

Atom Valley Business Plan 2023 / 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Places for Everyone is the long-term plan for the delivery of jobs, new homes and sustainable growth across Greater Manchester. The plan will ensure that all new developments are sustainably integrated into Greater Manchester's transport network or supported by new infrastructure.

Places for Everyone includes six growth locations which represent opportunities for the whole city-region to bring forward development at a scale which can drive transformational change across the whole conurbation.

The Atom Valley Growth Location is the growth location which includes Bury, Oldham and Rochdale local authority areas. The Atom Valley Growth Location is the single largest employment opportunity for the city-region, delivering thousands of quality jobs and thousands of new, quality, low carbon homes linked to sustainable transport.

Atom Valley is a Mayoral Development Zone within the Atom Valley Growth Location and was established in August 2022 with the focus being three key sites:

- Northern Gateway
- Kingsway park (incorporating the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute – AMPI)
- Stakehill

These three projects have the potential to provide 20,000 new jobs, 7,000 new homes and 1.6 million square metres of employment space through public-private partnership. There will be a focus on creating an "Advanced Materials City" and establishing a national leading Advanced Materials "mega" cluster for Greater Manchester, building on the existing manufacturing supply chains and skills base.

Since the MDZ was established, six Sub-Groups (outlined in more detail in Section 4) have been formed to drive forward development, growth and skills across the MDZ area. Their individual targets and workstreams are set out in detail in this document. The MDZ Board will also be coordinating these Sub-Groups to try and secure Investment Zone status for Atom Valley, as per the plans laid out in Central Government's March 2023 Budget.

Overall, Atom Valley presents the biggest opportunity in Greater Manchester to attract inward investment and long-term economic growth, focusing on advanced materials and the manufacturing sector. This is a long-term ambition that will take significant resources and time to deliver. This document sets out what needs to be done during 2023 / 2024 to ensure real progress is made and the overall ambition is realised in years to come.

2. VISION

The MDZ will utilise its expertise and influence to unite local stakeholders to unlock funding, drive forward progress and deliver the vision. The over-arching draft vision of Atom Valley can be summarised across the following nine points (. A fuller version of the Vision is available on the Atom Valley website at www.atom-valley.co.uk)

- 1. Atom Valley's vision is to create a dynamic, interconnected manufacturing mega-cluster, blending innovative world-class industry with ground-breaking research and development.*
- 2. Unmatched in its size and scale in Greater Manchester, it will create 1.6 million square metres of employment land for industrial uses and 7,000 zero carbon homes across three development sites in Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale, creating 20,000 new good quality jobs.*
- 3. Led by a partnership of developers, industrialists, universities, and local government, Atom Valley will develop market-facing strategies to secure the public and private sector investment needed to realise the transformational opportunity.*
- 4. Taking inspiration from successful examples such as the London Docklands and Salford Quays, Atom Valley will take a long-term approach to deliver large-scale regeneration and build a nationally significant industry cluster in one of the most deprived parts of the UK, enhancing national prosperity and delivering levelling up.*
- 5. Atom Valley will attract UK and international firms who want to build new manufacturing plants, SMEs who want to scale-up into modern premises, spinouts and start-ups who are ready to move from the lab to the factory, as well as businesses and individuals who simply want to benefit from international standard R&D skills and facilities.*
- 6. Atom Valley will capitalise on existing frontier sector strengths in advanced manufacturing, materials, and machinery in the local area. It will be integrated with Greater Manchester's internationally significant concentration of R&D and innovation assets in sustainable advanced materials and industrial digitalisation which are predominantly, but not exclusively, located on the Oxford Road Corridor.*
- 7. To catalyse the Atom Valley cluster, specialist premises and facilities to deliver large-scale R&D, pilot new applications of cutting-edge manufacturing technologies, and deliver skills training will be created. These open access facilities will also accelerate the diffusion of innovative technologies and approaches to manufacturing firms across Greater Manchester and beyond.*
- 8. Strategically located on the M62 corridor, and already just twenty minutes from central Manchester and 30 minutes from Manchester Airport, major new investments into road, rail, tram-train, and bus infrastructure will enable residents from across Greater Manchester to access jobs on the sites, Atom Valley firms to recruit from one of the UK's largest labour pools, and businesses to access suppliers and markets more effectively.*
- 9. Based in a city region with industry, innovation and partnership in its DNA, Atom Valley will be a model for a new form of greener, inclusive development that drives shared prosperity for Greater Manchester, the North of England and the UK as whole.*

3. BUSINESS PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

This Business Plan sets out the activity that the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) Board will oversee during 2023 / 2024 to deliver the long-term ambitions and vision of Atom Valley.

