

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 12 March 2025

Subject: Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway – Consultation

Report of: Councillor Bev Craig, Portfolio Lead for Economy, Business and Inclusive Growth and Tom Stannard, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Economy, Business and Inclusive Growth

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the plans to consult on the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) covering the Northern Gateway sites in Atom Valley.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Mayor undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway (Chapter 4).
2. Note that a further report will be brought back setting out the outcome of the consultation.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester is recommended to

1. Approve the undertaking of a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway

Contact Officers

Alex Maynard, alex.maynard@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Report authors must identify which paragraph relating to the following issues:

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Mayor undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway.
2. Note that a further report will be brought back setting out the outcome of the consultation. to a future meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for approval.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester is recommended to

1. Approve the undertaking of a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway.

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>Delivery of the Northern Gateway project will provide access to homes across a range of types and tenures and high-quality employment opportunities to a part of Greater Manchester which has been relatively economically disadvantaged.</p> <p>The development will also enhance access to social and transport infrastructure for new and existing residents.</p> <p>This proposal recommends a consultation on the delivery route for Northern Gateway which gives the affected communities the opportunity to make their views known.</p>
Health		
Resilience and Adaptation	G	<p>Detailed development proposals are to be agreed but a core principle for Northern Gateway is that provision of quality open space, including blue infrastructure, is integral to place making and an essential part of the development proposals.</p>
Housing	G	<p>This proposal will support the delivery of around 2,750 new homes as part of the Northern Gateway project, a proportion of which will be affordable homes of various tenures.</p> <p>It will also support economic development with local employment benefits, enhancing access to and affordability of homes for local residents.</p>
Economy	G	<p>Northern Gateway is the is one of Greater Manchester's Investment Zones and is a site of potentially international significance. It is the largest new employment site in Greater Manchester, a 'Giga-Scale Plus' opportunity which will see over 1m sqm of employment space developed, with significant associated employment, GVA, and growth implications.</p> <p>Its strategic location has the ability to attract national and inward investment from a multitude of sectors including advanced manufacturing, distribution and logistics, with innovation at its core.</p> <p>Development activity will be complemented by a package of training and skills interventions to ensure new high-quality jobs are accessible to local people.</p>
Mobility and Connectivity	G	<p>Northern Gateway will bring significant investment in transport infrastructure in the north-east of Greater Manchester, including Strategic Road Network and Local Road Network improvements.</p> <p>Alongside this will be enhancement of existing public transport provision and creation of new public transport options and sustainable travel modes serving the new developments.</p> <p>Modern businesses, particularly those in frontier sectors, require high-quality digital connections. The development will be underpinned by provision of this digital infrastructure for both employment and residential uses.</p>

Carbon, Nature and Environment	A	Physical development has unavoidable impacts on local air quality but these will be managed and mitigated as much as possible and the most material impacts will be largely confined to the delivery phase. Mitigation against long-term environmental impacts will be incorporated into development proposals. Delivery of new low- and zero-carbon homes and commercial premises will improve the average efficiency of properties across Greater Manchester and contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2038. Detailed development proposals are not fixed but biodiversity enhancement is a mandatory requirement for all new developments.	
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		Delivery of new low- and zero-carbon homes and commercial premises will improve the average efficiency of properties across Greater Manchester and contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2038.	
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.

Carbon Assessment

Overall Score

Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential		Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements for biodiversity, energy efficiency, and carbon reduction set out in Places for Everyone and GMS.
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings		Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements for biodiversity, energy efficiency, and carbon reduction set out in Places for Everyone and GMS.
Transport		
Active travel and public transport		Details of public transport and active travel interventions are to be determined but will represent an enhancement over existing.
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		Details of development proposals are to be determined but principles of decreased personal vehicle use and increased sustainable transport modes as proportion of overall travel are agreed.
Access to amenities		Details of development proposals are to be determined but principles of decreased personal vehicle use and increased sustainable transport modes as proportion of overall travel are agreed. Allocations within Places for Everyone include local amenity uses alongside residential and employment development, improving access to these services by sustainable modes of transport.
Vehicle procurement	N/A	

Land Use	
Land use	<p>Development includes land currently in agricultural use being developed for residential and employment purposes. Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements set out in Places for Everyone and GMS which require enhancements to biodiversity and protection of existing environmental assets.</p>
No associated carbon impacts expected.	<p>High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.</p> <p>Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.</p> <p>Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.</p> <p>Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.</p>

Risk Management

None.

