

GM BUSINESS BOARD (LEP)

SUBJECT: GC: Business Support, International and Marketing Update

DATE: 24th January 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, latest activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Mark Hughes MBE – Group Chief Executive, The Growth Company
Mark.Hughes@growthco.uk

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 LEP. 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:

0

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

GC Business Survey. 193 responses 5 December 2022 to 6 January 2023 (lower due to holiday period). Previous month's results in brackets. Broadly representative of the GM business base, but for an over-representation of SMEs, and manufacturing and DCT businesses, and under-representation of logistics, tourism and hospitality businesses.

- **Sales and profits.** 21% (vs 23% previously) of firms reported that they experienced an increase in sales in the last month, and 62% expect profits to increase (vs 64%, and similar to Jan/Feb 2022). Just 5% (vs 4%) expect profits to decrease.
- **Investment.** 50% (vs 41%) of firms expect to increase Capex spend in the year ahead. 54% (vs 50%) of firms expect to increase their allocation towards investing in workforce development and skills, innovation (51% vs 51%), and digital transformation (44% vs 39%).
- **Impacts.** The main three impacts facing firms are rising costs (36% vs 34% previously), supply chain issues (22% vs 19%), and cashflow issues (20% vs 19%). The hospitality, tourism, and sport, and other service activities were most likely to report decreased sales.
- **Recruitment.** 23% (vs 27% previously) of firms are currently recruiting, and 13% (vs 21%) said they had difficulties recruiting. The main occupational groups recruiting are for customer facing roles (41% vs 46%), managerial (12% vs 18%), and others not listed (22% vs 31%).
- **Workforce skill gaps.** 54% (vs 49%) of firms said that their workforce skills are only 'partly' at the level to meet their objectives. Principal technical gaps are: specialist skills (30%), knowledge of products/services (11%), and solving complex problems (11%). The main people and personal gaps are: sales skills (18%), managing or motivating staff (12%), and team working (12%).

Research, development and innovation

- **Innovation activity.** 30% (32% previously) new / significantly improved services, 23% (25%) of firms had introduced new / significantly improved goods, 26% (24%) invested in new organisational procedures and systems, and 24% (22%) had invested in advanced R&D activity.
- **Digital innovation.** 6% (vs 10%) 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 46% (vs 34%) said staff within their own business, 19% (vs 21%) said clients / customers; and 10% (vs 14%) said universities or other higher education institutions.

Social value and good employment practices

Now asks approach to social value, including the extent to which:

- **Guarantee at least 16 hours of work per week for employees.** 61% (57% previously) said this currently applies, 15% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Pay the Real Living Wage** (currently £10.90 in GM). 59% (57%) said this currently applies, and 17% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Offer flexible working options to employees.** 42% (44%) said this currently applies, and 24% said they were likely to include in future.
- **Actively look to increase the diversity of the workforce** (recruitment/ progression practices). 42% (37%) said this currently applies, and 29% said they were likely to include in future.

Other challenges and future support needs

- **Main challenges.** Access to new domestic sales opportunities (49% vs 53% previously), developing the business model (42% vs 45%), managing overall business finances (41% vs 44%), developing new products/services (32% vs 37%), and general workforce and skills (25% vs 29%).
- **Future support needs.** Innovation (40% vs 35%), planning (40% vs 48%), marketing (38% vs 38%), workforce development (33% vs 37%), and financial advice (26% vs 28%). 14% (vs 17%) are looking for extra support to manage their environmental impact.
- **International trade.** 10% (vs 10%) of firms undertaking overseas trade said they were looking to expand in current markets. Just over 10% of SMEs (10-49) are looking to expand in new markets and mainly those from retail and wholesale, manufacturing, and life sciences industries.

Insolvency

- **The number of registered company insolvencies** in England & Wales in November 2022 was 2,029: 21% higher than in the same month in the previous year (1,676 in November 2021), and 35% higher than the number registered 3yrs previously (pre-pandemic; 1,505 in November 2019).
- **Numbers for other types of company insolvencies**, there were 290 compulsory liquidations in November 2022, (5 times November 2021 and 7% higher than in November 2019). Numbers of compulsory liquidations have increased from historical lows seen during the pandemic, partly as a result of an increase in winding-up petitions presented by HMRC.
- **Insolvency risk.** Data for November shows that 11.6% (11.8% October, 11.5% September) have a 1-3 flag risk rating, compared with 10.8% nationally (10.9% last month). Insolvency risk in GM is higher in larger businesses than nationally (49+ employees). Insolvency risk in GM are up 1.5 % points vs levels pre-covid (April 2020), +1.4%pts nationally.