1. Over the past year, good progress has been made on driving forward a number of key constituent parts that comprise Atom Valley. The following items (listed below and also under individual Sub-Group workstreams) have been identified as priority workstreams that will accelerate delivery and enable tangible progress to be realised: Completion of the Atom Valley SOBC
2. Start on Site for the AMPI Project
3. Completion of the Northern Gateway Strategic Road Network Improvements SOBC for submission to the Department for Transport's RIS3 Consultation
4. Completion of the Northern Gateway Strategic Road Network Improvements Outline Business Case (OBC)
5. Completion of the Stakehill Outline Business Case

The preparation of the items two to four above will also play a key role in understanding how to best prioritise funding allocations to ensure maximum delivery of outcomes.

4. ATOM VALLEY MDZ BOARD GOVERNANCE

The Atom Valley MDZ Board oversees the alignment and agreement of long-term aspirations and strategy for the sites within the MDZ, whilst developing and maintaining strategic relationships with key external stakeholders. In addition, it provides a centralised and consistent forum for the resolution of high-level issues encountered during the delivery of the three sites programmes and projects that have been escalated from the Project Boards.

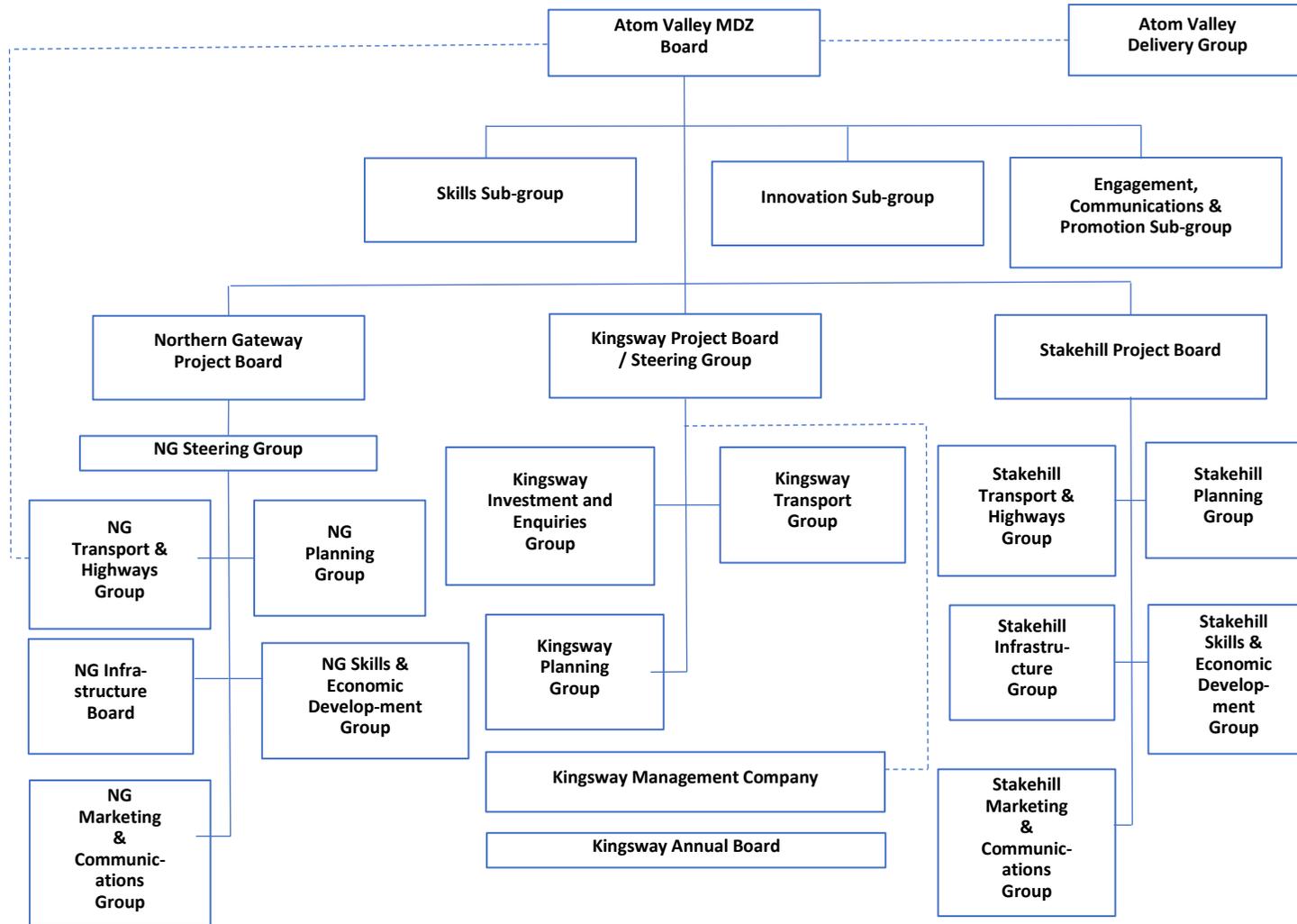
The main purpose of the MDZ Board is to:

