

**GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK**

**DRAFT TOPIC PAPER 1**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE GM SPATIAL FRAMEWORK**

**August 2010**

## INTRODUCTION

The Greater Manchester Strategy was adopted by AGMA in August 2009. It is our high level response to the fundamental policy challenge set out in the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER):

- to boost productivity so that the growth rate increases, and,
- to ensure that all parts of the city region and all its people enjoy improved economic opportunities as a result of a stronger economy.

The Greater Manchester Strategy is an added value strategy. It is based around 11 Strategic Priorities that are central to delivering the Strategy's vision:

***By 2020, the Manchester city region will have pioneered a new model for sustainable economic growth based around a more connected, talented and greener city region where the prosperity secured is enjoyed by the many and not the few.***

The Strategic Priorities are:

- **Early Years**
- **Better Life Chances**
- **The Highly Skilled**
- **Attracting Talent**
- **Transport**
- **Economic Base**
- **International Connectivity**
- **A Low Carbon Economy**
- **The Housing Market**
- **Effective Governance**
- **Sense of Place**

Through our groundbreaking work on the Greater Manchester Strategy Statutory we have committed to work differently to fully integrate our decision making and investment processes to optimise outcomes for Greater Manchester people.

The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework provides a new way to consider investment and development decisions which have a spatial focus across the work of all partners; it is the **spatial expression** of the Greater Manchester Strategy and sets out our spatial priorities for the next 10 – 15 years.

The GM Spatial Framework is not a fully comprehensive plan for Greater Manchester, but focuses on key agreed opportunities. The Framework will be a concise and selective guide to inform investment decisions by public and private sector partners, drawing from district core strategies and other local strategies and concentrating on issues and proposals which are important for

the conurbation as a whole and may require a joint commitment, for example to secure necessary supporting infrastructure

The **purpose** of the Spatial Framework is:

- **to provide a framework for collaboration for partners**
- **to provide a coherent set of spatial priorities for delivery and investment**
- **to support Local Development Frameworks (especially Core Strategies)**
- **to provide confidence that we have the land to deliver our growth strategy and thus fulfil the City Region's full potential as the engine of growth in the North**

### **The Scale of the Challenge.**

The past ten years have seen extraordinary changes in Greater Manchester:

- huge employment growth : 110,000 over the last 10 years as Manchester has transformed into a knowledge based economy;
- major growth in economic output;
- population growth of almost 67,000 between 2001 and 2008, with the population projected to rise still further by 2030;
- higher increases for those of working age, largely due to a (recently slowing) trend in economic migrants (30,700 international immigrants in 2008);
- rapid expansion of residential market in the Regional Centre;
- a fall in average household size from 2.46 in 1999 to 2.33 in 2007, significantly boosting the demand for housing.

**It is essential that GM has a framework within which growth can be accommodated sustainably; in locations which contribute to our objectives to raise economic performance by increasing the productivity of our businesses and workforce, and by connecting more of our residents to our success.**

### **SCOPE**

It is clear that spatial planning is important – decisions taken have long term consequences. The MIER highlighted the enormous impact spatial and planning policies, namely where and how firms and businesses locate their premises, have on economic growth and productivity. MIER was quite explicit that there was no rationale in spatial terms for supporting policies which try to redistribute activity in some places at the expense of others which are more productive.

Greater Manchester has a spatial form which is basically well structured and which can be further enhanced by careful location of new development and investment in infrastructure. We need a new approach which is not prescriptive, is based on the most up to date evidence and is flexible enough to allow us to respond to changing circumstances.

The abolition of the regional level of strategy and decision making has particular impacts – both positive and negative. We are facing a challenging time, when public sector resources will diminish and our ability to work collaboratively to achieve shared outcomes has never been more important. The GMSF is a unique opportunity which demonstrates the progress that Greater Manchester has made, through voluntary collaboration of the ten local authorities. It provides a shared and agreed framework within which all partners can work to deliver both at the local level and where appropriate at the sub regional level to maximise outcomes for our citizens.

The challenge for the GMSF is to:

- **enable the growth of existing agglomeration economies particularly in our city and town-centres;**
- **provide a framework within which we can manage economic growth whilst reducing our carbon emissions;**
- **address entrenched economic and social exclusion, and,**
- **create attractive places with high environmental quality.**

## **CURRENT AND EMERGING STATUTORY CITY REGION ‘SPATIAL STRATEGY’**

With the revocation and proposed abolition of Regional Spatial Strategy, the statutory spatial framework for Greater Manchester is provided by the development plans of the 10 local authorities. All are currently preparing their Core Strategies (which will replace UDP’s) and they will all be subject to Examination within a short time period .Each Core Strategy will:

The original starting point for all Core Strategy work was the statutory Regional Spatial Strategy. Even before RSS was revoked it was clear that the economic circumstances in which it was produced have been transformed; we are emerging from a deep recession the extent of which remains uncertain, and post recession assumptions only recently made may not be relevant.

