

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 MARCH 2023 AT
THE GMCA OFFICES, TOOTAL BUILDINGS, OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER**

PRESENT:

Bolton	John Walsh (Chair)
Bolton	Champak Mistry
Bolton	Hamid Khurram
Bury	Nathan Boroda
Bury	Mary Whitby
Oldham	Colin McLaren
Oldham	Umar Nasheen
Oldham	Sam Al Hamdani
Rochdale	Ashley Dearnley
Rochdale	Tom Besford
Salford	John Mullen
Stockport	Elise Wilson
Trafford	Jill Axford
Trafford	Barry Brotherton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

GMCA	Eamonn Boylan
GMCA	Steve Wilson
GMCA	Nicola Ward
GMCA	Ninoshka Martins

O&SC 79/23

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Greg Stanton, Mandie Shilton Godwin, John Leech, Mike Hurleston, Joanne Marshall and Naila Sharif.

O&SC 80/23

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair advised members that feedback and recommendations from the Committee's previous discussions on the GM Trailblazer Devolution Deal had been submitted to GM Leaders ahead of their final conversations with Government.

O&SC 81/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received in relation to any item on the agenda.

O&SC 82/23

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH
2023**

RESOLVED /-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.

**UPDATE ON THE GREATER MANCHESTER TRAILBLAZER DEVOLUTION
DEAL**

The Chief Executive thanked members for their input and reported that the devolution deal had now been signed. The key features of the deal remained unchanged including the commitment by Government for a single settlement from the next spending review which would also include funding for local growth & place, transport, housing & regeneration, adult skills and retrofit net zero expenditure.

Alongside that, the deal also included the following elements:

- greater control over post-16 technical education, setting GM firmly on the path to become the UK's first technical education city-region.
- new levers and responsibilities to achieve fully integrated public transport, including rail, through the Bee Network by 2030.

- new responsibilities over housing that will allow GM to crack down on rogue landlords and control over £150m brownfield funding.
- a single block grant that will allow gm to go further and faster in growing our economy, reducing inequalities, and providing opportunities for all.
- collaboration on a range of net zero, nature recovery and climate change adaptation measures, with some net zero spending decisions to be made locally.
- strengthened accountability arrangements.

Members noted the positive step forward and thanked officers for their work in delivering this piece of work.

In discussing the accountability arrangements, the timely review of scrutiny was noted. In return for more responsibilities, Greater Manchester's existing scrutiny committees would see the development of an enhanced and active role in defining the outcomes that would be delivered.

In response to a member's query on as to whether there would be an oyster card facility for payment on the transport network. Members were advised that the intention was for a wider roll out of contactless payment on the network similar to London with plans to start contactless payment through the introduction of franchising later this year.

In response to a member's query regarding the position of Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 in relation to the deal, it was reported that the deal referenced the partnership which was fundamentally around the integration of the suburban network and that GM would continue to push for the delivery of Northern powerhouse Rail. In relation to HS2, it was reported that the indication from government was that it remained committed to delivering HS2 to Manchester therefore work was underway looking at the delivery of HS2 in respect of the physical impact, particularly on Manchester city centre, and the delivery of the Airport station, which was seen as critical to GM's economy but also to the wider North.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the update in relation to the GM Trailblazer Devolution Deal be noted.
2. That it be noted that there is a clear role for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in contributing to the conversations regarding the potential outcomes for the single settlement.
3. That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023 be approved as a correct record.

O&SC 83/23

RETAINED BUSINESS RATES PILOT UPDATE

Cllr David Molyneux, GM Portfolio Holder for Resources and Steve Wilson, GMCA Treasurer introduced the report that provided an update on the position in respect of the 100% retained business rate pilot; including the current GM business rates funded schemes, the latest forecasts for 2022/23 and 2023/24 income and sought support for proposed 2023/24 schemes funded from the income expected to be received in 2022/23.

In discussing the schemes proposed for 2023/24, it was noted specifically that the scheme focused on developing the Night-Time Economy would provide a platform to re-build the economy whilst developing a skills pathways and career development opportunities within the sector.

In response to a member's query regarding the fluctuating forecast benefit of the pilot for 2022/23, it was clarified that these were projected figures at this stage and no commitments would be made until 2024/25. It was noted that these figures were based on a 100% growth benefit and would be influenced by economic conditions. One of the benefits of a 10-year extension would be that the variances and that volatility described between different authorities would even out allowing for a consistent and steady growth in the amount retained by GM.

In discussing the arrangement that would likely be put in place through the trailblazer, officers advised that the arrangement would need to reflect the unique arrangements agreed with GM at the start of the pilot in relation to any future reset of the baseline by which growth is assessed against. It was added that national resets were always part of the plan for the pilot, although none have happened since the introduction of the scheme, and this is likely to continue to be the case for any new deal. However, the “partial reset” mechanism agreed with GM and as set out in the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would allow GM authorities to retain part of the achieved growth and maintain the growth incentive principle which is fundamental to the rates retention system.