- Set in place a time-limited but long-term structure and business plan that would sit outside other organisational contexts and pressures. This will ensure that there are committed and certain resources in place to underpin its investment strategy
- Assist in strategically focussing development activity across the area which takes account of interdependencies, between the various components of the development process and assets in operation and the significance and timing of these components.
- Deliver the single institutional mechanism for land assembly, masterplanning, development facilitation, site preparation, infrastructure and place creation; and the ability to harness the resources of local and national government to secure maximum impacts and efficiency.
- Have the profile and ability to create a diverse mix of investment propositions to take to the market.
- Have the profile to procure development partners, where this is required, underpinned by land sale agreements or joint ventures between public and private sector partner.
- Be able to bring together appropriate experience and capacity in development and place-making from across the public sector, and at Board-level to create the momentum to support delivery of a long-term and complex change programme.
- Direct the development of project briefs and business cases.
- Provide a regular forum for considering and resolving key strategic issues.
- Provide a clear direction and steer to project.
- Clarify and set programme requirements and direction.
- Remain focused on key principles deferring detailed analysis to sub groups.
- Monitor high level risks and issues.

The MDZ Board has formed the following Sub-Groups that are tasked with the delivery of Atom Valley:

- Northern Gateway
- Kingsway Park (incorporating AMPI)
- Stakehill
- Engagement, Communications and Promotion
- Skills
- Innovation

An Atom Valley Growth Location-wide Transport Delivery sub-group has also been formed which includes Atom Valley within its remit. Northern Gateway and Stakehill Delivery Sub-Groups also have transport-focused panels to deal with project-specific items. An organogram of the Atom Valley group structures is set out below:



5. NORTHERN GATEWAY DELIVERY SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

5.1 Overview

The Northern Gateway site at Heywood/Pilsworth is a nationally significant proposal for employment-led development that is emerging through the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE). The site straddles the border of Bury and Rochdale and occupies a strategic location adjacent to the M60, M62 and M66. Market analysis considers that this, together with the scale of the opportunity, will attract high quality businesses and employment opportunities.

The Northern Gateway site is now firmly engrained within a number of Greater Manchester strategies and plans, with support from the Combined Authority. It has the potential to be genuinely transformational and to be a key driver in rebalancing the Greater Manchester economy by boosting the competitiveness of the northern districts. The extent of the site presents a complex delivery structure on a huge scale.

5.2 Governance

The Northern Gateway Project Board will oversee the alignment & agreement of long-term aspirations and strategy for the Northern Gateway site, whilst developing and maintaining strategic relationships with key external stakeholders. In addition, the Project Board will provide a centralised and consistent forum for the resolution of high-level issues encountered during the delivery of the Northern Gateway programmes and projects. The main purpose of the Project Board is to:

- Direct the development of project briefs and business cases
- Provide a regular forum for considering and resolving key strategic issues
- Provide a clear direction and steer to projects
- Clarify and set programme requirements and direction
- Remain focused on key principles deferring detailed analysis to sub groups
- Monitor high level risks and issues
- Report into the Atom Valley MDZ Board.

Membership comprises:

Bury Council:

- Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive (Chair)
- Paul Lakin, Executive Director
- Cris Logue, Assistant Director

Rochdale Council:

- Steve Rumbelow, Chief Executive
- Mark Robinson, Director of Economy
- Paul Moore, Assistant Director of Economy

Northern Gateway Development Vehicle (NGDV – representatives of the two main landowners Russells and Harworth):

- Iain Griffin, Development Director, NGDV

- Dan Needham, Development Director, NGDV

The attendance of other specialist advisors / programme leads at meetings will be reviewed as and when required. The NG Project Board will meet every 3 months, at least one week prior to the Atom Valley Board. The Board Terms of Reference are due for review in October 2023.