By necessity the current Core Strategies are ‘backward looking’ to be in compliance with RSS. They are all planning to accommodate the significant growth which was anticipated several years ago. Whilst we are strongly committed to sustainable economic growth along with a commensurate increase in the range and quality of housing, the timescales for delivery and the type of product may be different to assumptions made in the past.

Districts are reconsidering some of the assumptions and options for development in the light of the loss of RSS. There is no longer an

overarching framework setting out expected levels of employment and housing growth for example. Equally, RSS set the context and priority for the Regional Centre – no single document at district level can do this as the Regional Centre straddles three local authority areas. The GMSF provides the opportunity to address those genuinely strategic issues which cannot be properly considered at the local level and which add value to both districts and the sub region as a whole.

## **CREATING SUCCESSFUL PLACES.**

The Manchester city region is not a homogenous area but a diverse mix of high value and performing economic centres adjacent to some of the most deprived communities in the country. This mix presents a unique profile and set of challenges. We have to get the experience of our regional centre, our town centres and our local neighbourhoods right for the people who live, work and play here to fulfil our vision of a city region which competes powerfully on the world stage. We need to continually raise the quality of life across Greater Manchester - all ten districts are critical.

A key role for the spatial framework is to help to create the conditions to allow all of our places to flourish and prosper. The GMS identifies the starting point as the quality of life and experience of all who call the city region 'home' and for those who work, invest and play here. The 'ingredients' which make a place somewhere people want to 'invest' in (either time, money or energy) include good public services, a range of housing which meets needs and satisfies aspirations; a seamless and high quality transport network, a valued and functional public realm, a range of accessible retail and leisure opportunities, high quality and safe green space, a rich heritage and cultural offer. All ten districts are critical; there has to be a continual raising of quality of life levels right across the city region.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Greater Manchester is a functional economic area and is the largest economy in the North of the country. With a population of just over 2.5 million, it accounts for over 40% of the North West's total productivity and, together with Leeds, has the greatest momentum, capacity and economic diversity to offer a realistic alternative to London.

We have many strengths to build upon:

- The Manchester city region has a **strong and diverse economic base**. It has the largest concentration of firms and businesses engaged in ICT, Digital New Media and Financial and Professional Services outside of London. We have an important medical research sector with strong links between medical facilities and Universities. Collectively we have approximately 700,000 people employed in key new-economy sectors (e.g., ICT, Digital New Media, Health Services, Financial and Professional Services, low carbon industries).

- The city region is home to major transport **infrastructure** including Manchester Airport, rail hubs (Piccadilly, Victoria), the Manchester Ship Canal, and a strategic highway network comprising the M60, M61, M62, M66, M67 motorways.
- We also have a strong **cultural offer** focused primarily but not exclusively on the Regional Centre. Major events and venues such as Lowry Centre, War Museum North, Manchester International Festival, Bridgewater Hall, and first class sporting facilities at Old Trafford and Sportcity all contribute to the vitality of the city region.
- Across the city region we have areas of **outstanding environmental quality** which form a critical element of the city region's attractiveness. The city region has many environmental assets including its network of river valleys, canals and areas of landscape value, for example, Saddleworth Moors. The role of green infrastructure will become increasingly important in the future.

Manchester also has a number of challenges identified in the MIER that it must address if it is to achieve its full potential:

- Global and UK populations are going to continue to grow - this growth needs to be accommodated somewhere. Urban concentrations which are effectively governed and planned are the **most sustainable location for growth** as they combine efficient use of scarce land and resources and self sustaining economic scale.
- There are clearly challenges which have to be faced however in **decoupling growth from an increase in carbon emissions**, improving the environmental performance of existing building stock, changing behaviour regarding the use of the private car, heightening of flood risk and urban heat island effects by increasing development densities in a bid to increase resource and energy efficiency.
- Although GM is characterised by relatively high agglomeration economies, firms in the region do not exploit these as effectively as firms elsewhere in the UK. Their **productivity** is lower than we should expect given the size of GM's economy, and the region is therefore punching below its weight in terms of productivity. The skill levels of our resident workforce contribute to our productivity gap
- Within the conurbation itself there are significant **disparities** in performance which, as MIER confirmed have been reinforced over recent years. All local authority districts in GM have seen rates of worklessness reduce until the very recent past, but with increasingly polarised neighbourhood and individual outcomes.