Business Organisations

- **GM Chamber Survey (Q4-2022, published December 2022).** The latest Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) shows that sales to UK customers increased in the services and construction sectors, while it declined dramatically in the manufacturing sector. Sales in the manufacturing sector remain well below the same period last year. Within the services sector, B2B businesses report stability while B2C businesses have seen a quarterly increase in sales. The international trade picture is in sharp contrast to the domestic with export sales showing a further decline in this quarter. The survey results also showed further weakening in other indicators such as cash positions, investment intentions and business confidence.
- **FSB Small Business Index (Q3-2022, published December 2022).** The latest Small Business Index report (SBI) saw its second consecutive quarter in which the Index has stood in negative territory across all regions. The SBI deteriorated across most major industries in Q3-2022. The sharpest contraction was seen amongst hospitality, largely due to the consumers cutting back on discretionary spending. The net balance of small businesses reporting an increase in operating costs stood at 85% in Q3. This followed a net balance of 86% in Q2, marking the first quarter since Q1 2021 in which this reading has fallen. Utilities represented the most commonly cited cause of rising costs amongst businesses in Q3.

COMMISSIONING/FUNDING UPDATES

Accommodation Business Improvement District. Voted for with a 4:1 ratio on the 8th November. New delivery company to be ready to start on April 1st 2023 and will be the largest (in revenue) BID outside London. Nominations for private sector Board members have taken place, and elections are scheduled for early January. Annual income expected to be in the region of £3.5m.

DCMS Create Growth and BEIS Made Smarter have both recently been approved or opportunity to increase funding outlined below.

GM Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). GC Business Growth Hub is delivering a programme of support centred on the cost of doing business – “Here for Business” resourced from the 2022/23 GM SPF.

GM Innovation Accelerator Pilot. GC submitted 4 projects (including Energy Innovation Agency) into the GM Innovation Accelerator Pilot (£13 million). Funding decisions are expected end January with a two-year delivery until March 2025.

Ethnic Minority Communities’ engagement. Appendix 1 sets out our initial response to the Time to Change report by the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship. Our initial review shows good engagement with different ethnic minority communities and where future work is required to assess the relative comparative impacts of each of these.

BUSINESS SUPPORT & FINANCE

Opportunities Event. GC BGH has secured space at the Manchester Central Convention Complex on 16th May for an all day, large-scale event, centre on harnessing current/future market opportunities available to GM businesses on a local, national, and international scale. The event

aims to inspire, educate and link businesses to the opportunities available in local and national public procurement, private sector supply chains, and internationalisation along with providing practical advice on how best to leverage these opportunities within specific areas.

The day will comprise of a series of high-profile keynote speakers in addition to a series of workshops and roundtable panel discussions. The Exchange Hall will form the main exhibition space, though we intend to use the opening foyer to create a pop-up marketplace. Distinct zones within the exhibition space will represent key areas such as local and national public procurement, business support, key sectors such as Health Innovation, Advanced Manufacturing, Carbon Reduction, the Green Economy and more. In-person business support will also be on hand throughout the day, showcasing the wrap-around services which GC Business Growth Hub and wider providers can provide. Further updates will be provided and LEP input and participation is hugely welcomed.

Cost of Doing Business – #HereForBusiness Campaign. BGH continue to deliver a suite of activity across GM alongside partners to support businesses in responding to the increased costs of doing business. 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. These themes are being delivered via webinars, workshops, drop-in clinics, local in person LA events, and 121 support. Since the campaign launched in the Autumn, 844 businesses have been engaged. In parallel the Growth Hub will also continue its focus on businesses with growth ambition to ensure these opportunities are realised within the context of supply side constraints.

Good Employment Charter. Over 1,300 employers are now engaged with the Charter Unit, c.450 Supporters and 76 Full Members. 20 employers are currently seeking to progress to full membership. The Charter continues to deliver specific content and support to employers and have developed a useful resource on Leadership for Good Employment working in partnership with Gillian Drakeford ex-CEO of IKEA UK. The Charter is now focused on proactive engagement with sectors where low paid and insecure work is most prevalent. Specific engagement work will be developed with the Health and Social Care Sectors.