5.3 Workstreams and Objectives

Focus will be directed towards Transport-based projects (primarily concerning the Strategic Road Network), infrastructure (associated with the historic gigafactory enquiry) and the production of a site-wide masterplan:

The following transport focused work will be undertaken. The primary aim behind these workstreams is to enable a robust case to be made to central government regarding the overall scope, cost and importance of the Atom Valley transport package in its totality and the wider outputs and benefits that will be delivered.

- **Transport and Highways Delivery Plan:** coordination of all Transport and Highways work streams (SRN, Public Transport, Active Travel, Tram-Train and Local Highways) to provide a fully integrated plan to assess priorities and assist in the allocation of both revenue and capital funding
- **SRN Access:** preparation of Outline Business Case (OBC) for M66 J3 and M62 J18a which follows on from the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) prepared for central government's Road Improvement Strategy 3 (RIS3) programme. The OBC is required to meet the Department for Transport approvals process.
- **Local Highways Mitigation:** Continuation of modelling, design and project management to ensure the Local Highways Network can adequately support the Northern Gateway ambitions.
- **Mass Transit Study (into site):** Review of BRT / Tram-Train / Metrolink potential to serve Atom Valley

The infrastructure focused work will comprise:

- Compilation and review of the work undertaken by the utility companies associated with the historic gigafactory enquiry and production of a summary infrastructure plan in partnership with the utility providers.
- SWOT analysis of Northern Gateway as a location to accommodate a future gigafactory in comparison to other potential sites across the UK.

The Planning focused work will incorporate:

- **Production of a Comprehensive Masterplan:** The Northern Gateway Joint Venture, along with Bury and Rochdale Councils to produce a comprehensive Northern Gateway Masterplan. This is a requirement of the Places for Everyone process and will be a key tool in managing the phasing and type of delivery.
- **Planning Application and Delivery:** co-ordination and programme management of the pre-planning application work (DCO or other consents), stakeholder and statutory consultation engagement, legal and other consents with the ambition of submitting the first planning applications in 2024.

As well as the above, the Northern Gateway Sub-Group is also leading on the commissioning and preparation of the aforementioned Atom Valley Strategic Outline Business Case.

6. KINGSWAY BUSINESS PARK / AMPI DELIVERY SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

6.1 Overview

Kingsway Business Park is managed by the Kingsway Partnership, which comprises Rochdale Council, Rochdale Development Agency, Homes England and Wilson Bowden Developments (development partner).

Located next to J21 of the M62 and with its own Metrolink stop, it covers an area of 420 acres (169 hectares), of which 275 acres (117 hectares) are development land, with the remainder being primarily environmental green space. Some 75% of employment land has already been developed out, supplying just under 4m sq ft of employment space and in the region of 5,000 jobs.

The AMPI proposals form a key element of the Kingsway Park and wider Atom Valley vision. AMPI is being brought forward by Rochdale Council and the Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) in partnership with the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) and is seen as a catalyst for the creation of an innovation district within Rochdale. AMPI's main activities will include the development of new innovations in advanced machinery and manufacturing processes.

AMPI will also have a significant educational component which hopes to "level up" the local area with skills and training in the advanced machinery industry, and foster deeper links between higher education facilities and industry leading businesses.

6.2 Governance

The Kingsway Project Board (known as Kingsway Steering Group) will oversee the alignment of long-term aspirations and strategy for Kingsway Business Park whilst developing and maintain strategic relationships with key external stakeholders. The Project Board will provide a forum for the resolution of high-level issues encountered during the delivery of the Kingsway programme and projects. The main purpose of the project board is to:

- Direct the development of project briefs and business cases
- Provide a regular forum for considering and resolving key strategic issues
- Provide a clear direction and steer to projects
- Clarify and set programme requirements and direction
- Remain focused on key principles deferring detailed analysis to sub groups
- Monitor high level risks and issues
- Report in to the Atom Valley MDZ Board.

Membership comprises:

- Steve Rumbelow, CEO Rochdale Council (Chair)
- Mark Robinson, Director of Economy Rochdale Council & Chief Executive of Rochdale Development Agency
- Levi Rickell, Managing Director, Rochdale Development Agency
- Richard Duddell, Senior Project Manager, Rochdale Development Agency

- Christine Buckley, Kingsway Team Administrator, Rochdale Development Agency
- Nick Richardson, Managing Director, Wilson Bowden Developments
- Henry Henson, Development Director, Wilson Bowden Developments
- Dave Ellis, Construction Director, Wilson Bowden Developments
- Ian Smith, Planning Manager, Wilson Bowden Developments
- Simon Herring, Homes England.
- Ross Nicolson, Homes England

The Kingsway Project Board meets every 3 months.