- Congestion on the **transport networks** within GM is an important cost of increasing the size of the city, and MIER identified that improvements to transport would provide the largest economic payoff.
- The M60 ring is a critical part of the strategic highway network but is also very important as a local distributor. Development proposals which add local and commuter traffic to the M60 are problematic in sustainability terms as they encourage travel by car.
- New developments in future will rely to a large extent on the **current transport infrastructure**. While significant capital projects are planned to extend Metrolink and introduce the guided busway, it is unlikely that there will be major new capital schemes forthcoming which will alter the existing networks to any substantive degree. It is critical therefore that planned new development is cognisant of the capacity of the current networks and does not place unrealistic expectations upon transport providers, both public and private, to service locations and uses outside of the current networks unless there are exceptional reasons to do so.
- There is some evidence from house prices of a mismatch between supply and demand. In other words, there are not enough houses in the places people want to live. The city region has to be known as a place that offers high quality housing in places where people at all levels of the market, including the highly skilled and talented, will choose, and can afford, to live and invest. In the city region as a whole, we need to **create more places in which people want to live**, expand the choice and quality of homes, by investing in both existing and new homes.
- All new housing investment needs to enhance the quality of the housing offer, to create a better mix of house types, sizes and tenures in line with people's aspirations, and to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.
- Historically Manchester was the centre of heavy industry, which has left its mark on the landscape. It is important that the effects of pollution from the past are dealt with and that we ensure that today's activities do not continue to pollute the environment and lower **environmental quality**. The City region also has high levels of congestion in places which potentially threatens some of its locational advantages. The excellent road infrastructure has resulted in major parts being designated an Air Quality Management Area, with the level of carbon dioxide emissions deriving from road transport being significantly above the national average. Flood risk is a significant issue in some locations within the city region.
- The Greater Manchester Green Belt covers a substantial part of the region and has been effective in helping to focus development in the urban areas. The current levels of growth being planned for the city

region will can largely be accommodated on brownfield land within the existing urban area.

- The city region has some of the poorest **health outcomes** in the country, with particular concentrations linked to our more deprived areas. The link between urban planning and health is as old as planning itself. Many of the first activities which would currently be recognised as urban planning arose from concerns about health: for example the development and enforcement of improved sanitation systems in order to reduce communicable diseases, or the introduction of land use zoning in order to separate housing from polluted industrial areas.
- The physical environment can facilitate or deter a healthy lifestyle. The likelihood of people to walk, cycle or play in the open air is affected by the convenience, quality and safety of pedestrian and cycling routes and by the availability of local open space. This is particularly important for children, as the habit of healthy regular exercise is generally formed (or not formed) during childhood. A key determinant of physical wellbeing is economic wellbeing. We need to equip many more of our residents to access work through both skills training and physical accessibility of appropriate employment opportunities.

## **SPATIAL OUTCOMES**

The Spatial Framework sets out the guiding principles for all development and investment to maximise our ability to support the delivery of GMS.

By implementing the approach in the SF we will:

- **adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change**
- **optimise the economic performance of the city region by realising agglomeration benefits and connect more of our residents to opportunities**
- **create more attractive places to live**
- **reduce the need to travel particularly by car**
- **make a positive contribution to the health and well-being of our residents**
- **improve the quality of the natural and built environment**
- **ensure the most efficient use of natural resources**

## **SPATIAL PRIORITIES**

The GMS identifies those key assets of the Manchester city region on which future sustainable success depends:

The **Regional Centre** at the core of conurbation is the strongest in UK, employing about 160,000 people, with strong growth forecasts for the next 20

years. The Regional Centre, and particularly the city centre, shared by the cities of Manchester and Salford, already competes internationally but needs to continue to improve and develop to remain globally competitive. The future success of all districts in GM and many beyond depends on the ability of the Regional Centre to ‘punch its weight’

Within the Regional Centre there are several areas which will play a particular role over the next 10-15 years:

- **The Corridor Manchester:** stretching from St Peter’s Square to Whitworth Park contains a world class HEI cluster, including the UK’s largest University – Manchester University. The businesses and institutions that occupy the Corridor employ 55,000 people and generate £2.8 billion while over 40% of activity is knowledge intensive, almost double the national average.
- **Media City:** Critical infrastructure for creative and digital/new media
- **Sportcity :** an established location for internationally significant sports facilities
- **Salford and Trafford Quays :** increasingly important role as logistics hubs for the west of the conurbation, utilising waterways and links with the port of Liverpool.

The city region is characterised by a compact urban form and a network of sub regional **town centres** which are an important element of the distinctiveness and identity of our different places. Our town centres are struggling however – during the recent period of economic growth all 8 experienced a decline in employment. Town centres are the most accessible places and should benefit the concentration of activity there, retail, leisure, services. We need to review our approach to town centres, and in parallel our approach to the location of ‘town centre uses’ in more peripheral locations.

**Manchester Airport** is the only global gateway in the North of England currently connecting over 22 million passengers with more destinations than any other UK airport. The Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER) acknowledges the unique asset of Manchester Airport: the largest outside the South East. The growth of Manchester Airport is crucial to the wellbeing and prosperity of the region it serves.

**Trafford Park** is the largest industrial estate in Europe and one of the North west’s most significant assets. It is located close to the Trafford Centre, an out of centre regional shopping facility co-located with a range of regional sport and leisure facilities, office development and proposals for significant housing development.

Our ongoing research will help us to identify other key locations which are critical to continuing sustainable growth and characteristics of successful places which we need to replicate. The SF needs to be flexible enough to

accommodate the demands of a changing economy and to enable us to compete effectively at a global level.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is important that the Spatial Framework is viewed as an integral element of our decision making processes and is not seen only as a planning document. We must ensure that our strategic investment and decision making is informed by a common set of principles which have one shared objective – the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy.