

MINUTES FROM THE GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD HELD AT 16:00 ON WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT THE ALBERT HALLS, BOLTON TOWN HALL

Board Members:

Lou Cordwell (In the Chair)

Mike Blackburn, Steve Connor, Amanda Halford, Chris Oglesby, Miles Rothbury, Richard Topliss & Cllr Elise Wilson

Also Present: Cllr Martyn Cox (Leader of Bolton Council)

Advisors:

Eamonn Boylan (GMCA), Simon Nokes (GMCA), David Rogerson (GMCA), Lee Teasdale (GMCA), John Wrathmell (GMCA), Sheona Southern (Marketing Manchester), Mark Hughes (The Growth Company), Jesse Garrick (BEIS), Gerry Brough (Bolton Council) and Clare Taylor-Russell (GMCA).

GM LEP/21/36 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Apologies were received from GM LEP Members Andy Burnham, Vimla Appadoo, Lorna Fitzsimons, Nancy Rothwell, Marilyn Comrie, Justin Kelly, Sir Richard Leese, Cllr Brenda Warrington and Vanda Murray.

GM LEP/21/37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

GM LEP/21/38 MINUTES OF MEETING OF 20 APRIL 2021 AND SUMMARY OF SUMMER DISCUSSIONS

The Board considered the minutes of the previous meeting of 20th April 2021.

The Board were advised that the draft of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) would be distributed round in October for feedback.

RESOLVED: /

1. That the Board agrees the minutes of 20th April 2021 as a true and correct record of the meeting.

DISTRICT FOCUS

GM LEP/21/39 GM LEP – BOLTON UPDATE & DISCUSSION

Martyn Cox (Leader of Bolton Council) and Gerry Brough (Director of Place Development, Bolton Council) were invited to update the Board on work taking place to regenerate Bolton town centre as well as its outlying conurbations. Points highlighted included:

- The last 18 months had seen the need for a considerable level of direct assistance to be provided to businesses within the Bolton area. This included the distribution of over 4,770 business grants to provide support during the pandemic. The Business Support team continues to provide advice to concerned businesses, including a close relationship with retailers based in Bolton town centre with Bolton Business Connect providing an online portal that promoted the use of local supply chains and contractors.
- The importance of the skills agenda was highlighted with the provision of adult re-training opportunities being paramount to this.
- To encourage footfall in the town centre, support had been provided to ensure the safe re-opening of the high street. This included the development of a recovery plan, supporting outside dining, and awareness raising communication programmes.
- In terms of town centre regeneration plans. Monies had been secured through the towns fund. This was being used to aid the delivery of four major regeneration projects: the business innovation hub conversion of the Wellsprings Building; the refurbishment of the gallery & central library; a public realm scheme based around Cheadle Square and the residential redevelopment of the old bus station interchange, following the TfGM supported development of the new interchange; and finally, the refurbishment/upgrading of the Bolton Market Hall.
- This would complement a mixed used redevelopment of Farnworth Market Precinct and the proposed redevelopment of Crompton Place in Bolton town centre and the building of Bolton School of Medical Sciences on land adjacent to Royal Bolton Hospital.
- Monies had been secured from the GM Brownfield Fund for the development of five sites – which would result in the building of 670 new homes in Bolton town centre.
- Regeneration plans were in place for each of the four major district centres outside of Bolton (Farnworth, Horwich, Little Lever & Westhoughton) – and delivery of these projects had already commenced. monies had been set aside for this, with potential further funds subject to capital receipts from sale of land elsewhere in the borough.

- Logistics North and plans around similar developments were referenced.

Comments and Questions

- Members enquired about Bolton Business Connect and the level of uptake amongst local businesses. It was advised that it had only been launched a matter of weeks ago, so data was still being gathered at the present time. The aim was that following some initial Council funding and input, it would become self-funded via sponsorship by local businesses.
- Members noted the importance of residential schemes to repopulate the town centre. A query was raised regarding the number of residential units now dedicated to the town centre. It was advised that there was a need to be residential for 4500 people in addition to the 1200 dwellings already extant in the town centre.
- Members enquired about how the impact of these initiatives will be measured and were advised that this would be included in an evaluation covering metrics such as investment, employment, business survival and skill levels.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the update on regeneration work taking place within Bolton and the wider district be received by the Board.

GM LEP DELIVERABLES

GM LEP/21/40 LEP ECONOMIC DASHBOARD MONITORING

An update was given to the Board on the dashboard refresh.

- The dashboard had been utilised throughout the pandemic to measure economic activity through key metrics – providing a ‘regular drumbeat’ on how the economy was performing and gradually recovering.
- The dashboard had now been updated to better ensure that the metrics being followed were as relevant as possible to the evolving context and therefore would remain useful to all partner organisations.
- In terms of labour market measures – the ceasing of the furlough scheme would require close monitoring in terms of its potential impact on some employment sectors. Claimant counts were coming down, though not as quickly as might be hoped. There was currently a scenario in which there were a high number of vacancies, yet also high unemployment numbers – this disparity was largely due to a mismatch in the skills required by the firms currently recruiting.