Three groups sit below the project board:

- The Transport Group – meets every three months. Purpose: to discuss Transport and Travel matters relating to Kingsway Business Park
- The Investment and Enquiries Group - meets every month. Purpose: to discuss current position with regard to properties at Kingsway and to seek to link them to known investment enquiries.
- The Planning Group – meets every month or as required. Purpose: to discuss current and future planning matters

The Kingsway Management Company is a separately constructed legal entity which manages the communal areas of the business park, by way of applying service charges to all owners and occupiers. It meets every three months.

6.3 Workstreams and Objectives:

The on-going design and delivery of AMPI is the main priority of the Sub-Group. The project is currently at RIBA Stage 3 with the aim that completion of RIBA Stage 4 and a start-on-site will be achieved by March 2024.

Discussions around Subsidy Control, gap funding options and operational management structures will also be worked on in parallel with the property development elements. The operational management structure will include the integration of NPL's new metrology function which will see ten staff members based at AMPI.

The success of AMPI is closely linked to the upskilling and reskilling local communities to ensure they have the skills required from future businesses associated with AMPI and its industry clusters. As well as working with Hopwood Hall College to increase the chances of local residents to access current employment opportunities across the Estate, work will continue alongside the Skills and Innovation Sub-Groups to develop a programme of requisite activities and interventions. This will be closely linked to the Greater Manchester Integrated Technical Education system being brought forward across the sub-region. More detail on the Skills Sub-Group proposals for AMPI and Atom Valley is outlined in Section 9 below.

Aside from AMPI, ongoing development and asset management of the Kingsway Estate will continue.

7. STAKEHILL DELIVERY SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

7.1 Overview

Stakehill Industrial Estate was developed in the 1970s and is located at the end of the A627M Spur, with access from the M62 at Junction 20. The Estate is currently around 90% occupied. Stakehill provides c. 2.9m sq ft of floorspace, spread across some 65 units with a total employment of approximately 3,000 people.

The existing Stakehill is a cross-boundary allocation in PfE (JPA2) which falls within Oldham and Rochdale. Part of the allocation is designated Green Belt and will be allocated for:

- 150,000 sqm of high quality, adaptable, employment floorspace within a 'green' employment park setting, with a focus on suitable provision for advanced manufacturing and other key growth sectors.
- 1,680 high quality homes, including larger, higher value properties, to support the new jobs created within the Atom Valley Growth Location and create a sustainable and high-quality extension to the urban area.

7.2 Governance

The Stakehill Project Board will oversee the alignment and agreement of long-term objectives and strategy for the Stakehill zone, whilst developing and maintaining relationships with key external stakeholders.

The Stakehill Project Board will provide a centralised and consistent forum for the resolution of high-level issues encountered during the delivery of the Stakehill programmes and projects.

The purpose of the Stakehill Project Board is to:

- Direct the development of project briefs and business cases linked to the objectives described above.
- Provide a regular forum for considering and resolving key strategic issues.
- Provide a clear direction and steer to projects.
- Clarify and set programme requirements and direction.
- Remain focused on key principles deferring detailed analysis to sub-groups.
- Monitor high level risks and issues.
- Nominate leads on each of the 5 sub-groups who would co-ordinate and report to the Stakehill Project Board.
Report into the Atom Valley MDZ Board.

The Stakehill Project Board Objectives are:

- Support, assist and deliver strategy, programmes and projects which are aligned and consistent with the remit of the Atom Valley MDZ.
- Deliver development and create employment opportunities at Stakehill for residents.
- Identify priorities for investment to support new development.
- Improved and sustainable transport links.
- Create and retain employment.

- Offer better jobs with access to higher skilled employment opportunities.
- Improve training and skills development for residents.
- Create and facilitate new residential communities.