The Good Employment Awards for 2023 have now been announced and nominations are invited. Submissions for entry close February 3rd. The Charter will also hold a GM Good Employment Week in June (19th – 24th), which will focus on informing and empowering employees about good employment and informing them of what good should look like.

Social Value Support. January and February will see the introduction of new cohort programmes and workshops that cover; Understanding Social Value, legal governance re: Social Enterprise, VCSE/private sector partnership panel event and the BGH Match – Value in Volunteering Network event, this alongside Bespoke Bids tender readiness workshops now provide a suite of vehicles to support organisations on various themes under the banner of social value.

Skills for Growth SME Support. The programme continues to be on track with all 5 critical success factors at 100% or above. End of Dec 22 – 6,532 businesses engaged, 2,997 SME Productivity Plans, 3,482 referrals to GM Bridge and Good Employment Charter, 210 new apprenticeships created, 7241 individual skills plans, and 1,569 completions claimed. We have also been granted a contract extension to deliver SfG through to the end of September 2023.

EnterprisingYou (EY). Up to the end of December 2022, the programme has seen 7,267 enquiries with 2,695 starts on programme (62% female and 38% male; 26% Ethnic Minorities & 22% are 50+). December saw EY host its first and most unique networking event specifically targeted at the GM self-employed community living and working with a disability, with 50 attending on the day. Growth for the programme overall has remained steady with 60% of completers reporting an increase in turnover, to 4.3m. Also, remaining steady overall - 85% of completers have reported maintaining their current turnover levels and 32% of completers have reported maintaining their pre-tax profit. Overall numbers of completers for December either reducing or no longer requiring benefits is 10%. Yvonne Sampson, Service Leader, featured in a January edition of Women House on BBC R4.

Innovation Service. Generated c. 816 business assists, 102 collaborations, 126 new to firm products and 66 new to market with total 286 new jobs created (since 2019). Programme collaborations continue between SMEs and GM Universities across technology areas including rapid prototyping, eco/environmental, advanced materials/chemistry, manufacturing, digital and creative

and AI/machine learning. The Innovation Accelerator ecosystem capacity funding project commenced in November as a pilot until March 2023. This short project will research GM's key ecosystem players/stakeholders/assets and customers and identify any emerging clusters/issues within the four frontier sectors via roundtable and focus group activity planned from January 2023.

Innovate UK EDGE. Year to date supported over 150 individual SMEs in the Northwest and attract £5m in external investment, creating over 150 new jobs. With half of these companies being designated as having "High Growth" potential (aspiration to innovate, bring in external investment and develop international markets). Innovate UK has signed an agreement to re-join the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), but this time as "International Partners", rather than Members (as previous).

The position around UK "association" of Horizon Europe still remains on hold pending the resolution of a number of matters (e.g. the Northern Ireland Protocol). However, the UK has a guarantee scheme in place for funding for UK elements of ongoing projects that have already been approved under the scheme.

Community Renewal Fund Start-up Support. Programme completed December 2022. Included support for the unemployed or underrepresented groups to become self-employed/start a business and involved a small kick starter grant. Supported 131 individuals against a target of 80, 101 businesses against a target of 120 and awarded a value of £111,046 vouchers to clients who received 1:1 support on web design, marketing, finance, branding etc.

Create Growth. The Create Growth programme (awarded in September 2022 and building on Creative Scaleup pilot) has now launched with an official press release from DCMS. Alongside delivery, mobilisation of the new programme continues, with recruitment of staff, launch of the new marketing campaign and a live tender for external delivery aspects of the programme. The programme will support creative industry SMEs through upskilling in IP, innovation, finance, leadership, and more, with a particular focus on investment readiness.

Green Economy. Focused on increasing the number of companies in the online marketplace. Participated in GM Green Summit, Net Zero NW and interviewed by the Times to raise the profile of GM Net Zero Activities. Achieved a total of 117 company profiles in the marketplace, 39 new sales opportunities have been shared with members, 622 engagements have been received through the website and social media platform and 263 searches of our marketplace. A new version of the Green Economy website launched in December which now includes an automated member sign up process so work has now begun to market the marketplace to new businesses. www.greeneconomy.co.uk

Journey to Net Zero. The ERDF Carbon Reduction contract had achieved 93% of Enterprises Supported and 42% of Carbon Saving against cumulative targets to date at December 2022 quarter end. A strategy is in place to accelerate the pace of recording carbon savings. Cohort 10 of the Journey to Net Zero programme will be commencing on 12th January 2023. Bee Net Zero reporting covering activity from January 2022 to date is 95 Enterprises Supported (46 of whom were JTNZ cohort programme delegates), 704 tonnes of carbon savings, £372,752 of Cost Savings, and 21 clients who had invested in Green Technologies.

