Councillor: Michael Holly (in the chair)

Councillors: Susan Haworth (Bolton)
Roy Walker (Bury)
Ahmed Ali (Manchester)
Chris Goodwin (Oldham)
Kate Lewis (Salford)
Peter Malcolm (Rochdale – substitute for Cllr Biant)
Mark Hunter (Stockport)
Elise Wilson (Stockport)
Yvonne Cartey (Tameside)
John Holden (Trafford)
Barry Brotherton (Trafford)
Charles Rigby (Wigan)

Other attendees: Cllr Sean Anstee (Portfolio Lead for Skills, Employment and Apprenticeships)

Officers: Eamonn Boylan (Chief Executive, GMCA)
Susan Ford (Statutory Scrutiny Officer, GMCA)
Simon Nokes (Executive Director Policy & Strategy, GMCA)
Gemma Marsh (Assistant Director – Skills (Policy, Strategy & Delivery, GMCA)
Mat Ainsworth (Assistant Director – Employment (Policy, Strategy & Delivery, GMCA)
Ross Macrae (GMCA)
Emma Stonier (Governance and Scrutiny, GMCA)

Apologies: Councillors: Cecile Biant (Rochdale)
Grace Fletcher-Hackwood (Manchester)

E01/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cecile Biant and Grace Fletcher-Hackwood.

E02/18 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair raised the collapse of Carillion as an item of urgent business. The Chief Executive provided the Committee with a verbal update on the work that was underway to understand the likely impact of the collapse on Greater Manchester. Work was taking place with partners across GM to establish the extent of Carillion contracts which include both construction projects and facilities management.

Carillion was the principal contractor in the SEMMMS Road and discussions were
taking place with the joint venture partners to establish how these liabilities could be taken on. Carillion was also the main contractor for Tameside College and conversations were underway about how this work could continue with new partners. Legal Advisors were examining the relationship between Carillion and Manchester Airport Group (MAG), as stakeholders in the development of the Airport City/Enterprise Zone. It was stressed that Carillion was not a stakeholder in Manchester Airport but a partner in the Airport Enterprise Zone.

Members were informed that to better understand the impact of the collapse on the supply chain the GMCA and Districts were working with GM Chamber of Commerce, and the picture would become clearer over the coming weeks. Government has indicated they will support public sector contracts, services and jobs and that Greater Manchester was in communication with Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who is leading the government taskforce, to urge the government to ensure that protections are robust as possible.

Members expressed concern about sub-contractor jobs which were part of the supply chain and supported any action GM could take to address this. The Government taskforce was noted as having a clear remit. GM will support, as far as they can, local businesses affected by this and they were keen to work with local partners and Councils to assess what support could be offered.

The Committee requested that they were updated in relation to the implications for Greater Manchester as these emerged.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 8 DECEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held 8 December 2017 were submitted for consideration. A Member requested that the following amendment was made to paragraph 2, page 9;

“It was proposed to members that they may wish to consider the item Fair Economy and Fair Wages under a rapid review task and finish group to ensure this was incorporated into the work of the Committee. The Committee agreed to this proposal. A Member felt instead that this subject was a core and continuous issue for this Committee. It was requested that any members interested in Chairing this group contact the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.”

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held 8 December 2017 as an accurate record, subject to the amendment outlined above and minor typographical amends.

**WORK AND SKILLS OVERVIEW AND UPDATE**
Cllr Sean Anstee, Portfolio Leader for Skills, Employment and Apprenticeships introduced a collection of reports which provided an update on the work and skills programme.

i. Work and Skills Highlight Report

The Committee were provided with an overview of the Work and Skills Highlight Report. Key areas noted were:

- GM continued to work with the Department of Education (DfE) in order to progress the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) for 2019/20;
- Work underway with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to get a pilot Institute of Technology (IoT) into Greater Manchester;
- Projects were being developed to ensure the best use of the apprenticeship levy which included a GM public sector approach to apprenticeships;
- GM support continued the recommendations of the Area Based Review (ABR) of post 16 provision; and
- The upcoming launch of the Working Well Work and Health Programme expansion which was one of the first programmes to offer employment and health and wellbeing support in one place.

A number of Members requested more information about the risks flagged in the RAG ratings of the Highlight Report were. There was a need for a greater understanding of why some of the areas of work were rated ‘amber’ (progressing but with risks). It was confirmed that this would be provided in the form of a brief update.

A Member asked what was in place to increase access to skills training for the significant number of low-paid workers in GM, who found it hardest to access training leading to better employment. The predicted growth in jobs at levels 3 and 4 across GM was also highlighted and it was asked whether there was enough support for adults with low skills or no skills to achieve level 2 and 3 qualifications, to enable them to take advantage of these opportunities. Members’ attention was drawn to the Working Well Work and Health Programme. The programme has four pillars; to support those in work with progression; to support and identify those in work and at risk of falling out of employment; targeted support for those out of work to get back into employment and support for those who are unable to work. It is anticipated that these will deliver tangible benefits across Greater Manchester.