Membership Comprises:

- CEO Oldham Council, Chair
- CEO Rochdale Council
- Exec Director / Director, Oldham Council
- Director / Assistant Director, Rochdale Council
- Representatives from Oldham Council, Rochdale Council's Planning, Investment, Employment, Regeneration and communications teams (i.e. the 5 sub-groups of transport, planning, infrastructure, skills, and communications) and Rochdale Development Agency
- Membership of the Stakehill Project Board to be extended when appropriate to include or have consultation roles for representatives from TfGM, DfT, National Highways, Transport for the North, DLUC Regional Director of Levelling Up and Representative Education and skills and the Stakehill Industrial Estate Business Improvement District

The Stakehill Project Board which will be chaired by the Chief Executive of Oldham Council will initially meet every 6 weeks.

7.3 Workstreams and Objectives:

The main focus will be the continuation of the on-going Business Case process for the Stakehill proposals. The Strategic Outline Business Case has been completed. The Project Team are now undertaking a review with the intention of moving on to commissioning a full site-wide Masterplan and Final Business Case. The Masterplan work will include an assessment of options to accommodate advanced manufacturing options (in line with Places for Everyone aspirations)

One of the main priorities is to improve transport links to Stakehill to ensure local residents have the ability to gain access to new employment opportunities. Two current commissions regarding the improvement of bus services and active travel from Oldham to Stakehill (and wider Atom Valley opportunities) are due to be finalised this year. The findings and conclusions will be considered and next steps actioned upon.

Over the next 12 months, the Stakehill Project Board will strive to build on the recently completed Strategic Outline business case to further enhance the deliverability of the site. This will include a further assessment of enabling infrastructure requirements, site access and establishing the appropriate delivery framework. The Stakehill opportunity was successfully presented at UKREiiF 2023 by senior Oldham Council officers. To ensure the opportunity is targeted at similar audiences the Stakehill Sub-Group will liaise with the "Engagement, Communications and Promotion" Sub-Group. Likewise, ensuring the learnings from the Innovation Sub-Group are fully considered will require close coordination.

8. ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTION SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

8.1 Overview

The role of this group is to support the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone, advising on the development and delivery of effective engagement, communications, and promotion of Atom Valley.

To enable this, the Sub-group will:

- Develop marketable value proposition(s) tailored to different audiences, for example: government/funding bodies, potential inward investors into the UK, and existing / near businesses.
- Develop an understanding of critical supply and demand inputs including development time, constraints and opportunities, infrastructure requirements, occupiers (including large) and sector clustering and specialisation opportunities.
- Utilise existing and commissioned relevant local and global economic research, analysis etc. and identify any gaps in knowledge that will need to be filled to facilitate a robust approach.
- Participate in shaping the distinct market focuses for Atom Valley
- Ensure alignment with the other Atom Valley Sub-groups. The local authority and developer representatives will ensure links with the three site-based sub-groups. Sarah Porru will ensure linkages with the Skills Sub-group and Neil Eccles with the Innovation Sub-group
- Bring forward a Delivery Plan following the planned workshop in January.

8.2 Governance

Membership comprises:

- Mark Hughes (Chair), Group CEO, the Growth Company
- Neil Eccles, Head of Innovation, Rochdale Development Agency
- Alison Salas, Marketing Manager, Rochdale Development Agency
- Emma Barton, Executive Director for Place & Economic Growth, Oldham Council
- Sarah Porru, Assistant Director – Regeneration Delivery, Bury Council
- Karen Johnston, Head of Communications, Engagement & Marketing, Bury Council
- Iain Griffin, Development Director, JV – Russell LDP
- Dan Needham, Development Director, JV – Harworth Group
- Dawn Sexton, Atom Valley PM
- Justin Bentham, Strategic Lead, Growth Company
- Sheona Southern / Victoria Braddock, MD / International Marketing Director, Marketing Manchester
- David Hilton, Business Development Director, MIDAS
- Eleri Roberts, Senior Account Manager, Growth Company Business Growth Hub.

The Engagement, Communications and Promotion Sub-group meetings are held monthly.

Three task groups have been established for agreed priority areas to progress actions in between the monthly Engagement, Communications and Promotions Sub-group meetings. They are:

- Marketing & promotion
- Inward investment
- Business engagement.

8.3 Workstreams and Objectives

- **Web Development:** Key vehicle to engage, communicate and promote the vision to key audiences and investors. There is scope to further develop web presence and related social media throughout the year.
- **Production and Agreement of Sub-Group Delivery Plan:** This will include market analysis and focus to ensure successful engagement as well as identifying key priorities for the Sub-Group. Furthermore the Development and promotion of the Atom Valley proposition will occur in relation to target markets & Contestable and Viable Market Segments

9. SKILLS SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

9.1 Overview

The Skills Sub-group is central to the delivery of the Atom Valley Vision, which includes attracting new firms and investment and encouraging innovation by existing firms – both of which will require a strong supply of technical skills at a range of levels.