Legal Considerations

Consultation must be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation. The GMCA legal team, in consultation with Bury and Rochdale counterparts, will ensure the appropriate processes are followed.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None.

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

1. Atom Valley, Mayoral Development Zone (GMCA approval 29 July 2022)
2. Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway – In Principle Decision (GMCA approval 12 July 2024)

Tracking/ Process

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

No

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?

N/A

Bee Network Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 In January 2025, GMCA endorsed the preparation of an updated Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and underpinning 10-year Growth & Prevention Delivery Plan ('Delivery Plan'), which brings together priority actions to be delivered over the coming years to realise the GMS vision.

1.2 A key focus for the Delivery Plan will be the activity required to unlock growth through the successful development and regeneration of our places, working collaboratively with our public and private sector partners. Our collective approach will need to ensure the continuation of a growing global city centre, along with a wider city region of thriving boroughs and vibrant town centres across GM. Fundamental to this will be the delivery of well-connected employment and housing sites with our growth plans benefitting all our residents over the 10-year period.

1.3 This paper sets out the approach as it relates to Northern Gateway, focusing on the proposed implementation of a Mayoral Development Corporation to support delivery of this transformative project.

1.4 Northern Gateway is a flagship Greater Manchester development and the single largest employment allocation in the North. It is an essential component of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone and one of the Greater Manchester Investment Zones. Its successful delivery is critical to realising the objectives of the Places for Everyone joint plan and the GMS.

1.5 In July 2024 GMCA agreed in principle to the creation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) for Northern Gateway and confirmed that detailed options for an MDC could be explored with officers from Bury, Oldham, and Rochdale Councils.

1.6 Since that time, work has been ongoing across GMCA, Bury, and Rochdale officers to progress investigations into an MDC for Northern Gateway.

2. Mayoral Development Corporations

2.1 Development Corporations can be important tools for delivering large-scale development, including mixed-use regeneration, transformational urban extensions, and new settlements.

2.2 In the right circumstances, these powerful vehicles can bring a number of advantages to complex projects, including:

2.2.1 A focus on coordination and consistent delivery from a dedicated body with a specific purpose to develop and deliver a strategic vision for a defined area;

2.2.2 Highly visible public sector commitment coupled with broad public- and private-sector expertise at board level as a driver for private investment; and

2.2.3 Powers to facilitate the delivery of the project.

2.3 The Localism Act 2011 set out the parameters for creation of locally-led Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs), where elected mayors designate MDCs in consultation with their combined authorities. These powers were conferred on the Mayor of Greater Manchester by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017.

2.4 These powers were used by the Mayor of Greater Manchester in September 2019 to establish an MDC for Stockport Town Centre West, which has gone on to deliver the ambitious regeneration programme for that part of the town.

3. Mayoral Development Corporation for Northern Gateway

3.1 Deloitte were commissioned to develop a Delivery Vehicle Options Appraisal (DVOA) to build upon recommendations of the July 2024 GMCA report, to provide robust evidence to determine the appropriate delivery vehicle for Northern Gateway.

3.2 The DVOA assessed a series of options and refined these into a shortlist – the shortlist was then analysed, including consideration of the complexity of this being a cross-boundary scheme.

