

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 25 October 2024

Subject: Greater Manchester One Network Connectivity Partner Procurement

Report of: Councillor Nick Peel, Portfolio Lead for GM Digital;
Tom Stannard, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for GM Digital

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out progress on GM One Network implementation and summarises the outcome of a tender process to extend One Network to include connectivity for sites that are not served by the GM Local Full Fibre Network.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the completion of the migration of c 1200 sites from legacy networks to the GM One Network across six organisations and the efforts of officers and commercial partners in its delivery.
2. Note the potential to leverage GM One Network to improve services and reduce costs across Greater Manchester's public sector including for connectivity, internet access, and other cloud services, and cyber security.
3. Approve the GMCA entering into the contract with Vodafone for GM One Network Connectivity Partner services valued at up to £2m to enable connectivity to more sites, creating an agreement that can be drawn on for the benefit of partners in GM One Network (at their cost); noting that orders under the contract will be subject to the governance set out in the report and decisions in accordance with the Constitution.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Phil Swan (GMCA), phil.swan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation	G	Having reliable and resilient connectivity in place ensures access to digital services in the even of a risk Having reliable and resilient connectivity will allow businesses to re locate or work from alternative locations
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity	G	Improves digital infrastructure whilst providing the potential to reduce duplication and cost across the GM Public Sector Improved connectivity to Traffic signals (circa 150) allows for improved SMART services at Traffic Signals Connectivity supports Urban Traffic Control equipment and provides access to manage and control traffic congestion Reduces on-going cost when compared to current services provided Provides connectivity to circa 150 Transport sites with potential to be expanded to other sites
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Equipment and capabilities that are more energy efficient than at present
Consumption and Production		

Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target
Newer equipment is more efficient than existing equipment.

Further Assessment(s):

Carbon Assessment

G Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR Negative impacts overall.
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Risk Management:

See section 6

Legal Considerations:

See sections 3, 4 and 5

Financial Consequences – Revenue and Capital

The overall cost of the initial financial commitment in this contract will be met from financial contributions from local authority partners including TfGM and Rochdale Council based on a cost apportionment model agreed with TfGM and Rochdale.

Any capital expenditure made by TfGM will be added to the Transport Capital Programme and the associated borrowing costs met by GMCA.

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background papers

- GM Digital Blueprint. GMCA Report March 2023.
- Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network Programme – GMCA Report January 2020.
- Greater Manchester LFFN Programme – Public Sector Building Upgrade – GMCA report December 2020.
- GM One Network Part A and Part B Report including the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement March 2022

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

Yes

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No.

Bee Network Committee

n/a

1 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Over recent years GMCA has worked with localities and TFGM to roll out fibre connectivity to c.1,600 sites used by the public sector across the city region. This programme was called the GM Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) and it will provide fibre connections to these sites until 2050, supported by Virgin Media O2. The programme was implemented successfully throughout the pandemic and has pushed fibre connectivity into new parts of Greater Manchester as well as to those sites. The work contributed to the city region moving from 5% gigabit connectivity in 2017 to over 90% in 2024, in line with Greater Manchester's strategic objectives.
- 1.2 GM One Network is an aligned initiative through which four localities plus GMCA and TFGM jointly procured services to utilise the LFFN fibre to create a shared next-generation wide area network. This programme is 98% complete with c. 1,200 sites connected in a 10 year commitment to a resilient shared service that is governed through a Collaboration Agreement approved by GMCA and supported by TFGM and Stockport, Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Councils.
- 1.3 Together, speeds to schools, community centres, fire stations, council's offices and many other facilities are being increased, often ten or even a hundred-fold, and placed on a more resilient footing; with £6.6M of savings or avoided alternative cost over a 10 year period, plus a £3.7M of social value that is benefitting communities and businesses across Greater Manchester. With UK data consumption estimated to increase by up to 8 fold by 2030 from today's figures, One Network has the ability to scale up to meet demand.
- 1.4 Importantly, One Network is expandable to other public sector user partners in with potential for further efficiency gains across Greater Manchester given that the core infrastructure is in place. The tender outlined in this report supports expansion and is part of ongoing work to enable both existing and potential new public sector partners in GM to connect additional sites that are not part of the LFFN.

