

MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, HELD ON FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2021

Present:

Bury:	Councillor Mary Whitby
Manchester:	Councillor Greg Stanton
Oldham:	Councillor George Hulme Councillor Sam Al-Hamdani (substitute)
Rochdale	Councillor Michael Holly (Chair) Councillor Raymond Dutton
Salford:	Councillor Jim King
Trafford	Councillors Barry Brotherton
Wigan:	Councillor Charles Rigby Councillor Debra Wailes (substitute)

In attendance:-

Andy Burnham, GM Mayor
Councillor Elise Wilson, GM Portfolio Lead for Economy and Business

Officers in attendance: -

GMCA	Joanne Heron, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
GMCA	John Wrathmell, Director of Strategy, Research & Economy GMCA
GMCA	Gemma Marsh, Director Education, Skills & Work, GMCA
GMCA	Sharon Kelly, Education, Skills & Work, GMCA
GMCA	Kevin Lee, GM Mayor's Office
GMCA	Oliver Fenton, Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA
GMCA	Paul Harris, Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA

EO&S21/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillors Michael Winstanley, Susan Haworth, Stephen Homer, Kate Butler and Becky Senior.

Apologies were also received and noted from, Simon Nokes, Executive Director, Policy and Strategy, GMCA and Karen Clarke, GMCA.

EO&S21/17 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

a. Face Coverings

The Chair reminded Members in respect of the new guidance on the wearing of face coverings.

b. Urgent Business

The Chair explained that he had allowed consideration of the Devolved Adult Education Budget item as urgent business in order for the Committee to as a supplement to the agenda.

This report will be considered at the upcoming GMCA meeting. I have allowed this item to be brought to this committee as urgent business to ensure that this Committee to is able to review and comment on the report prior to its consideration by the Combined Authority.

EO&S21/18 MEMBERSHIP OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

That the appointment of Councillor Samuel Rimmer (Bolton, Con) as a member of the committee as a replacement for Andrea Finney (Bolton, Con) for the remainder of the 2021-2022 municipal year, be noted.

EO&S21/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by any member in respect of any of the items on the agenda.

EO&S21/20 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIR FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Chair sought nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair to the Committee for the remainder of the 2021-2022 municipal year. In his absence, a nomination of Councillor Samuel Rimmer was moved and seconded.

There were no other nominations received.

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee be minded to approve the appointment of Councillor Samuel Rimmer as the Vice Chair to the Committee, subject to a discussion between the Chair and Councillor Rimmer.

EO&S21/21 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9th JULY 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee, held on 9th July 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the Economy, Business Growth and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on held on 9th July 2021, be approved as a correct record.

EO&S21/22 GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY REFRESH

The GM Mayor introduced a presentation which provided the Committee with an update on the work to date and progress made in the refreshing of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

A draft version of the Greater Manchester Strategy – A good place for all, was appended to the report. It was noted that the draft strategy’s vision identifies Greater Manchester as a great place to grow up, get on and grow old; a great place to invest, do business, visit and study.

The report highlighted that the strapline of “Good Lives For All” had been included in response to and demonstrating the commitment to deliver on the Independent Inequalities Commission and the Build Back Fairer reports with Greater Manchester seeking to support all residents to achieve their vision of a good life.

Members noted that in developing the draft strategy, the draft text positions Greater Manchester to be a greener, fairer and more prosperous city-region, delivered through our unique and distinctive neighbourhoods, towns and cities, coming together in a vibrant successful Greater Manchester. The strategy sets out shared outcomes and commitments to be attained over the period of the strategy and are underpinned by collective ways of working.

The report explained that the draft strategy provides a ten-year vision and direction of travel for Greater Manchester, leading our recovery and renewal as the city-region comes out of the pandemic and learns to live with the ongoing implications. Members noted that the Strategy will be accompanied by a three-year Delivery Plan, which will initially capture those specific programmes of activity being delivered which support the shared outcomes and commitments in the Strategy, with a proposition for the further development of a more comprehensive delivery planning process.

It was noted that in respect of progress monitoring, a basket of measures, will be included, some of which will be monitored, some targeted, and some assurance measures around the adoption and embedding of our ways of working. The performance framework will draw on a range of data and intelligence sources, and will include community insight, as a mechanism to ensure our interventions are responsive to the lived experience of Greater Manchester’s residents. For the first time, the new performance framework will also include a few measures to be targeted at neighbourhood or community level and will introduce minimum standard approaches – below which would trigger a policy review and response.