It is essential to the inward investment and innovation aspects of the Atom Valley project:

- Skills will be an essential component in ensuring that the new opportunities brought to Atom Valley are accessible to, and do benefit, existing residents.
- Having a strong skills supply, and a flexible support system for responding to skills demand, will be an attraction to potential investors.
- The engagement of further and higher education, working together to engage business into an innovation infrastructure, will be central to ensuring the alignment of skills strategies with the emerging needs of businesses located in Atom Valley.

The Skills Strategy in Atom Valley will present an opportunity to test, on a local scale, linked to a strategic gateway project, the concept of an integrated technical skills system. This is more complex than just a matching of supply and demand.

On the supply side, the creation of clear occupational pathways through to Level 4 and above opportunities will involve:

- Engaging with current curriculum reforms, in both work based and classroom routes, therefore including T levels and higher technical qualifications, alongside apprenticeships – to make sure these are aligned with demand and are clear in terms of progression for learners.
- Strong direct engagement between employers and providers to design, adapt and deliver curriculum in flexible and relevant ways.
- Recognition of the obstacles presented for learners seeking to progress into technical occupations, by the low levels of achievement in the area, and the need for significant improvements to literacy and numeracy to ensure opportunities are open to all.
- Supporting a culture of technical expertise among partner colleges and training providers, to support the recruitment, development and retention of outstanding staff, and securing their dual expertise as subject specialists and expert teachers.

On the demand side, this will involve:

- Building strong and direct relationships between providers and employers, to undertake training needs analyses, linked to strategies for business growth, and to support a growth in demand for skills in this context.
- The provision of strong careers, advice and information for young and adult learners, so that they understand the current and emerging opportunities in Atom Valley, and the pathways to taking advantage of them.

9.2 Governance

There is a wide range of expertise within the Skills Sub-group, and there is a commitment to updating and extending this, by bringing in additional stakeholders and partners as the project progresses.

However, the core of the expertise will be provided by the three local further education colleges and the University partners.

The group is chaired by Julia Heap, Principal and Chief Executive of Hopwood Hall College.

Meetings will initially be quarterly, but this may change, and there may be the addition of further working groups, on a task and finish basis, as the project develops.

9.3 Workstreams and Objectives

- **Roadmap Skills Strategy:** Working with Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce as they develop the Learning and Skills Improvement Plan for Greater Manchester, the existing College skills analysis processes, and linking across the other Atom Valley sub-groups, as they develop their proposals, to establish a coherent strategy for skills for Atom Valley. This would potentially serve as a pilot for the Greater Manchester Integrated Technical Education system, operating below the City Region, but above the level of the three individual local authorities.
- **A Study of Skills Needs/Gaps:** with the aim of preparing a route plan that would cover all key stages of education through to CPD.
- **Employer Support Programme:** To be developed in conjunction with the Innovation Sub-group, a programme to support employers to engage with Innovation and understand their current and future skills needs.
- **Promoting Technical Learning:** A campaign to raise the profile and importance of technical skills, including new areas of curriculum development, to ensure that all stakeholders in the relevant areas are aware of the opportunities presented by technical learning and the emerging opportunities in Atom Valley.

10. INNOVATION SUB-GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 2024

10.1 Overview

Innovation is a central part of the vision for Atom Valley, as articulated at the first meeting of its board: “*Atom Valley must aim to become a location of international significance doing innovative, high level, high value added, high wage work*”. The support and promotion of innovation and R&D will be a key mechanism by which the vision of Atom Valley will be realised. This will involve developing extensive links with the city-region’s universities, and the creation of new research centres in Atom Valley, focusing, not on pure research, but on industry engagement, process innovation, the wider diffusion of existing innovations, and, in partnership with existing institutions such as the region’s FE colleges and universities, on skills development.

10.2 Governance

The Innovation Sub-group will:

- Devise, own and drive an innovation strategy for Atom Valley to boost the economy so successful businesses can create products using sustainable methods.
- Identify, understand and support the existing business base, including the barriers that prevent further growth, to help businesses to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Describe the environment required to attract new companies.
- Develop ways to connect with start-ups that want to scale up.
- Embed the Innovation Accelerator programme for the Sustainable Materials Translational Research Centre (SMTRC) into Atom Valley
- Support the development of the GAMMA Centre concept.