The Mayoral Manifesto commitment to develop a Good Employers Charter was highlighted as was engagement with employers around issues such as low pay and training to encourage them to address this. It was noted that engagement with Small and Medium Enterprises could be challenging, but that work was taking place with larger employers around engagement with their supply chains in relation to changing employer practices.

The opportunities presented by the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB), to increase the skill attainment of adults and to engage with schools to increase levels of qualifications, was also highlighted to Members.

A Member noted the concerns outlined in the report about the implementation and local impact of Universal Credit and asked whether there were adequate local resources to alleviate these concerns. Members were informed that Greater
Manchester had lobbied Government to ensure that as Universal Credit was rolled out the process went as smoothly as possible and that people were able to access relevant support. Universal Credit has been rolled out in Trafford and Oldham and lessons learnt will be taken from this prior to roll out across the rest of Greater Manchester. The positive local relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Job Centre Plus (JCP) allows issues to be raised and dealt with effectively.

Members also asked for further clarity on the section on apprenticeship travel and the Area Based Review (ABR). Members were updated that the current focus of the Area Based Review was primarily around the Trafford and Stockport merger. Apprenticeship Travel had been a Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) scheme to assist apprentices with the cost of travel.

A Member asked for information regarding who sat on the Education and Employability Board mentioned in the report. It was confirmed this would be circulated. This Board had been set up as part of the review of Children’s Services to ensure that there was a clear link between educational attainment in schools and the post 16 provision and employment.

A Member commented on the red rating for early leavers on page 9 of the report and requested further information on how this was being tackled. Officers explained that it had been expected that all referrals would complete the 2 year programme; however reassessments because of changes benefits system meant that participants were no longer eligible for support. Ways of resolving this in future programmes were being looked into.

Members highlighted the importance, alongside apprenticeships, of general education and transferable skills.

Members asked whether the Combined Authority monitored equality outcomes and whether there was evidence of positive outcomes through interventions. It was confirmed that equality outcomes were measured and that Members would be provided with examples of some of the positive outcomes achieved.

ii. Careers & Enterprise Network

Members received a presentation which gave a summary of the Bridge GM Programme. It was confirmed that the Department for Education had recently launched their Careers Strategy; GM had received this positively as work was already underway in GM towards items outlined in the strategy.

Key areas highlighted in the presentation were;

- The close alignment between the strategy and GM’s new work and skills framework for careers ‘Bridge GM’;
- Challenges faced and solutions and opportunities to address these and the consensus that careers can help tackle some of these issues;
- The Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) was helping to drive the agenda forward; including defining the framework for ‘life ready’ and supporting the successful transition to and from secondary school;
- The joined up approach taken between education, business and the provider
market to ensure that the right opportunities meet the right young people;

- The five pillars of Bridge GM which were outlined as; creating an evidence base of what works, enhancing the curriculum offer, a dynamic network of businesses and education supporting young people, simplification of a busy marketplace and high quality school-led prestigious careers programmes;

- Existing strengths available to support the GMCA ambition which included; ability to flex national models to fit GM and local objectives, convening capabilities, 77 leaders in Secondary Schools driving programmes, upcoming networking event between businesses and pupils, an online toolkit and match funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to fund Enterprise Co-ordinators;

- Bridge GM’s aims included; every young person to have at least one encounter with a business in every year they are in education, young people to have first-hand experience of the workplace by age 16 and all young people to experience high quality careers programmes. It was noted these underpinned the wider targets set out in the GMS;

- The involvement of headteachers and senior leaders in the programme which was highlighted as innovative;

- Achievements to date include; 77 schools and colleges signed up to the Enterprise Advisor Network; 160 schools working towards a quality mark in careers through Inspiring Information, Advice and Guidance; 45 schools and businesses matched to deliver the Enterprise Adviser Network in GM and 3000 young people having received Apprenticeship Information, Advice and Guidance; and

- The ambition that by 2020 there were school led programmes in place to support young people across GM.

Members were particularly interested in the networking event. They asked:

- Whether the networking conference for businesses and school pupils had been ambitious enough in terms of reach?
- How businesses and young people would judge whether the event had been a success?
- How the participants had been selected?
- What was being done to encourage schools to get disadvantaged pupils to take part in these events to broaden their awareness of available opportunities?

