintaining a robust audit trail to demonstrate compliance with appropriate protocols and regulations
 - **Research:** the LEP is supported at every meeting with relevant data and economic analysis to enable it to understand, and respond, to economic trends
- 2.3 In previous years, the LEP has agreed to supplement this activity with additional capacity from its core funding to support research, policy and strategy development along with targeted funding for individual LEP priorities.
- 2.4 For instance, this current year's allocation for 2020/21 was discussed at the Board meeting in November March 2020 and it was agreed to allocate £250k to support the GMCA Executive research and strategy function
- 2.5 Key impacts of this funding, when put alongside additional GMCA funding is a comprehensive research, policy and strategy programme which, between the LEP and CA, has been able to deliver in priority areas for the LEP including:
- Development of the GM Living with Covid Resilience Plan and **GM Economic Vision** and submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review
 - Maintaining a robust **research and evidence base** to ensure that GM remains at the forefront of current strategic thinking and developments including updating the Independent Prosperity Review in light of the Covid pandemic
 - Continued delivery of the **GM LIS Implementation Plan** with the Annual Review brought to the LEP in January 2021, identifying progress against each action and proposing how Year 2 implementation and milestones needed to be adapted in light of the Covid pandemic. (The LIS Implementation Plan is also supported by a significant investment of retained Business Rates)
 - Development of **Innovation GM**; a whole ecosystem approach to diversify the business base, transform ways of working, build vibrant places, create future resilience, support pathways to work and tackle social issues
 - Strengthening the **GM Employment Charter** to support employers to develop good jobs, deliver opportunities for people to progress, and help employers in the city-region grow and succeed. (Again this is supported by investment of retained Business Rates)
 - Refreshing the **GM International Strategy** setting out a framework of objectives delivering on the long-term vision of becoming a top global city-region.
 - Development of a LEP focused **Public Affairs function**, engaging with Ministers, MPs and Government departments to raise the profile of the GM Economic Vision and work together to realise shared ambitions.
 - Ensuring that LEP priorities are delivered in a way that makes a difference to the lives of **people across all our communities** with key themes such as the GM Social Enterprise Advisory Group, the GM Social Value Framework and the GM Inequalities Commission

- 2.6 A further £250k was allocated to a number of key LEP priorities including the LEP Membership Review; delivery of the LEP Foresighting Group; the annual contribution to the LEP Network; and small contingency for ad hoc activity including expenses with any remainder funding allocated to LIS implementation activity.

3. LEP CORE FUNDING 2021/22

- 3.1 The previous year has seen a number of significant developments to the context in which GM LEP priorities are being delivered including the challenges and opportunities presented by the Covid crisis, the development of the GM Economic Vision and the current Board membership review.

- 3.2 Therefore, in agreement with the Chair, it is proposed that the £500k is allocated alongside GMCA investment to drive LEP delivery of the GM Economic Vision in the following crucial ways:

Delivery across Policy areas in line with the Vision - £250k

- 3.3 It is proposed that £250k is allocated to support capacity in research, policy and strategy to support the implementation of the GM Economic Vision along with supporting the city region's continuing response to Covid and the longer term approach to recovery.

- 3.4 This additional LEP capacity funding will continue to be used alongside GMCA funding to deliver the comprehensive management of the LEP, supporting the Chair and Board members in their roles, as well as enhancing the significant programme of support and activity to enable the LEP to drive forward its agenda in priority areas as outlined above. This will include implementation of key aspects of the GM Economic Vision as discussed at previous meetings.

- 3.5 Working with the GMCA and its partners, the LEP will drive an economic recovery that puts people first, embraces the benefits of diversity, rebalances inequalities, creates lasting resilience, supports the move to net zero carbon and rethinks productivity.

Promoting Greater Manchester's Economic Vision and Assets - £123.5k

- 3.6 Marketing Manchester and GMCA Communications have been collaborating on strategic and tactical communications activity to raise the profile of the GM Economic Vision, GM LIS and the GM International Strategy, to position Greater Manchester as a city-region that can support UK economic recovery and growth, while leading green growth and innovation and tackling inequalities

- 3.7 It is proposed that £123.5k is allocated to continue this approach with £100k for Marketing Manchester to deliver content creation and £23.5k for GMCA for the provision of a Senior Communications Officer.

- 3.8 See Annex A for further details on the programme to date and the proposed way forward in 2021/22.

Delivery of specific projects to take forward the agreed Yr 2 LIS implementation plan - £100k

- 3.9 It is proposed that the remainder of the strategic funding is allocated to support the agreed Yr 2 LIS implementation activity, in line with the GM Economic Vision and shaped by Board members in their respective LIS portfolio roles to help drive overall delivery.