The following points were made:-

- It was suggested that greener can be a catalyst for a fairer society where a more affordable public transport system can become a real alternative to the car. Better, more energy efficient housing will lower energy bills. Some GM districts are currently developing low carbon homes for social rent.
- Retrofitting properties will improve homes, reduce energy costs and create jobs.

- A target for zero carbon GM by 2038 is in place.
- It was noted that the first tranche of bus franchises have been advertised for expressions of interest. The process is also to be linked to the “Good Employment Charter”. A greener, more affordable public transport system will help to sustain and grow the economy in Greater Manchester.
- The upcoming implementation of the GM Clean Air Zone will enable for GM to be cleaner and greener. It was noted that the government has provided £120 million support to transport industries. Work was continuing to support the compliance for vans in order to balance up greener and fairer.
- A Member asked what powers members have to ensure new build properties are carbon free in the future. In response, it was noted that this matter was included as part of the planning framework and new planning policy within Places for Everyone, which will cover 9 of the 10 GM districts. A date of 2028 will seek for all properties to be zero carbon. This policy proposal will be submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2022.
- A Member highlighted the potential impact on HGV companies that may struggle financially to convert their vehicles to comply with the new Clean Air Zone regulations. The member enquired if there was any funding to support HGV operators to change or retrofit existing vehicles. In response, it was noted that the GM Growth Company has established a clean air service to provide support to companies. In addition, it was noted that new or more efficient vehicles will provide longer-term financial savings for companies. The establishment of a Clean Air Zone is a legal mandate from Government, and GM will try and support businesses through the transition. The Mayor asked the Member to provide information in respect of a local issue so that he could follow it up.
- A suggestion was made to explore how larger HGV operators may be able to support smaller businesses.
- A Member highlighted that the strategy needs to be flexible to be able to adapt to emerging green technology and infrastructure.
- The early adoption of greener skills on the journey to the zero carbon by 2038 will enhance opportunities for businesses.
- A Member noted that given the level of elite sporting and arts venues across Greater Manchester, reference to this should be referenced in the Strategy.
- A member commented that under climate change, water shortages will be more likely. The Member also highlighted concerns on the behaviour of utility companies and the impact infrastructure failure may have on liveability. In response, it was noted that the resilience of energy systems was important. Members noted that GM is the first region in the UK to map energy generation, storage and transmission. This work will provide a street by street picture of energy supply in districts and will provide a picture of where any gaps may be.
- The Mayor highlighted the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) programme in Stockport as an example of good liveability, where zero carbon transport is linked to zero carbon housing.
- It was noted that Electricity NW is supportive of the 2038 target. The Mayor also noted that the work of HyNet North West which will produce, store and distribute hydrogen across the region and could be a big step towards carbon neutrality.

- A Member suggested that modular nuclear reactors may be a way forward to address energy gaps in the City Region. The Mayor noted that this proposal was raised at the recent COP26 event, but that while a range of zero-carbon energy generation should be considered, he would need persuading on the siting and safety of this method of energy generation.
- A Member welcomed the levelling up plans within Greater Manchester to address the north and south differences. In response, Members noted the benefits of the Northern Gateway to generate economic growth in and around the area where it is located.
- A member asked how much of the retrofitting works will be undertaken, without the support from Government, in order to meet GM's targets. In response, it was noted that a retrofit taskforce has been established to look at retrofitting and a process is already underway for public buildings and also social housing. Net Zero North West have calculated that retrofitting could create 80,000 green jobs in the city region.
- A Member asked what the GM Pension Fund can do to support investment into low carbon areas.
- Councillor Wilson highlighted that the GMS is a strategy for the whole city region. The delivery of the strategy through neighbourhoods will drive GM ambitions. Local level measures and data can help make an impact on challenges and opportunities to make tangible differences.
- A Member asked if there was anything further that can be done to encourage residents to take up green energy plans. In response, the current challenges facing energy suppliers was noted, and the need to consider the issue of energy top ups from non-sustainable energy sources before wider promotion is undertaken.
- A partnership between the GMCA and Octopus Energy has been announced.
- An overview of the Stockport MDC was provided which explained the location, the development of an intergenerational community and transport links, which will include the potential for Metrolink and enhanced BeeNetwork active travel routes. Where home improvements are being undertaken, advice will be available to help home owners and businesses can include de-carbonising measures.
- The impact of the Integrated Rail Plan and changes to Northern Powerhouse Rail was highlighted and a Member asked if the GMS needed to be updated to include these changes. In response, the Mayor highlighted that Government's decision was the wrong solution and that a separate East-West railway line to serve Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool was needed. The proposed overground HS2 arrangements in at Manchester Piccadilly were being challenged. Transport for the North had identified that the as the best and preferred solution for HS2 in that area would for an underground approach. Discussions were continuing with Government in relation to developing funding options through land value capture.