Made Smarter. Delivery of the Made Smarter Adoption Programme for 2022/23 continues to perform well, with new client registrations improving and project funding on target.

BEIS has offered an additional £300k on top of the existing budget to the northwest. Whilst it will be difficult to take advantage of all the funding offered due to time constraints, a plan has been put forward for an additional £275k of which £217k has been approved to date. This will enable the northwest to fund an additional 10 projects that will account for the bulk of the extra funding, plus allow some additional marketing activity.

Business Lending. In the 9 months ending December 2022, GCBF had invested £954,000 in 16 GM businesses despite approvals being slow due to delays with RLS3 government backed guarantee accreditation process with BBB. WIP is £975k across 17 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.

Angel & Innovation Finance. GC Angels achieved its first realisation following a £100k investment in 2020 into a Salford tech start up, delivering a 30% return on capital and enabling the recycling of £100k of GM capital after a growth focused acquisition. Demand for innovation finance continues to be high across GM with GC Angels actively investing again following Business Rates support from GM. Two female founders received investments before the end of 2022 leveraging 3x private investment and another opportunity is in DD for completion in January with a 6x private investment leverage profile. Growing demand has increased the pipeline by 50% meaning capital support from Business Rates is likely to be quickly committed given unmet innovation demand. An indication of the response to the GM Innovation Accelerator submission is expected in February and may offer much needed capacity. The carrying value of the portfolio has increased to £2.9m, leveraging almost £20m of private capital support. Key discussions with BBB Regional Angel Programme for scale up investment capital continue.

INTERNATIONAL & MARKETING

Accommodation Business Improvement District (ABID). The outcome of the ABID ballot was announced on 8th November, with resounding support for the ABID, with a 4 to 1 ratio of voters in favour. Following a 4-week period of reflection, to allow for potential challenges, the process of setting up the new delivery body is underway, ready to start on April 1st 2023. Once operational, Manchester ABID will be the largest (in revenue) BID outside London. Nominations for private sector Board members have taken place, and elections are scheduled for early January. The new company is being registered and recruitment for 3 new core posts, including the ABID Manager, is underway. A programme of regular communications to levy payers has started. Media reaction has largely been positive, with wide coverage in trade and regional media.

SXSW 11-17 Mar 23. A Manchester 1 day take-over of UK House (DIT lead) in Austin, Texas has been agreed for Monday 13th March which will enable a full day of curated events and content to be delivered across the day focussed on music and tech. A music showcase on Monday 13th from a leading Manchester band is in the process of being finalised. A panel session for Weds 15th featuring Andy Burnham, Bev Craig, Kirk Watson, the Mayor of Austin and a music industry figure is being finalised. Planning of the wider diplomacy and investment programme development is underway as well as discussions with key partners.

MIPIM 14-17 Mar. Planning for the event is progressing well. 31 partners have now joined the partnership from GM's private and public sector organisations, with additional partners in negotiation expected to close in February with a target of 60 partners. Speaker session submissions from partners have been invited to be incorporate into the programme. The delegation will be led by Joanne Roney, Eamonn Boylan and Paul Dennett. The overarching theme is 'Generation Manchester' supported by 4 golden thread themes: Innovation, Green, Smart and Fairer.

Domestic Marketing

Christmas Campaign. Working in partnership with the Manchester BID/CityCo, MM delivered the annual Christmas campaign to drive awareness and increase footfall in the city centre, with a focus on the newly launched Festive Sundays. Headline stats were strong, with overall pageviews of 45K. The paid campaign generated 1.2million impressions, alongside an additional 162K impressions via organic social campaign activity.

JC Decaux Christmas campaign. Starting in mid-November, a Christmas short break campaign was live across key OOH sites throughout London. These in-kind OOH placements delivered 10.8 million impressions, to a value of £258K.

International Marketing

MM is currently developing a new website for Innovation Greater Manchester. Two campaigns have been created to support Bee Net Zero. A film is being produced to be showcased at CoTN. The video will feature assets from across the NP11 LEP areas, focusing on the opportunities and challenges of the following themes: Transport; Advanced Manufacturing; Digital, Health & Lifesciences; People, Trade and Global Place-making.