In response to a member’s query whether the Growth and Investment Zones would be subject to a national re-set, it was clarified that the Growth and Investment Zones there were exempt from that re-set, and that there was a partial exemption in Greater Manchester for local investments. Therefore, it was seen essential to link the incentive to the levers to allow GM to retain maximum benefit of local investment.

In conclusion, members thanked officers for their work in developing this piece of work and requested that a future item be added as to the work programme to ensure that the current 25/75% split between Greater Manchester and Local Authorities remained effective and in line with agreed principles.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the following recommendations to the GMCA:
 - a) Note the forecast, as at the end of quarter 3, for 2022/23 business rates income including the 75:25 split between districts and GM investment.
 - b) Note the planned income for 2023/24.
 - c) Approve the proposed 2023/24 GM use of the 2022/23 business rates income (set at 25% of total benefit).

- d) Approve the proposal to bring back any further in-year commitments should the year end income exceed that forecast at quarter 3.
 - e) Note the position in respect of the devolution trailblazer deal for Greater Manchester.
2. That the Business Rates retention scheme be included in the Committees work programme for the forthcoming municipal year, specifically to ensure the effectiveness of current operation.

O&SC 84/23

**GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY: PROGRESS
REPORT SPRING 2023**

Simon Nokes, Executive Director, GMCA introduced the report and provided an overview of the progress made at 12 months into delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy, noting the updating of the performance dashboards which underpin the GMS performance framework.

The report focused on key strategic opportunities presented to Greater Manchester, raising visibility of how whole system responses, and applying GMS ways of working could support maximisation of opportunities.

It was noted that energy efficient homes were important to achieving the environmental ambitions for GM and therefore a member sought to understand what was being done at a GM level to support the delivery of GM's environmental ambitions. Officers advised of the work that was being done at a GM level to develop the existing housing stock. Further to that a task and finish group had been set up under the Green City Region Partnership to identify challenges and suitable intervention as part of the 5-year environmental plan. It was also reported that as part of the devolution deal further funding and powers had been secured to support GM authorities to tackle poor quality private rented sector properties.

It was noted that GM's objective to be carbon neutral by 2038 was still considered achievable, however the pathway towards that, was reported to likely exceed the

carbon budget, by a considerable margin unless decarbonisation would be accelerated. In support of achieving carbon neutral targets and to understand the impact of decisions, the GMCA had launched an assessment tool that would assist in the scrutiny process and in the development of policies and interventions in order to drive significant progress in support of attaining the wider GMS ambitions.

In response to a member's query regarding the alignment of the Integrated Care Partnership to the GMS, it was highlighted that this allowed for a whole system approach which would create a better opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of GM residents whilst minimising environmental impacts through the delivery of sustainable healthcare.

Concerns were raised around the digitalisation of the UK's telephone network and the impact on older residents. In acknowledging the concerns raised, officers advised that the old copper network was coming to the end of its life and therefore plans were underway to switch off the network by the end of 2025 as such landline would instead work via a broadband connection and therefore officers noted that there was a need to ensure that residents were made aware of these upcoming changes.

Members thanked officers for the report and welcomed the opportunity to explore the key themes highlighted within the report and to receive a detailed delivery programme.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the report and the progress made since the launch of the strategy, including the current strategic opportunities presented to Greater Manchester, and how these could be used to maximise the potential to achieve the GMS ambitions be noted.
2. That it be noted that insufficient detail of programme delivery had been gathered to assess specific impacts arising from delivery in support of GMS ambition.

3. That it be noted that the assessment completed took an overview approach, considering the strategic intent of the GMS and forming a view from the overall approaches, understanding and intent.
4. That it be noted that the Committee would welcome the opportunity to explore the key themes highlighted within the report and to receive a detailed delivery programme.

O&SC 85/23 GMCA OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH REVIEW - AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE WIDER DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT IN GREATER MANCHESTER.

Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, introduced the report and provided an overview of the findings of the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Review into the wider determinants of effective integrated water management in Greater Manchester.

Members welcomed the report and were supportive of the recommendations as outlined within the report. There was broad agreement from members around the need for an integrated water management approach to mitigating future flood risk in GM.

The importance of ensuring adequate planning policies were in place was highlighted. It was felt that that integrated water management should be predominant consideration for all new planning developments.

A member highlighted that certain green belt sites earmarked for development under Places for Everyone were subject to flood risk and noted that current drainage system was not suitable to accommodate these additional new developments. Therefore, the need to manage surface water sustainably and incorporating planning requirements

to design solutions into new developments was seen as essential in reducing flood risk.

In response to a member's query on as to whether the funding being received through the Trailblazer Deal would see a reduction in houses being built on greenbelt sites, it was stated that the specification of the funding allowed for the sole delivery of existing brownfield sites and not the creation of new sites and therefore would not meet the housing targets for GM.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked all those that were involved in the development of the report and recognised the importance of bringing the issues to the attention of political leads to ensure that adequate support would be provided to Local Authorities.

RESOLVED /-

1. That the report and its contents be noted.
2. That the recommendations within the report for consideration by the GMCA be noted.