3.3 Deloitte's assessment concluded the delivery vehicle with the greatest ability to support the effective delivery of Northern Gateway is an MDC. This stems from the MDC's capacity to maintain local accountability and explore potential enhanced powers, alongside a series of additional benefits:

- 3.3.1 Retains local accountability and local community input;
- 3.3.2 Provides delivery and governance stability in the long-term;
- 3.3.3 Streamlines private sector engagement by acting as a “front door”;
- 3.3.4 Boosts the profile of the Northern Gateway programme;
- 3.3.5 Ring-fences and provides sufficient resources for delivery;
- 3.3.6 Convenes the public sector by establishing a single institutional platform;
- 3.3.7 Has the ability to explore powers such as, land assembly, plan-making and financial incentives for accelerated delivery;
- 3.3.8 Has previous examples to use as a benchmark and does not rely on pending legislation.

3.4 It is for these reasons that it is recommended that work continues to establish an MDC for Northern Gateway, with the next stage being a formal consultation.

4. MDC Consultation

- 4.1 As noted above, the designation of Mayoral Development Corporations is governed in Greater Manchester by the Localism Act 2011 Part 8, Chapter 2, as modified by the Schedule to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 (“The Act”).
- 4.2 This provides that the Mayor may designate a Mayoral development area only if consultation has been concluded in accordance with the Act. Authorisation is sought within this Report to endorse the Mayor carrying out this consultation.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the consultation is carried out in accordance with the Act, which stipulates the following statutory consultees:
 - 4.3.1 Members of the GMCA;
 - 4.3.2 MPs whose parliamentary constituency contains part of the proposed area (in this case James Frith for Bury North; Christian Wakeford for Bury South; Elsie Blundell for Middleton North; and Graham Stringer for Blackley and Middleton South);
 - 4.3.3 Each district council whose areas are within the proposed boundary (in this case Bury and Rochdale); and
 - 4.3.4 Any other person whom the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.

4.4 For Northern Gateway, similar to the process for the Stockport Town Centre West MDC, the consultation is proposed to be extended to all residents and businesses, and Council Members in each district for the proposed MDC area.

4.5 It is proposed that the consultation will also be publicly accessible through the GM Consult engagement platform, providing information about the proposal and appropriate supporting materials.

4.6 It is proposed that the name and boundary of the MDC are included as part of the consultation, as follows:

MDC Name: Atom Valley Northern Gateway Mayoral Development Corporation

MDC Boundary: See Appendix A

5. Next Steps

5.1 After the consultation has concluded, responses will be analysed and a report made to Bury and Rochdale Cabinets and GMCA on the results.

5.2 In accordance with the Act, The Mayor must have regard to any comments made in response by the consultees; and in the event any comments received are not accepted by the Mayor, the Mayor must publish a statement giving the reasons for non-acceptance.

5.3 Consultation on the Northern Gateway MDC will allow statutory and additional consultees to provide a response to the proposals, and for these responses to be reflected as part of subsequent work to progress the implementation of the MDC, including the development of a constitution and confirmation of resources.

5.4 In alignment with the consultation, the key matters for determination in creation of an MDC for Northern Gateway will be developed further. This work will include details of a developed rationale for intervention; purpose, aims and objectives of the MDC; governance and decision-making; financial considerations; risks and resources. These will be set out in a future report to GMCA.

5.5 Subject to the consultation results, if the Mayor decides to go ahead, he will issue a notice he intends to create an MDC for Northern Gateway. The consideration period for the designation of a Mayoral Development Area is 21 days beginning with the day the document proposing the designation of the Mayoral Development Area is laid before GMCA in accordance with the standing orders of GMCA.

- 5.6 Following this period, the Mayor must publicise the designation and notify the Secretary of State of the designation setting out the name to be given to the Mayoral Development Corporation for the area. The Secretary of State must issue an Order to bring this into effect.
- 5.7 Should the recommendations in this Report be approved, a Shadow MDC Board will be established in advance of an approval to implement an MDC, to provide interim oversight to drive forward the delivery of Northern Gateway at pace.