2 COLLABORATIVE NETWORK PROCUREMENT

- 2.1 Every public sector organisation operates a “Wide Area Network” (WAN) so that users and computers in one location can communicate with users and computers in other locations.
- 2.2 These WAN services are often procured from major telecoms companies and include both infrastructure and services. Whilst the partners in One Network have migrated c.1200 sites from their individual networks onto One Network, there are a further 163 TfGM and 7 Rochdale Council sites that were not part of the LFFN programme and remain on legacy contracts that are due to expire. In addition, there are a further 1,415 TfGM Urban Traffic Control Sites that require 4G/5G connectivity, with a downstream need to extend this by a further 5000+ connections to support for Bus Reform.
- 2.3 Potential additional partners that wish to join One Network may also have sites that are not on the LFFN and would require connectivity.
- 2.4 To address this a procurement was carried out to deliver Non-LFFN Connectivity Partner services and establish a contract that would enable further sites to be connected. Its scope includes a range of connection types including fibre to 4G/5G wireless which can be drawn on depending on site requirements. All Greater Manchester councils, GMP and health services were named in the tender documents to create provision for scaling.
- 2.5 Importantly, the procurement did not restrict partners with non-LFFN sites from joining in the future. If other public organisations were to join, this would be on an equitable basis with the original partners, with either a financial return to those partners or further investment as determined appropriate by the partners. This is defined in the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement signed by the current partners and endorsed by GMCA.

3 PROCUREMENT OUTCOME

- 3.1 Following a Public Contracting Regulations 2015 compliant procurement process, Vodafone has been selected as preferred bidder to deliver Non-LFFN Connectivity Partner services. The overall value of the contract is £2M and services can be drawn

down for the benefit of any of the organisations named in the tender as part of work to extend One Network.

- 3.2 GMCA would be the contract holders and would be responsible for commissioning services under it, but the relevant beneficiaries of each commission would then be recharged so that there is no cost to GMCA (unless and to the extent that GMCA are a beneficiary). Use of the contract would be governed via the GM One Network Collaboration Agreement which is managed by the GM One Network Collaboration Board, chaired by Stockport Council and including representatives from each of the partners in One Network.
- 3.3 An initial draw against the contract would be on behalf of TFGM and Rochdale Council for the 170 fixed connectivity sites and 1,415 wireless connectivity sites, as described above, at a combined value of £842,000, the costs of which will be met by those organisations through a recharge from GMCA.
- 3.4 The initial contract will be for 3 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

4 OVERALL BENEFITS

4.1 The summary benefits from this procurement are that:

- Together with linked work, it enables TfGM and Rochdale to migrate from legacy contracts for connectivity that is due to expire.
- It creates a flexible mechanism against which further sites can be added and supports potential One Network expansion to benefit more public services including by standardising connectivity infrastructure across the GM Public Sector community making it easier to layer on other shared Digital services in the future.
- It reduces duplication in procurement, migration of services and provision and management of services and 3rd party contracts relating to site connectivity.
- It supports effective digitalisation of public sector services, in particular significant improvements in user experience via service speed and quality, particularly for those partners migrating sites from copper infrastructure to fibre through this process.

- It improves resilience by leveraging the GM One Network.
- It extends use of GM One Network's shared internet connections and expands the ability to consume other relevant digital services jointly in the future.
- Enhances the GM One Network advanced network platform which will give partners more flexibility to connect sites to the GM One Network that are not served by GM LFFN Fibre.
- Note there is a second Lot linked to this procurement that is still being finalised and will further enhance the GM One Network platform by providing the partners with the ability to deploy, configure and install network infrastructure, using automation to reduce the amount of engineering costs.
- Progresses GM's ambition to become a globally recognised digital city region – there is potential to showcase Greater Manchester's involvement in Digital and Smart City developments through preferred bidder's global network of Partners and industry commentators.

5 GOVERNANCE FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY

- 5.1 Rochdale Council and TFGM are taking these proposals through their own organisational governance in line with their own formal decision-making processes with the intention that each partner has internal support for this procurement ahead of the GMCA meeting on 25th October 2025.
- 5.2 This activity is supported by the GM One Network Collaboration Board that is chaired by Stockport Council with attendance from GMCA(FRS), TfGM and Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport Councils. This reports into the GMCA Digital Portfolio governance which reports to the GMCA. It is supported by the GMCA Digital Services team. The oversight of this connectivity infrastructure for these services would be via the existing route into GMCA that supports One Network.

6 KEY RISKS

- 6.1 The risks set out in Table 4 below relate to the procurement and migration of these sites to the GM One Network

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Existing contracts expire before the new service is available	High	Medium	Secure commitment from preferred bidder to migrate sites with contract end dates before contracts end, secure short-term extension of contract where this isn't possible
Existing contract end dates may result in dual running costs for some sites	Medium	High	Plan migrations to minimize impact, with each partner looking to offset any transition costs through optimum timing.

Table 4: Key Risks

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Please refer to the to the Recommendations section at the top of this document.