The Innovation Sub-group reports to the main Atom Valley MDZ board. The members of the sub-group are:

- Richard Jones (Chair) Vice-President for Regional Innovation and Civic Engagement & Professor of Materials Physics and Innovation Policy, The University of Manchester
- Peter Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, NPL
- Bill Sampson, Chief Scientific Officer, Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre (GEIC) & Professor of Materials Modelling, Department of Materials, The University of Manchester
- Neil Eccles, Head of Innovation, Rochdale Development Agency
- Paul Clifford, Director of Economy, Oldham Council
- John Wrathmell, Director - Strategy, Research & Economy, Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Mike Murray, Chief Technical Officer, the Vita Group
- Luke Vardy, Chief Executive Officer, Cygnet Texkimp
- Yvonne Grady, Head of Innovation, The Growth Company
- Dawn Sexton, Atom Valley Project Manager

Where necessary, further businesses may be invited to join the group, particularly from within the Atom Valley boroughs.

The sub-group meets monthly.

10.3 Workstreams and Objectives

The first workstream to be delivered in 2023/24 will be the development of an Atom Valley Innovation Roadmap.

The Roadmap will draw on national strategy documents and the GM Innovation Plan. The document will be tailored to the existing industry bases of Rochdale, Oldham and Bury, together to realise the strategic goals of GAMMA within Atom Valley and associated programmes such as the Advanced Machinery and Productivity Institute, the ambitions of the region to host a Sustainable Materials Translational Research Centre (building on the pilot programme funded through the GM Innovation Accelerator), Made Smarter and the wider Net Zero goals of the city region.

The Atom Valley Innovation Roadmap will be presented to the Atom Valley Board. It should be regarded as a living document that will evolve in-line with the wider strategy of Atom Valley MDZ.

The following deliverables are proposed:

1. Appointment of delivery resource / consultancy
2. Review of existing plans and roadmaps to design and facilitate a full day workshop, with key stakeholders to create a roadmap for up to four themes that are linked to the vision for Atom Valley (this could include machinery, materials, modular construction etc.);
3. Design and delivery of further theme development to refine and prioritise actions and outline the scale of opportunity and feasibility for each;
4. PowerPoint report of programme findings with associated Excel Appendices
5. Preparation of a formal document for publication that can be used by the wider Atom Valley Sub-Groups.

Funding has been allocated to various programmes within Atom Valley such as AMPI and SMTRC and each will have associated road mapping exercises that can contribute towards this work.

The Atom Valley Innovation group will support the development and delivery of a number of key innovation programmes that can have an impact on the local area, maximising their impact for the Boroughs of Bury, Oldham and Rochdale.

NPL have instructed the University of Huddersfield to lead on Industrial Engagement on AMPI Strength in Places programme. RDA has a member of staff to work on this aspect of the programme and the objective of the Innovation Group will be to increase levels of participation in the programme from companies located across Atom Valley.

The Strength in Places programme will in late 2023, launch a competition for the remaining funding within the programme. The Atom Valley Innovation Group will identify ways to support businesses within the area to access this funding, alongside accessing expertise that is available through programmes like Innovation for Machinery (I4M).

Similarly, working with partners on the Pilots for Sustainable Materials Translational Research Centre, the Atom Valley Innovation Group will support to link businesses within the Atom Valley area to access the resources that are available through the Innovation Accelerator programme, support the development of a further revision of

the business case for the SMTRC, ensuring businesses within Atom Valley and institutions in the region are able to contribute towards the plans production. This will support the plans to develop a permanent facility in Atom Valley.

Finally, the Atom Valley Innovation Group will monitor and inform the work to build the advanced materials cluster within the North of England, which is being carried out through the p-SMTRC Innovation Accelerator programme, working alongside STFC.

Collectively, work on this programme and joining up activities with GAMMA, will support the development of the business case for the GM Advanced Manufacturing Centre at Kingsway Business Park. The GM Advanced Manufacturing Centre will focus on the “GAMMA triangle” of activities which are the key to GAMMA’s strategy: Sustainable Materials in Manufacturing; Industrial Digitalisation; Advanced Machinery; all underpinned by AI/Machine Learning.

The main focus of the work of the Centre will be the diffusion of innovation which aligns with activities of the Innovation Group.

Collectively, this work to diffuse innovative technology into companies in Atom Valley which will have the most immediate and direct impact on enabling businesses to compete more effectively and create well-paid jobs. And it is this which will play a key role in increasing productivity not just in the Atom Valley boroughs, but throughout Greater Manchester.