Members were informed that young people attending the event came from 20 schools, with 15 young people from each school and at least one school involved from each GM District. This was the first time an event like this had been held and the ambition was to hold more events in future. It was also expected that more businesses would wish to engage with the programme over time and ideas were being discussed about how to get young people into businesses directly via work placements. Schools had been asked to select a range of young people aged 14-15 with a range of abilities and aspirations. The young people had also been asked to complete preparation exercises prior to attendance. Some of the expected outcomes were noted as; businesses enjoying the event, young people engaging and asking questions, alternative routes and possibilities opening up to young people and a change in perceptions on both sides.

Members were also advised that Enterprise Coordinators were placed in schools with
a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils. They work with Senior Business Leads and headteachers to address these challenges. They will also track which young people have received which activities. Additionally the business network ensures that the young person in that school will have at least one encounter with a business in each school year. Through this work it is expected that some of these challenges will begin to be addressed.

A Member noted issues being raised with the apprenticeship levy, particularly in relation to a drop in the number of apprentices, and asked whether this was something which was recognised in Greater Manchester. Actions regarding converting young people’s interest in apprenticeships were being considered. A project was also being looked at with schools who received the levy, to assess how they could employ apprentices in practice. Members were updated that overall the levy had seen a decrease in apprenticeships. It was agreed that more information regarding the impact of the apprenticeship levy on numbers would be shared with Members. There was work taking place regarding the levy this included; the public sector apprenticeship approach; the monitoring of figures; work with the Chamber of Commerce to understand the impact on Small Medium Enterprises and engagement with large employers around whether they intend to spend the levy to try and ensure this is not lost from GM. It was noted that the levy can also be used to upskill employees and work was needed to understand the jobs and skills required to take advantage of this. Expected Technical Education reforms were also emphasised to Members and the work taking place to encourage colleges to become ready for their implementation.

Members asked whether the programme had considered the support that trade unions may be able to give the programme. Officers explained that unions were engaged, through a Trade Union representative on the Skills and Employment Partnership, but there might be further opportunities for joint work in this area.

A Member enquired whether careers fairs still took place. It was confirmed they did and a very high profile north west event will take place in Manchester in March. There was an ongoing challenge to engage GM businesses to participate and work was underway to incentivise businesses to attend these events.

A Member asked about the overall trend in figures for those not in education, employment or training (NEET) across Greater Manchester. It was noted that there had been a slight decline in these figures but that this needed to be better understood. There had been a change in the statutory reporting duty means there is no longer a duty to include 18 year olds in these figures and further work was needed to assess the impact of this.

Members commented on the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) and queried whether there were contingency plans in place to support this work post Brexit. Members were updated that the Combined Authority had received positive signs from Government on this matter. There was an ongoing challenge to find match funding, but work was underway with partners and government departments to identify all possible sources of match funding. The challenges associated with sustaining this work were acknowledged, but the long-term goal was to embed change and build partnerships to ensure this approach was mainstreamed.
A Member asked what interventions were in place for 18-25 year olds in prisons to upskill them. It was commented that there was a wider need to identify routes for those who needed specialist support into employment or training. This was something which the Combined Authority needed to include in their analysis work. It was suggested by Members that the GMCA engaged with the probation service in relation to options for supporting young people in prison. The devolution of the criminal justice system presented opportunities for joint working to support offenders into employment. More flexible central funding for this work was essential to its success.

The role of uniformed services cadets and other voluntary sector groups were mentioned and the importance of these groups in developing life ready skills, as well as potential careers was recognised. Members’ were informed that the GMCA would be working with partners to look at all opportunities that young people could access to see where and how these could be linked into the wider work programme. It was confirmed that the voluntary sector were involved with this work, but this element was not reported in isolation, it was embedded within wider work. In future reports it was suggested that this work was emphasised to ensure that people recognised the role of the community and voluntary sector.

Members were notified of work to encourage employers to become school governors which would have the added benefit of improving the connections between schools and businesses. A change in the ways businesses recruited young people was also highlighted to Members, with some businesses moving to recruiting young people and providing them with the relevant training and qualifications, rather than employing graduates. Greater Manchester needed to be aware of this trend when planning programmes.

A Member mentioned the 77 schools involved in the Bridge GM programme and asked what the overall figure this was out of was. Information was also requested on the geographical spread of the 77 schools and the 45 matched business.

Members asked how the work of the Combined Authority aligned with work and skills programmes taking place in each local authority to avoid duplication. It was highlighted that work at a Greater Manchester level and work at a local level was complementary, but an ongoing dialogue was needed to ensure that there wasn’t unintended duplication. To assist with this the GMCA convenes a regular meeting of local work and skills leads. There was further engagement through the development of the Greater Manchester Strategy Implementation Plan.