Ryanair Ireland Campaign. Continuing the Ryanair partnership that began pre-Covid, a short break campaign was delivered across Ireland from 3rd November. The 4-week paid media campaign generated 2.4million impressions and an average uplift in passenger bookings across the five Irish routes serviced by Ryanair into Manchester of 16.5%. Initial booking figures show that overall, the campaign delivered £261K of economic impact and a ROI of 12:1, but final booking results expected early Jan.

Travel Trade

ETOA's East & South-East Asia Marketplace. ETOA's East & South-East Asia virtual B2B event took place on 22 November, enabling MM to connect with 16 tour operators and travel agents from throughout the E and SE Asian region, focusing on sharing updates on what is new and upcoming in Greater Manchester in the coming years.

Dove Travels Fam Trip. Ashwani Gupta, Managing Director of Dove Travels, a large full-service travel agency and tour operator was hosted in Manchester for two nights in late November. His itinerary focussed on incentive product and generated an enquiry for Manchester City Football Club for 80 delegates.

Avanti Destinations – US FAM trip. In partnership with Avanti Destinations and AC Group, 10 agents were hosted on a FAM trip starting in Manchester in early December. Delegates included Avanti Destinations' top selling agent across the whole of the US, the COO of Avanti Destinations and the CEO of AC Group. The group stayed at the Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, experienced Chetham's Library, Manchester City Football Club, Spirit of Manchester Distillery, Manchester Taxi Tours and Scranchester Tours.

PR and Content. MM hosted and engaged with 30 travel media in November and December, resulting in 31 pieces of coverage. By the end of 2022, Greater Manchester had been recognised in four global accolades – in October, National Geographic listed Manchester in its [Best of the World 2023 list](#), alongside 25 global destinations, and in November Lonely Planet's [Best in Travel](#) listed Manchester as one of 30 must-visit destinations, alongside destinations like Sydney, Australia, and Lima, Peru. This was followed by [Conde Nast Traveler](#) US, and [Time Out](#), both naming the city as one of the best places to visit in the UK. Following a press release about the accolades, the story ran in outlets including BBC News (24.2m OTS), The Guardian (21.8m), Evening Standard (21.2m), and 14 other titles. At the end of 2022, total coverage generated was 1billion OTS.

Inward Investment Project Successes. Year to date, there have been 41 successful inward investment projects and 2,559 job creations. The project successes so far involve 10 HQ, 12 R&D and 3 Low carbon projects, which will create 161 apprenticeships. All projects so far are aligned with the Local Industrial Strategy with all job creations including salaries above the real living wage and 68% include salaries above £35,000.

Recent successes:

- **Canopius** – 80 jobs – Global Re-Insurer has announced the launch of the 'Canopius Tech & Data Hub' in Manchester, UK. This project was mobile between city-regions. The Hub will begin operating early next year and will ensure that that company is developing the best possible solutions within the data and technology sphere, while also supporting its strategic goals to become a "future-focused" business.
- **Mason Advisory** – 44 jobs – IT tech security company growing their UK footprint in GM and moving to the city centre to be closer to their client base.
- **Concretene Ltd** – 30 jobs – Advanced construction materials development company. Nationwide Engineering Research & Development (NERD) have developed a graphene-based admixture that can significantly lower embodied carbon in concrete. An R&D base will be developed at The Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) in Manchester.
- **KPMG** – 20 jobs – The firm will build Ignition North, a new 25,000sq foot collaborative hub in Manchester designed to spark innovation and support digital transformation on the site, as well as redesigning its wider office space. The new centre will be home to KPMG's Ignition team. Along with technology experts from across KPMG, the Ignition team will support clients from the

start of an idea all the way through to the design, prototyping and development of solutions using a combination of methods, tools and technologies.

There have been 201 new projects added to the pipeline with 12,820 corresponding jobs. The volume of projects added YTD is slightly below figures to this time last year. The MIDAS pipeline currently shows a further 30 projects and 2,952 jobs with a strong-very strong chance of successfully closing this financial year. This includes 5 R&D projects and 7 HQ projects.

