

Date: 25th September 2020

Subject: Greater Manchester International Strategy Refresh

Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Portfolio Lead for Business and Economy and Cllr Elise Wilson, Leader of Stockport Council, Portfolio Lead for Business and Economy

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## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

In July 2017, Greater Manchester launched a three-year Internationalisation Strategy which outlined the city region's ambitions on a global stage to grow international exports, investment and research and innovation partnerships as well as continue to attract international visitors and students.

This report summarises the background and context to the one year refreshed Greater Manchester International Strategy, attached for the GMCA's review and approval.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

GMCA are asked to:

1. Approve the refreshed Greater Manchester International Strategy

## **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

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## **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 involves 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.

Monitoring the equality impact will form part of the on-going evaluation of the International Strategy.

**Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures**

Climate change is a challenge of global 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 worlds, 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 could better leverage digital connectivity as a key enabler for supporting us to connect with our international partners as an alternative to international travel.

**Risk Management** – n/a

**Legal Considerations** – n/a

**Financial Consequences – Revenue:** – n/a

**Financial Consequences – Capital:**

**Number of attachments to the report:** 1

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Greater Manchester 2017 to 2020 Internationalisation Strategy. Available here: <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1947/internationalistion-report.pdf>

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>	
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution	No

<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
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?		
GMCA	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

**1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 In 2017, the Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership and GMCA agreed three-year internationalisation strategy with an overarching aim for Greater Manchester to become a “Top 20 Global City by 2035”. The success of this strategy is measured against a series of objectives:

- Our attractiveness to international investors, visitors, business and academic talent and students;
- Our international cultural and place offer and the propensity of our business base to trade internationally;
- Our success as a key international gateway to the UK – and a gateway to the world for our UK businesses and communities;
- The quality and ease of access and interconnectivity to all places across the city region to maximise the local benefits of Internationalisation across Greater Manchester communities.

1.2 In February 2020, a full evidence review was undertaken to understand the city-region’s performance against the existing strategy, in short the city-region performed well against its strategic objectives. It saw improved global recognition, further connectivity and an increase in trade, investment, student and visitor numbers over the three-year period.

1.3 The evidence review brought to light the city region's year on year growth in international engagement. This can be attributed to its strong asset base, understanding of its sector strengths, clear strategy frameworks and a more coordinated and sophisticated approach to delivering activity had. Over the three year period this led to better performance and positioning.

## **2 COVID-19 and Greater Manchester's International Strategy**

2.1 In March 2020, the refresh of the International Strategy was put on hold as the significant implications of COVID developed. It became clear that the economic uncertainty and restrictions on travel were likely having an adverse impact on GM's international ambitions. To understand this impact, an international COVID impact assessment was delivered in consultation with a range of Greater Manchester partners including Manchester Airport, Marketing Manchester, Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, MIDAS, the Department for International Trade, Greater Manchester's Universities and Local Authorities.

2.2 Initial impacts included a drop in exports, fall in investment, reduced flights at Manchester Airport and a significant fall in both business and leisure visitors, directly impacting all of Greater Manchester's international ambitions.

2.3 The impact of COVID on the city region's international ambitions and activity is hugely significant. However, it is not the only issue challenging our competitiveness on an international stage. The current geo-political climate, the lack of clarity around the UK's relationship with the EU and the rest of the world creates further complexities.

2.4 Reaffirming Greater Manchester's commitment to international engagement is important at these difficult times, even though the current geopolitical and economic uncertainty make the refresh of a long term, detailed and specific international strategy a hard task.

2.5 To address the identified challenges, work on the refresh of the International Strategy was resumed in May. The refreshed strategy has been developed by working closely with a wide range of Greater Manchester partners and stakeholders including local authorities, businesses, The Growth Company, MIDAS, Marketing Manchester, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the airport, our universities and other regional stakeholders.

- 2.6 Whilst the refresh builds on the current Greater Manchester international priorities and successes of last three years, COVID has brought a new dimension to this work, which needed to be addressed.
- 2.7 The approach to the refresh was therefore twofold:
- Review our 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.
- 2.8 Consequently, and to support the latter, the refresh takes on a 12 month time frame, in line with the publication of the Greater Manchester One Year Living with COVID plan.
- 2.9 The Strategy will be reviewed again in 2021 to include a more detailed analysis of our priority markets and to address further challenges post-COVID.
- 2.10 National government are also currently re-considering future UK foreign policy including the UK’s national trade and investment strategies. Looking towards implementation, we must work closely with government where appropriate to ensure strategic alignment.

### 3 Intended Audience

- 3.1 The International refresh was drafted with a wide range of audiences in mind:
- **Residents of Greater Manchester** – Recognising the transformational impact internationalisation can bring to a city region and its residents as well as the advantages a culturally diverse population can have for supporting internationalisation;
  - **Businesses of Greater Manchester** – Supporting our businesses to become more aware of the opportunities international engagement present and help them to utilise global trade, investment and R&D partnerships to become more competitive and resilient creating a stronger economy for Greater Manchester;
  - **Greater Manchester Partners and Stakeholders** – Providing a framework for respective international plans and ambitions;

- **National Government and Opinion Leaders**– Greater Manchester as a key city region for supporting UK’s growth ambitions;
- **International Audience** – Greater Manchester as a globally competitive, diverse and welcoming city region that inspires global leaders, visitors, investors and businesses across the world through our strong sector base, talent and unique offering.

## 4 A Strong Foundation

4.1 The International Strategy is based on Greater Manchester’s strong foundations, identifying our unique assets and offer to support and drive our international reach.

These include:

- A diverse population, recognising that diversity is our greatest asset;
- A strategic geographical position at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse making Greater Manchester the Gateway to the North;
- A strong sector base as identified in the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy supported by four universities and a strong knowledge economy;
- Unique Assets including a strong cultural, music and sporting heritage;
- A coordinated approach to international strategy and delivery.

## 5 An Enhanced Strategic Framework

5.1 The refreshed one-year International Strategy sets out an enhanced strategic framework and updated strategic objectives.

5.2 The priority areas from the 2017 to 2020 strategy have remained broadly the same however, to illustrate the close synergy and inter-connectivity between the different priorities they have been grouped in two different categories – **Core Priorities** and **Enablers**.

5.2.1 Core Priorities include Trade, Investment, Research and Innovation, The Visitor Economy (Business and Leisure) and International Students

5.2.2 Enablers include Connectivity (Digital and Physical), Marketing and Perception and City-region Diplomacy

5.3 The addition of City-region Diplomacy as a new enabling priority is in response to the election of a Greater Manchester Mayor and the increased recognition of the role city regions play in driving international engagement.

## 5. Conclusion

The refreshed one-year Greater Manchester International Strategy is attached in Annex 1 for the GMCA’s comment and approval.