

GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 8th February 2023

Subject: GM Digital Blueprint 2023-26

Report of: Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, Portfolio Lead for GM Digital and Joanne Roney Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for GM Digital

Purpose of Report:

This document is a covering report for the draft GM Digital Blueprint for 2023-26 for consideration and validation.

This report includes:

- An outline of the rationale for refreshing the Blueprint at this time.
- An outline of the process we are following to refresh the Blueprint, including how we are engaging with stakeholders.
- Key changes and updates in the refreshed Blueprint relative to the 2020 version.
- An outline of the refreshed GM Digital Blueprint content structure
- A plain text only version of the draft refreshed GM Digital Blueprint Vision, Mission Statements, We Will Commitments, Enablers and Key Initiatives

Recommendations:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider whether the refreshed GM Digital Blueprint priorities and commitment statements adequately and appropriately respond and contribute to the strategic ambitions set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy.

Contact Officers

Phil Swan phil.swan@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Risk Management

Risks will be managed through the GM Digital Governance for GMCA led initiatives and through stakeholder engagement for the wider eco-system activity.

Legal Considerations

Legal considerations will be managed at an initiative/programme/project level in conjunction with the legal teams of partner organisations.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Financial revenue for GMCA led activity will be managed within the GMCA Digital Directorate. Financial considerations and funding for programmes and projects led by partner organisations will be managed by the appropriate partner. Where partners are collaborating agreements about management of revenue finances will be agreed by the collaboration Board for that programme or project.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Financial capital for GMCA led activity will be managed within the GMCA Digital Directorate. Financial considerations and funding for programmes and projects led by partner organisations will be managed by the appropriate partner. Where partners are collaborating agreements about management of capital finances will be agreed by the collaboration Board for that programme or project.

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Background Papers

Link to GM Digital Blueprint 2020-23

[PowerPoint Presentation \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

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

GM Transport Committee

NA

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8th February

1. Introduction/Background

GMCA's first digital strategy was published in February 2018. It built on the ambition outlined in the 2018 Greater Manchester Strategy that Greater Manchester would be a world-leading digital city-region.

This strategy was updated in early 2020 as the GM Digital Blueprint, placing people more firmly at the heart of our plans and setting out a three-year set of priorities to meet our ambitions.

We are now refreshing the 2020 Blueprint for the next three years, in order to:

- Align with the refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy;
- Respond to changes in political, economic, social and environmental landscape;
- Reflect expansion and progress of programmes and agendas;
- Build on existing capabilities and assets; and
- Continue to build on our successful collaborative partnerships.

2. Context

The three years since the 2020 Blueprint was published have been a period of unprecedented upheaval and change across the world, with significant ramifications for our digital ambitions for Greater Manchester.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented immediate and unprecedented challenges to the citizens, businesses and public services in Greater Manchester. It increased reliance on digital communications, exacerbating existing issues including inequality of access to connectivity and skills, the gap in digital confidence and skills gap in some communities, the increasing need for public services to have resilient and secure digital ways of working, and affordable access to data.

The acceleration of digitisation in certain fields has created even more rapidly increasing growth in the digital economy and demand for talent. This trend, combined with increased global instability and cyber threats, has created even more demand for cyber security expertise.

At the same time, the role of digital technology in many pre-existing challenges affecting Greater Manchester in terms of productivity, climate change and smart cities has become even more evident and urgent. The Blueprint refresh takes account of this landscape.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

Between September and January, GMCA carried out an extensive programme of engagement with stakeholders from across the city-region to inform the Blueprint refresh.

Focus groups and discussions took place reflecting different geographical, sectoral and demographic interests in the Blueprint.

This process of engagement confirmed that the overall ambitions, priorities and direction of travel of the GM Digital Blueprint are still broadly right and have widespread support across industry, the public sector, academia and the voluntary and community sector in Greater Manchester. The GM Digital brand has an increasing profile and reputation, across the UK and internationally, as a result of the work of the past 3 years and the groundwork laid before the first Blueprint.

4. The Refreshed Blueprint: Key changes

The engagement process has highlighted there are areas that need updating and reframing in order to reflect current circumstances, the evolution of the ecosystem, the strategic commitments of the Greater Manchester Strategy and Local Authority digital strategies and hence our thinking and activities. Key changes are summarised below:

- Bringing through the environmental/net zero agenda more explicitly, responding and contributing to the strength of the commitments to carbon neutrality in the Greater Manchester Strategy.
- Strengthening commitment to address inequality in all GM digital priorities and commitments
- Stronger representation of connecting communities and empowering communities
- Reflecting the importance of the responsible use of data, including data-driven public services and data as a critical part of our digital infrastructure in achieving our ambitions.
- Incorporation of Creating and Scaling Digital Businesses and Digitally Enabling all Businesses into Priority 3 Digitally Enabling a Resilient and Prosperous Economy
- Reflecting the importance of stimulating innovation and the relationship between the digital and innovation ecosystems in GM.

- The introduction of Priority 4: Creating Connecting Connected, Inclusive, Sustainable Places for the articulation of place-led strategic commitments.
- The strengthening of the role digital in stimulating and enabling a prosperous economy that offers opportunities for everyone.
- Emphasising the enabling power of a strong and responsive digital talent pipeline, and the enabling power of embedding digital skills for all aspects of life through the GM population as a whole.

5. GM Digital Blueprint 2023-26 Structure

The GM Digital Blueprint 2021-23 represents an evolution and improvement of the 2020 Blueprint, and as such retains many similarities in content and structure. The final format of the Blueprint, as in 2020, will be a slidedeck plus accessible content. The headline narrative structure of the Blueprint:

- **Title Slide (slide 1):** GM Digital Blueprint 2023-26
- **This is the Digital Place (slides 2-6):** setting out our vision of success and ambition for Greater Manchester as a digital city-region with a difference, with people and environment at the heart of our plans; where digital connectivity improves people's lives; and with a fast-growing £5bn digital ecosystem. A place that makes things happen, where responsible businesses of all types can come and thrive.
- **This is our GM Digital Blueprint (slide 7):** setting out how we are updating our blueprint for the next three years, including our ambitions for 2026, and how the Blueprint will enable the GMS vision of a greener, fairer, more prosperous Greater Manchester.
- **GM Digital Ambitions for 2023-26 (slide 8):** A set of performance targets and indicators (currently being developed with GM digital eco-system stakeholders) to measure success of the 3 year GM Digital Blueprint delivery.
- **The 2023-26 Digital Blueprint Vision and Priorities (slides 9-15):** Empowering People and Communities; Building Responsible, Data Driven Public Services; Enabling a Resilient and Prosperous Economy; Creating Connected, Inclusive, Sustainable Places; and Strengthening our Position as a Global Digital Influencer.

- **The 2023-26 Digital Blueprint Enabling Workstreams (slides 16-20)** : Building digital skills and literacy for life, education, work and business; Strengthening our Digital Talent Pipeline; Extending our world class digital infrastructure, technology and data; and Harnessing academia, testbeds and research.
- **GM Digital Ways of Working (slides 21-24)** that we will use when designing and delivering the refreshed Blueprint: to put people first; to collaborate; to use data responsibly; to be responsible and resilient, to harness the power of social value; and to be open and transparent.
- **Governance and co-ordination (Slide 25)**: setting out how the Blueprint will guide the GMCA digital team's activity, how implementation of the Blueprint will be steered and co-ordinated and how GM Digital information and best practice will be shared.

A plain text version of the content in slides 9-20 is attached with this report.