LEP Oversight and Governance - £26.5k

3.10 In addition to this strategic work, it is proposed the following funds are allocated to support the LEP's role in oversight and governance. This includes:

- *GMCA: LEP Membership Review – £10k*
A comprehensive Board review is current being carried out to recruit new Board members to fill a number of vacant positions with a view to the fully refreshed Board being in place by April 2021. It is proposed that funding is allocated for 2021/22 should there be any further changes in Board membership
- *GMCA: Delivery of LEP Foresighting Group - £5k*
The Foresighting Group brings together senior representatives of the business community whose advice on key issues will help develop the LEP's long term thinking and implementation of the GM Strategy
- *Contribution to the LEP Network - £7k*
- *LEP contingency for ad hoc activity including expenses - £4.5k*

Annex A

Marketing Manchester and GMCA Strategic Communications for GM LEP: Activity Proposal for 2021/2022 Date: 24 February 2021

Background/Context

Marketing Manchester and GMCA Communications colleagues have been collaborating on strategic and tactical communications activity and in support of GM LEP and its aspirations for the Greater Manchester economy since September 2020. This work supports themes within the Greater Manchester Economic Vision, Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy and the Greater Manchester One Year International Strategy, to position Greater Manchester as a city-region that can support UK economic recovery and growth, while leading green growth and innovation and tackling inequalities. It also follows on from the LEP Communications plan written by GMCA and approved in 2019. This communicated the LEP's implementation of the Greater Manchester Strategy, International Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy to local and national stakeholders with a comprehensive media, communications and engagement approach.

This work builds on the content curation project funded by the GM LEP, developed and successfully delivered by Marketing Manchester, which began in November 2017 to enhance Greater Manchester's reputation nationally and internationally through PR, content and communications activity. In time, the strategy is to develop and grow this area of work to enable it to become self funding.

This paper outlines proposed activity to continue communications programme in support of GM LEP for 12 months from April 2021 – March 2022.

Previous delivery

Between November 2017 and March 2020, Marketing Manchester provided content curation support on behalf of GM LEP, delivering event, content and PR activity generating coverage providing 600 million+ opportunities for Greater Manchester's key messages to be seen or heard, including 212+ individual content packages (KPI was 6m OTS, 112 pieces of individual content). Between September 2019 and September 2020 GMCA, delivered the LEP's communications plan, building the profile of the board through a variety of traditional and social media platforms. This work increased the reach of the LEP's messaging through exponential increases in social media audiences and ensured that LEP decisions and investments were highlighted to key audiences through a programme of external facing communications.

Beginning in September 2020, the global pandemic provided a revised focus on strategic and tactical communications activity in support of the themes within the Greater Manchester Economic Vision. In the past financial year a LEP steering group has overseen the work of MM in the delivery of content, digital and events, and GMCA in the delivery of media and comms.

Results to Date: Evaluation / Outputs Sep – February 2021

Marketing Manchester and GMCA communications colleagues started work on GM LEP Economic Proposition Strategic Communications activity in September 2020. In the six months to February, this work has delivered outputs including:

- **Website and thematic content development:** Delivery of a new Insights section for the GM LEP website, with development of a new form of content marketing to highlight priority themes and stories, including in depth articles, video storytelling and associated social media.
- **Content:** Planning and execution of a suite of strategic content for use and promotion via the GM LEP Insights section and other channels. To date, work has been done to deliver 20+ pieces of original content, including original Insight articles, social video production, and social media assets.
- **PR and media relations:** Proactive PR and media relations activity in support of the GM LEP Economic Strategic Communications has delivered in excess of 1 million+ Opportunities To See or hear communications messaging from GM LEP. Highlights include coverage in Tier 1 rated media (Sky News, Bloomberg Radio) media interviews with GM LEP leaders and coverage relating to the launch of the Greater Manchester Economic Vision, including management of a paid media partnership.
- **Partner relationships:** Building relationships with a broad range of partners – within the GMCA, the ‘GM family’ and external organisations. Established the LEP as a trusted ‘voice of business’ for the city-region, providing comments and supporting partner communications.
- **Greater Manchester Economic Vision launch:** Planning, promotion and delivery of the Greater Manchester Economic Vision launch, including the development of supporting content (Economic Vision film), PR and media relations activity – including a paid media partnership with North West Business Insider, Economic Vision [landing page](#), and digital marketing support (paid and organic social media).
- **Events:** Planning is underway for the promotion and hosting of further events featuring GM LEP speakers and content, including BBC Digital Cities, health and wellbeing, female entrepreneurs and Innovation GM.
- **Social Media:** Creation and management of social media posts via the GM LEP channels, including Twitter and LinkedIn. A key channel for the GM LEP, LinkedIn follower numbers have increased from circa 700 to 1,150 during this period, Twitter followers have grown to 2,828.

Proposal for 2021/22

Guided by a Steering Group (comprising GM LEP board members, GMCA Economic Lead and GC Chief Exec), Marketing Manchester and GMCA communications colleagues will deliver a rolling programme of strategic and tactical communications support for GM LEP, emphasising the role for Greater Manchester in enabling UK economic recovery and growth, the UK’s levelling up agenda, innovation, and green growth.

This work will be delivered in line with the aspirations and ambitions within the GM Economic Vision, Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy and Greater Manchester One Year International Strategy, and the forthcoming Greater Manchester Strategy.

Both organisations work together to deliver a strategic and tactical communications framework.

Marketing Manchester will lead on content, events and digital elements of this work, developing and delivering strategies to achieve standout for key sector narratives and overarching themes (see below: green growth, innovation, CSR, LIS sector ambitions, Business Recovery).

GMCA communications colleagues will lead the media relations and public affairs elements of this activity, with an emphasis on the profile of the GM LEP board and ensuring that Government / stakeholder engagement is supported by clear and consistent communications.

Key Messaging and Target Audience

The programme will support the GM LEP in communicating that Greater Manchester is perfectly positioned to work with Government to achieve UK economic growth and recovery, level up/address inequalities, as well as deliver green growth and innovation.

Activity will target senior UK Government officials and academic, scientific and business leaders both locally and nationally who can corroborate, support and amplify Greater Manchester's reputation in delivering economic activity unlocking prosperity. This will be achieved by delivering content, communications, PR and events aligned to the following **key themes and delivery activity**:

- **Green growth, COP26:** Activity building on GM's strengths and ambitions in delivering low carbon solutions to global challenges, including retrofitting properties, delivering a smart city and green transport solutions. This work would align with Greater Manchester's ambitions to make an impact at COP26.
- **Innovation GM:** Activity building on the Innovation GM initiative, demonstrating Greater Manchester's abilities to address inequalities and build prosperity where it is most needed by building and mentoring a supercluster of innovative businesses that can deliver jobs and opportunities.
- **Positioning in line with CSR asks**
- **LIS sector ambitions:** Building on the sector strength narratives published in the LIS and reinforced by the Greater Manchester Economic Vision, including health and social care innovation, digital and advanced materials.
- **Business Recovery:** Broadening awareness of GM LEP's work to support UK economic growth and recovery to increase confidence among the business community, signpost resource and celebrate success.

KPIS and Evaluation

- To deliver at least 50 packages of bespoke content creation, to include video, thought leadership, social media posts for own channels.
- 10 x thought leadership articles for GM LEP leaders; 4 x sector themed campaigns (to include news creation, PR, social media, content)
- Delivery of at least 5 GMLEP hosted events
- Opportunities to See (OTS) 20million
- 15% increase of social media followers to GMLEP channels including Twitter and LinkedIn

Delivery

Marketing Manchester's communications, events, digital and sector marketing colleagues and the GM LEP Senior Communications Officer will work alongside MIDAS Business development sector leads, and other colleagues across GC and industry partners to collaborate in the creation and delivery of:

- **A rolling communications plan** with immediate, medium and long-term outputs.

- **Reactive media/profile raising opportunities**, with provision of briefing materials and content to support GM LEP leaders in reinforcing Greater Manchester's economic strengths.
- **Develop and deliver GM LIS priority sector-specific PR and communications campaigns** (health and social care innovation, advanced materials, digital sector, low carbon), in collaboration with industry and academic partners. Targeting key UK national and sector media with a rolling programme of content highlighting Greater Manchester economic strengths, with messaging nuanced towards economic recovery. Led by Marketing Manchester.
- **Programme of GMLEP hosted events**. Led by Marketing Manchester
- **Media support to place GMLEP at the heart of GM's Innovation Story**. Led by Marketing Manchester.
- **Profile raising opportunities and supporting assets** for GM LEP board members; GMCA economic portfolio lead Elise Wilson; and Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham where appropriate. To include identifying speaking and Tier 1 media interview opportunities, drafting comment and opinion articles and capturing interviews for social media use. Led by GMCA Comms. Marketing Manchester (working with CA) will also support GM LEP board members with economic briefing notes for content and comment to be used via social media and in media interview opportunities.

Budget Proposal

- £100k - Marketing Manchester for provision of resources to deliver Content creation including: content curation and comms staffing resource; production of film editorial, collateral and marketing assets; digital development and maintenance of GMLEP website; social media; and delivery of the programme of events.
- £23.5k - GMCA for the provision of a Senior Communications Officer. (Previous funding agreed for this post ran from September – September and this role is currently funded until September 2021. The requested £23.5k would ensure the role continues until the end of the financial year 21/22 and bring all LEP comms funding in line with the financial year).