Financial & Profession Services:

- Financial Services Skills Commission Roundtable (1 December) - The Financial Services Skills Commission (FSSC) asked MIDAS to help coordinate a reskilling roundtable in Manchester with PwC. The event looked at skills opportunities and weaknesses in the Financial Services Sector.
- Currently working with Whitecap Consulting on the next iteration of the Manchester Fintech Review, which should be available for circulation end of Feb/Mar. This will be a core piece of collateral for future business development activities.
- As part of continuing work around the Kalifa review, MIDAS and West Yorkshire LEP are shortly due to launch a joint proposition. Instead of a physical launch event, this will now be a virtual and PR event taking place in Q4, targeting international Fintechs and DIT post.

Creative, Digital and Tech (CDT):

- 24 November – Disruptor North Conference, Leeds – MIDAS joined a panel session about taking your business global to an audience of 100-200 tech stakeholders, delegations from DIT were in the audience and joining senior representatives from DIT, NPH Tech company C-Suites.
- Extensive planning is taking place for the Mayoral visit to SXSW festival in March 2023 in conjunction with Marketing Manchester.

Life Sciences and Healthcare (LS):

- 11 November - Asia Summit on Global Health: MIDAS pitched to a fringe event of Hong Kong SME's representing the UK along with 4 other European countries. 12 companies attended and follow up meetings have been scheduled.
- Pro-Manchester Healthtech Conference: 12 December, in person event MIDAS attended and advised on local speakers for panel and attended for lead generation at Circle Square.
- Project Vial in visit – a large global life sciences company was hosted by MIDAS on 16 December, various introductions to the Mayor and the wider ecosystem were made and further discussions are ongoing re R&D projects.
- Work is underway to plan a roundtable with medtech companies with DIT Turkey in February.

Advanced Manufacturing and Materials (AM):

- A cross sector (AM, Life Science and FPS) mission to Texas and then New York took place at the beginning of November generating 4 strong inward investment opportunities for Advanced Manufacturing. These included an EV manufacturer and an Aerospace company, both looking to create over 100 high value jobs.
- A webinar on graphene and lightweighting materials is being planned for Jan/Feb for lead generation activities.

Manchester China Forum

- MCF was a key supporting organisation of the 5th China-UK Trade and Economic Forum held in London on 2nd November with over 300 senior representatives in attendance. Through MCF's collaboration with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce UK, the Forum was focused on the opportunities that levelling up and the net zero agenda will have to play in shaping UK-China commercial engagement looking forward.
- Following on from joint activity with Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) during 2022, MCF continues to strengthen ties with HKTDC and Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO). This includes MIDAS' Life Science sector team recent involvement in the Asia Summit on Global Health in November and the following roundtable for inward investment opportunities. MCF was also a supporting organisation for the "Dialogue with Chief Executive of Hong Kong" event in partnership with HKTDC. MCF is looking to involve the Director General of HKETO in its next Board meeting in early 2023 to explore the deepening of trade and investment links between GM and Hong Kong.

- MCF has successfully secured bid for funding from the British Embassy in China concerning the two city-region's collaboration on the green/low carbon agenda. MCF and Tianjin have agreed to organise a climate session to share experience, exchange knowledge, and explore trade and investment opportunities. The event is expected to be held in January/February 2023. This session will also serve as a base for future and further cooperation between the two cities in other key sectors.

Manchester India Partnership (MIP)

- MIP supported the Consulate General of India in Birmingham in their outreach for new Indian students in the GM region. A welcome reception was co-hosted with the Consulate, with ICICI Bank at the University of Salford on 16 November. There are 220 new students from India in the region across all GM universities.
- A multisector delegation from one of India's biggest Chambers of Commerce ASSOCHAM visited on 8 December to explore opportunities in GM. ASSOCHAM was hosted by MIP and MIDAS at Emirates Lancashire Cricket Club.
- High Commissioner to the UK: Vikram Doraiswami, will be visiting Greater Manchester on the 13th January 2023. MIP is arranging the itinerary including a mayoral visit, tours of significant Net zero, creative and digital sites as well as a dinner for local MPs and the High Commissioner.

Japan Steering Group

- A delegation of Osaka city officials, companies and universities are due to visit GM in January 2023. A Steering Group are working on a twin-track itinerary for the visit to meet the needs of the city officials and businesses, and to showcase GM and the Steering Group's wide-ranging partners.
- With a planned Mayoral visit to Osaka in Autumn 2023 the intention is to further the relationship and have the MoU's in place by this time. The Steering Group is keen to set in place a 3-year programme in the run up to Expo 2025 in Osaka. The recent sign-off of business rates funding for MIDAS' international partnerships programmes will enable this work to be set in train.