RESOLVED/-

That the draft Greater Manchester Strategy text and the proposed approach to the development of the supporting delivery plan, be noted.

EO&S21/23 GROWTH AND PROSPERITY THROUGH DECARBONISATION

Councillor Elise Williams, Lead Member for Economy and Business, introduced a presentation which informed the Committee on growth and prosperity through decarbonisation.

The presentation reiterated some of the discussion from the previous GMS item, in particular the priorities of the Strategy to :-

- a) create a carbon neutral Greater Manchester by 2038, with better air quality and natural environment;
- b) realise the opportunities from our world-class growth and innovation assets, driven by our Local Growth Plans / Industrial Strategy to open up opportunities in all parts of the city-region and
- c) to support the creation of better jobs and good employment that has a purpose beyond growing shareholder value, utilising the opportunity to positively impact on our communities.

The presentation set out the 2038 mission, outlined industry backed science-based targets and provided examples of action that had been undertaken, particularly in relation to GM Growth Company support to green sector companies, retrofitting programmes and highlighted the role of a carbon neutral transport system.

The following points were made:-

- The potential of bus franchising in GM will not only enable greener public transport but also opportunities for business generation in Greater Manchester.
- Green efficiencies and links to digitalisation requires processes to keep people and data safe online.
- A Member welcomed the report and noted the progress made.
- A Member highlighted the gaps in supply for charging points for electric vehicles and suggested that this will challenge the progress towards net zero travel. In response, it was noted that there is a plan in place to deliver support for electric vehicles. A Member noted that bus franchising and other transport modes need to be more attractive for people to reduce car usage and that investment in infrastructure required a long term plan.

RESOLVED/-

That the presentation be received and noted with thanks.

EO&S21/24 YOUNG PERSONS' GUARANTEE

The Chair explained that this item will be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee.

EO&S21/25 DEVOLVED ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET - PROPOSED PRIORITIES AND APPROACH FOR 2022/2023 ONWARDS

Members received a report and presentation which provided an overview of the progress against the planned priorities since the inception of GM's devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) programme.

An outline of the proposed process for continuing plan-led grant funding agreements and extensions to the procured contracts for 2022/2023 (academic year) was presented, together with an outline of the proposed refreshed objectives for the Adult Education Programme, in preparation for implementation from 2022/2023 (academic year).

Members noted that the final recommendations will be published at the upcoming meeting of the GM Combined Authority on 17 December 2021.

The following points were made:-

- The positive impact of devolution has allowed for GM to work with a concentrated group of skills providers.
- Better collaborative working has helped bring programmes together, such as the Working Well programme.
- Work taking place to enable residents to understand those offers available, for 2022/2023.
- A Member welcomed the work to support residents with high needs and disabilities to lead independent lives. The Member enquired if this would also allow support for employment.
- A Member asked if work would take place to enable skilled refugees to be able to use their expertise transferable in the UK. In response, any assessment will require an understanding of attainment and where there may be gaps, the individual may be offered appropriate training.
- The Chair welcomed opportunities for life-long learning.
- Following an enquiry from a Member, officer noted that some community learning can be accessed for individual training needs.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the GM Skills Team be thanked for their work on this initiative.
2. That the information contained within the presentation, including progress and impact of the devolved AEB, arrangements for 2022/2023 (academic year) onwards and refresh of the AEB objectives, be supported.

EO&S21/26 REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS

Members are asked to note and comment on the GMCA Register of Key Decisions for the period 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022.

RESOLVED/-

That the register of key decisions be noted.

EO&S21/27 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

Members considered the committee work programme for the 2021-2022 municipal year.

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

EO&S21/28 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED/-

That the future programme of meetings, as set out below, be noted:-

Friday 14 January 2022, Friday 4 February 2022, Friday 11 March 2022.

All meetings will commence from 10:30 am.

EO&S21/29 SEASONAL MESSAGE

The Chair wished Members and Officers a merry Christmas and a happy, safe and healthy 2022. Those sentiments were reciprocated.