- Travel metrics were highlighted. Overall, the number of journeys being taken had returned to pre-pandemic levels. However, a smaller number of these were related to people commuting to work than previously, with more travel for leisure and other purposes being seen. Also, more of these journeys were being taken by car, with modes of public transport still being down.

Comments and Questions

- Members asked for further detail on travel patterns. It was advised that the traditional morning and evening peaks of commuter travel had flattened out quite considerably, with a more even spread of travel being seen throughout the whole day.
- Members enquired how the dashboard metrics related to wider GM targets. It was advised that, as part of the refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy, an outcome framework was being developed that would align metrics and outcomes.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the update on the Economic Dashboard metrics and the recent refresh be noted by the Board.

GM LEP/21/41 LEP ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

A report was provided that updated on the 2021/22 Annual Delivery Plan, which set out the key activities that would help GM LEP realise its strategic ambitions with a focus on the GM Economic Vision over the period to March 2022 and beyond.

The updated ESG framework was highlighted, which had built upon the suggestions raised in previous conversations. Approval was sought from members for the included workstreams.

The Plan included a Deliverables Dashboard including a range of metrics and milestones to measure progress in achieving the deliverables.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board approves the updated ESG framework and the choice of UN SDGs.
2. That the Board notes the updated LEP Economic Monitoring Dashboard.
3. That the Board approves the draft LEP Deliverables Dashboard.

4. That the Board approves the appointment of Vimla Appadoo as LEP Diversity Champion.

STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE

GM LEP/21/42 PLACES FOR EVERYONE UPDATE

A report was provided which updated members on the progress made on the Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021. Which was a joint development plan for nine of GM's local authorities.

- The consultation process for the Plan had now entered its last two weeks. The LEP was not a statutory consultee for the Plan but there was agreement that the views of the LEP would be a valuable addition.
- It was asked if the Board would be agreeable to delegating authority to the GM LEP Chair to sign off the Statement of Common Ground.

Comments and Questions

- Cllr Wilson advised that Stockport is not covered by the Places for Everyone plan but has developed its own vision which builds on the previous GM wide work.
- The importance of unlocking the potential of brownfield sites was emphasised by Members.
- Members welcomed the Plan and thanked officers for the level of work put into making the Plan a reality.

RESOLVED: /

1. That the Board notes the Places for Everyone update.
2. That the Board agrees that the draft Duty of Co-operate/Statement of Common Ground accurately represents the position of the GM Local Enterprise Partnership and authorises the Chair to sign the Statement of Common Ground on behalf of the GM LEP.

GM LEP/21/43 GM INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

A report was provided to the Board which outlined GM's planned approach to refreshing the Greater Manchester International Strategy and updated upon GM's most recent international engagements and a forward plan of activity.

- Members were reminded that last year had seen a temporary 12-month plan due to the levels of uncertainty at that time, however it was agreed that this year would see a full refresh of the Strategy.

- Input was currently being sought from leaders and partners across the city region.
- Ultimately, the overall vision for the strategy remained relatively similar reflecting Greater Manchester's key assets and international brand.

Comments and Questions

- Reference was made to the national context and the impact of any potential trade agreements. It was advised that the strategy aligned with the Government's Global Britain ambitions and would take account of any trade agreements as they arose.
- Further reference was made to relations with countries such as Ireland and Germany – with members asking how these relationships were inaugurated. It was explained that this varied depending on context with connections built up through established relationships often providing the helpful initial conversations.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board notes the outline of the GMCA's planned approach to refreshing Greater Manchester's International Strategy.
2. That the Board notes the update on GM's recent international engagements and its forward plan of activity.

GM LEP/21/44 MARKETING AND COMMS UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on the strategic communications activity undertaken on the GM LEP's behalf by Marketing Manchester and GMCA communications colleagues during August 2021.

This included a strategic marketing action plan which built upon learnings taken from recent months.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Board notes the update.
2. That Board Members be asked to support GM LEP strategic communications through their own channels.

GM LEP/21/45 GROWTH COMPANY BUSINESS SUPPORT, INTERNATIONAL AND MARKETING UPDATE

The Board was advised that the paper was evolving towards providing a preview function rather than as a review of recent activity.

- The Progress21 event was due to take place on 23rd September with around 4000 attendees expected at the event which would include 130 speakers and 180 exhibitors.
- The Growth Company was developing an Autumn business/investment recovery campaign, that would build upon the support offered by Progress21. It would respond to the continued needs of businesses to support recovery and the evolving priorities of the GMCA & LEP. Key themes would include Innovation, Net Zero, Skills and Inclusivity and frontier sectors, integrating these across promotions and attraction of investment to GM with support for business already in GM.
- The latest business survey was still seeing increasing business confidence, tempered however by continuing concerns around supply chains.

RESOLVED:/

1. That the Growth Company Business Support, International and Marketing Update be noted by GM LEP.

GOVERNANCE

GM LEP/21/46 BOARD MEMBER FEEDBACK ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

The Chair had attended an NP11 catch up last week – which had focussed upon how work across LEPs in the North could complement each other and maximise investible propositions across the North.

GM LEP/21/47 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Members were asked to feedback to officers with any suggestions for future agenda items.

Meeting closed at: 17:40

The next public meeting of the Board would take place on Tuesday 16th November 2021.