A Member noted the inclusion of the ability to flex national models to fit the local needs of Greater Manchester and the ability of Greater Manchester to influence the curriculum and asked for examples of how this worked in practice to be shared outside of the meeting.

iii. **Low Skills and Long Term Unemployed**

Members received a presentation which provided a general overview in relation to employment, unemployment, skills and older residents in Greater Manchester. This provided the rationale for the work and skills programmes put in place. The Committee were informed that the changes in unemployment data following the introduction of Universal Credit was being assessed to ensure that the GMCA had access to detailed enough data to inform its policy decisions.
Members questioned what initiatives were in place in relation to getting older workers into employment. The work of the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub was being developed and a key strand of this was economy and work. Work was underway to understand the issues stopping older people moving into and progressing in jobs. Some of the elements of the Working Well Programme would support this cohort. The Ambition for Ageing Campaign and the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations were also commissioning work to examine the interventions needed to support older carers back into work. Additionally the Autumn Statement committed Government to working with Greater Manchester to identify solutions to tackling unemployment in older people. Greater Manchester was working with partners to develop a pilot. Employers were also being engaged regarding their support for older workers, for example by developing flexible recruitment and pathways into roles. Members supported the project in development about how to support older carers into work and emphasised the importance of employment to improving health and wellbeing.

A Member noted that the data included in the presentation ended at age 64 and asked whether it was possible to incorporate data for ages 65+ which was important as the state retirement age rose. It was confirmed that this would be looked at and an update provided.

Members wished to receive regular updates on GM’s labour force data. A better understanding of the data was essential if the Committee were to understand the issue of inclusive growth which was at the heart of this Committee’s work.

A Member commented that the data in the report related to people over 50 in work was more positive than expected and that there seemed to have been progress on this which was reassuring.

iv. Skills Capital

Members received an update regarding Skills Capital Funding. This is a £71m pot of capital funding, which sits within the Local Growth Fund, and it is intended this will drive Skills Capital to support the Greater Manchester Strategy. A live procurement process was underway for the first round of funding. The second round of funding was going to launch in February 2018. A robust appraisal process has been developed for the assessment of bids. A paper is expected to be submitted to the Combined Authority meeting at the end of February and the Committee will be informed if there is any slippage relating to this date.

A Member queried whether the appraisal process took into account college inspection reports. It was confirmed that these were looked at as part of this process. It was also highlighted that Greater Manchester does not have an outstanding college and that it was intended to use Skills Capital and other resources to drive improvement and to have a positive impact on those accessing Further Education colleges.

A Member commented that performance was a nuanced picture, and that investment and support were both important in a college achieving outstanding ratings. The impact the fabric of a college would have on morale and performance should not be overlooked.
A Member asked how the key decision relating to the ‘Skills Funding Amendment to Funding’ scheduled for the February Combined Authority meeting was going to be dealt with in terms of scrutiny. The decision was related to an opportunity to retain elements of funding due to a change in policy and associated underspends. The GMCA wants to ensure that the funding is retained within Greater Manchester and not returned to government. The funding is intended to support the work and skills agenda within the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS). Members requested to receive this report on this at their February meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update on the Work and Skills Programme;
2. That a brief report would be provided related to the risks noted in the Highlight Report and the traffic light rating system (particularly amber and red ratings) and any actions to ameliorate these;
3. To receive recent statistics relating to the impact of the apprenticeship levy on apprenticeships starts;
4. To receive the membership and terms of reference the Education and Employability Board;
5. To receive the details of the 77 schools and 45 businesses engaged in the Bridge GM programme together with details of their geographical spread;
6. To receive information about the positive outcomes of interventions through Bridge GM, the Careers and Enterprise Centre and European Social Fund;
7. To receive an update on whether unemployment data for ages 65+ was available and thoughts about how data regarding this cohort was to be tackled in the light of the increasing state retirement age; and
8. That the Skills Funding Amendment to Funding in the key decisions was added as an agenda item for the February meeting.
Susan Ford, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, introduced the work programme. An updated version was tabled to Members.

It was noted that the February meeting was due to consider the GM Industrial Strategy, Funds for Strategic Projects post 2020, the Greater Manchester Strategy Performance Management Dashboard and the GM Digital Strategy.

Members were informed that Councillors Cecile Biant, Chris Goodwin, Kate Lewis, Charles Rigby and Yvonne Cartey had nominated themselves to sit on the task and finish group for a Fair Economy and Fair Wages and that the Statutory Scrutiny Officer would contact members to arrange meeting dates for this group.

Discussions were taking place with colleagues from the Airport to schedule an item on the Manchester Airport as a significant GM asset and the work programme would be updated once this had been agreed.

Members were updated that there would not be a meeting of this Committee in May 2018 but that one will take place in June 2018 and this date would be circulated to Members.

RESOLVED:

1. That officers update the work programme in light of comments made at the meeting;
2. That the Statutory Scrutiny Officer would contact members of the task and finish group to arrange meeting dates; and
3. That the date of the June meeting would be circulated to Members.