



GM LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SUBJECT: Greater Manchester International Strategy and Implementation Plan

DATE: 18th March 2021

FROM: Mike Blackburn, Chair of the International Marketing and Advisory Board

PURPOSE OF REPORT

In October 2020, Greater Manchester launched a one-year refreshed International Strategy which outlined the city region's ambitions on a global stage and responded to the challenges faced in-light of CV-19 and Brexit.

This report introduces the GM International Strategy Implementation, the work undertaken in drafting it and the key milestones and next steps over the strategy's one-year period.

The Implementation Plan has been presented to IMAB, the LIS Programme and Delivery Executive and The Growth Board in their most recent meetings.

A final draft of the full Implementation plan can be found in **Appendix.1**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEP Members are asked to:

- Note and comment on the implementation plan

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Working with diversity and ensuring equality is an essential component of the International Strategy, ensuring that any opportunities and benefits that emerge from international engagement such as jobs and growth are shared across all communities and groups in Greater Manchester.

International relations involve developing relationships and connections with people from a wide range backgrounds and cultures. The International Strategy recognises the value that diversity – gender, age, culture, religion and nationality can bring to this work. Understanding and valuing these differences can result in greater participation from our residents and also support us with expanding our collaborations across the world.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Climate change is an international concern. Cities across the world share the same challenges of carbon emissions, energy security, water management and sustainable transport. While cities are one of the main contributors to climate change, they are also centres of innovation where new models and integral solutions are developed and tested. The International Strategy will support Greater Manchester's climate change actions, advocating the creation of new and development of existing relationships to share our experiences and learn from the best in the world, working jointly to develop new products and models that will address the global climate challenge.

This ambition is reflected across a range of priority areas including Research and Innovation, City-region Diplomacy and Marketing and Promotion. Furthermore, the green economy is identified as one of Greater Manchester's key sectors, increasing trade and investment activity will actively support the growth and competitiveness of this sector.

This strategy also considers how Greater Manchester can better leverage digital connectivity as a key enabler for supporting us to connect with our international partners as an alternative to international travel.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Rebecca Drakeford
International Strategy Officer, GMCA
rebecca.drakeford@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Maria Gonzalez
Principal, International Relations, GMCA
maria.gonzalez@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2020 Greater Manchester published a refreshed International Strategy, jointly owned by the GMCA and GM LEP and drafted in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including Local Authorities, The Growth Company (MIDAS, Marketing Manchester), GM Chamber, Universities, the Airport etc.
- 1.2 The International Strategy sits as a key action in the Business Environment section of the LIS Implementation Plan. Our international connections, promoting our strengths and assets, attracting talent, driving international research partnerships, and increasing our export propensity across our frontier sectors are all important components to the successful delivery of the LIS.
- 1.3 The over-arching ambition of the International Strategy is to reaffirm the city region's commitment to international activity and engagement as well as respond to the emerging international challenges brought about due to the uncertainty of Brexit and COVID-19.
- 1.4 The objectives of this International Strategy refresh were twofold:
 - To review GM's long-term international vision and enhanced strategic framework, identifying new and continued strategic objectives that supports the delivery of Greater Manchester's long-term ambitions in-light of new challenges and opportunities.
 - Address the immediate and emerging issues brought about by COVID-19 and any emerging challenges and opportunities from the UK's new relationships with the EU.
- 1.5 The current International Strategy takes on a 12 Month time frame, in line with the publication of the Greater Manchester One Year Living with COVID plan. A refresh of this strategy will be considered again in Autumn 2021, in-line with the expected refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and as more details emerge on national governments future UK foreign policy, including the delayed trade and investment strategies.

2. Wider Context

- 2.1 The pandemic has caused significant challenges locally including creating unimaginable difficulties for our key international stakeholders and delivery partners who help drive the priorities of our international strategy.
- 2.2 In addition to the changes brought about by the pandemic, the new context we find ourselves in today, locally, nationally, and internationally is very different to just a year ago:
 - **Brexit** - The UK has now left the European Union with significant impacts being reported by firm in the region particularly in relation to VAT and documentation which is disrupting day-to-day business and regional exports. It is believed that the true implications of Brexit are delayed due to the pandemic.

- **Global Britain** - The UK's departure from the EU has seen momentum build behind UK governments new approach to international policy. Global Britain focuses on the UK's role as a force for good and shifts its attention away from Europe towards the US, the Commonwealth and high-growth emerging markets.
- **Role of Cities in International Diplomacy** – There is growing recognition from UK Government of the important role city regions can play in supporting wider UK ambitions overseas. This role is arguably recognised more overseas and the GMCA have seen a noticeable increase in meeting and activity requests from other cities but other nations wishing to work directly with Greater Manchester.

2.3 The increased profile of Mayoral Combined Authorities, Brexit, the rapid adoption of digital tools in international diplomacy and a new phase of UK international policy are all influencing the way cities like GM can engage with the rest of the world. It is vital that despite the challenges we face, GM must continue to respond to opportunities as they emerge, under the framework of the refreshed International Strategy, recognising the opportunities international engagement present for supporting our economic recovery and delivering our wider economic vision.

3. Implementation Plan

- 3.1 To support the delivery of GM's one-year International Strategy and to ensure coordination of activity, a one-year Implementation Plan has been drafted in consultation with the city region's key international stakeholders such as The Growth Company (including Marketing Manchester and MIDAS), Department for International Trade, the Universities, Manchester Airport as well as Local Authorities.
- 3.2 The Implementation Plan takes the 46 strategic objectives identified in the GM International Strategy and breaks them down in to 92 clear and monitorable actions. These actions, developed in close consultation with relevant partners aim to capture existing activity, work programmes and campaigns that support the strategy's objectives as well as capture new activity required to address gaps and help better coordinate delivery.
- 3.3 Each action has been allocated an owner organisation who is responsible for ensuring its delivery and feeding back on progress at a 6- and 12-month period.
- 3.4 The plan takes on the form of a live document, it will be regularly updated over the course of the strategy period to capture any new and relevant work activity as well as progress and emerging challenges. Capturing detail in this way will also ensure a more efficient refresh later in the year.
- 3.5 To ensure the Implementation Plan is closely aligned to GM's wider strategy portfolio, the Strategic Objectives have been clearly mapped against those in both the Greater Manchester Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy.

4. Reporting and Monitoring

- 4.1 At the end of the strategy period (September 2021), a final evaluation on progress will be reported in to IMAB, Growth Board, the LEP and then to the Combined Authority.
- 4.2 The International Strategy will look to be refreshed again in Autumn 2021 in line with the Greater Manchester Strategy and will take on a similar long-term time frame.

5. **Conclusions**

- 5.1 The full implementation plan can be found attached in **Appendix 1** for your reference.
- 5.2 A summary of the GMCA International activity for the next few months can be found in **Appendix 2**

Appendix 1. International Strategy Implementation Plan

Separate spreadsheet

Appendix 2. GMCA Planned International Priorities and Activity – 2020/2021

Following the launch of the International Strategy in October, the GMCA received a positive response from diplomatic missions, foreign Ambassadors, Mayors, and senior officials from global city regions. This engagement presented a timely opportunity to pursue conversations with our priority markets as identified in the strategy.

Through this international engagement it has come to light that some European countries are investing significantly in their bilateral relationship with the UK post Brexit. Examples of this include Spain, Ireland and Turkey opening consulates in Manchester. The growing international presence in the region puts GM in a strong position to drive international activity and capitalise on the opportunities that may emerge.

This appendix provides IMAB with a summary of conversations the Mayor and International team are having with international markets and planned activity in coming months. In addition to GM engagements with India and China via the two special purpose vehicles – MIP and MCF - the team, supported by MIDAS and MM, is currently focused on the following activity:

1. Ireland – Greater Manchester – Liverpool City Region Partnership

Following Taoiseach Varadkar's visit to Manchester in 2019, a virtual meeting involving the now Tánaiste Leo Varadkar, the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney, Department for International Trade Minister Graham Stuart MP, Irish Ambassador Adrian O'Neill, British Ambassador Paul Johnson, Mayor Steve Rotherham and Mayor Andy Burnham hosted a joint meeting in November 2020. This meeting coincided with the announcement from the Irish Government to open a new Consulate in Manchester.

All three parties agreed to work in partnership under three pillars – Trade and Investment, Research and Innovation and People and Culture links. During the meeting it was agreed a Task Group would be established to oversee activity.

The GMCA will continue to work with Liverpool, the British Embassy in Dublin, DIT, MIDAS and MM to develop a program of activity for 2021 and plan a joint LCR-GM mission to Ireland in summer/autumn 2021.

2. Japan

In October the GMCA International team arranged a Japan-GM roundtable, co-hosted by the Ambassador of Japan and the Mayor, chaired by Jo Ahmed, Honorary Consul of Japan in Manchester. Attended by over 40 NW businesses the event received positive feedback from both the business community, DIT and the Embassy.

Following the event, a Japan-GM Steering Group chaired by Jo Ahmed has been established. The Group, that met for the first time in December, has agreed to initially focus the activities in three areas – raising awareness of the opportunities presented

by the UK/Japan Free Trade Agreement, the Olympic Games in Tokyo, city-to-city links with Osaka, GM-Japan air connectivity and a virtual mission to GM for Japanese Companies.

A GM-Japan Steering Group has since been formed as a follow up action to the meeting. With representation from industry, business support, local and national government departments, the steering group will oversee the development of a GM-Japan workplan, ensuring coordination in activity. In the short term the group aims to host a joint GM-Japan FTA awareness event in March for GM businesses and host a virtual Manchester mission for Japanese companies based in London in May. The group will also oversee development of a wider GM-Japan strategy.

3. Germany

Germany is one of Greater Manchester's closest economic partners. Conversations with the British diplomatic missions in Berlin and Dusseldorf, the German Embassy in London and the Business German Association in the UK are ongoing. Richard Carter, former MD of BASF in the UK, and former member of the Mayor's Business Advisory Panel and the NWBLT is currently supporting the team with the development of a more coordinated strategy for proactively engaging with Germany to tap into opportunities that may emerge from their commitment to investing further in the UK post-Brexit.

Separate conversations are also ongoing with the Office of the Minister for Innovation, Digital and Energy of the North Rhine-Westphalia region in relation to the organisation of a series of events to encourage trade, investment, and exchange between the two regions. This activity comes as follow up to a positive virtual meeting the Minister and Mayor had in September 2020 where several areas of potential collaboration were discussed. It is worth pointing out that North Rhine-Westphalia is also a priority region for the Northern Powerhouse Department for International Trade team, with two post based in Dusseldorf appointed this year.

The GMCA are now working closely with MIDAS and the British German Association to better understand German clusters and sector opportunities with a view to development a GM-German workplan for 2021. The joint activity with North Rhine-Westphalia is due to take place in March and will focus on Cyber Security.

4. USA

In December 2020 the Mayor had a positive meeting with the Trade Commissioner to North America, Antony Phillipson. The Trade Commissioner not only praised GM's ambition and approach to City-region Diplomacy but also added that the quality of analysis that underpins our priority markets and the proposition of the international strategy is head and shoulders above any other UK city region.

The Mayor agreed to visit the US when normality is restored. In the meantime, MIDAS will continue to work closely with the teams across the Embassy and Consulate network to arrange joint activity.

5. Bangladesh

In addition to leveraging international activity to drive economic benefit and improve our global perception, the International Strategy also recognises the importance of people-to-people links and the role of our communities in building international connections.

The largest diaspora communities in GM are Irish, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Chinese. The city region has a long history of working with these communities and groups to showcase their diversity, for example through annual festivals such as Chinese New Year or the St Patrick's Day Parade. MIP and MCF also play a key role in engaging with our Chinese and Indian communities.

In 2019 the Mayor travelled to Bangladesh with a large GM delegation which was considered a great success. The visit helped secure a direct route from Manchester to Dhaka and led to the establishment of two sister city agreements with the Mayors of Sylhet and North Dhaka.

Following the mission, a Manchester Bangladesh Partnership has been established, chaired by Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Deputy Leader of Oldham Council. The group consists of representatives from the airport, universities, the British Council, the British and Bangladeshi High Commissions, Manchester-India Partnership, Manchester Museum and two private sector partners, BDP and Seamark. The group aims to work in partnership with stakeholders in GM and Bangladesh, in particular with Sylhet and Dhaka North, to further the bilateral relations and opportunities for collaboration on the areas of education, tourism, knowledge sharing and trading and investment. The Mayor has committed to a follow up visit to Bangladesh in 2022, possibly combined with Pakistan.

In addition to market specific activity the GMCA International Team continues to work with cities where well-established relationships have been made, including Barcelona, Lyon, Rotterdam, Oslo, and Ulsan, identifying opportunities for exchange. To help drive strategic city partnership moving forward, the GMCA International Team are also working to develop a City-region diplomacy plan to provide a clear framework to developing further city links. Wider priorities also include supporting the Northern Powerhouse Department for International Trade team with the development of a GM Export Plan, supporting the Mayor and Cllr Elise Wilson with any international activity, and working with the GMCA Environment Team and MM on planned engagement at and around COP26.