

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee – 10 February 2022

Subject: Manchester Work and Skills Strategy Refresh

Report of: Director of Inclusive Economy

Summary

This report provides an update on the development of a new Work and Skills Strategy for Manchester, to replace the previous version which has reached the end of its life.

The first draft of the new Work and Skills Strategy is attached as Appendix 1. This includes the findings and draft priorities that have been drawn from engagement and research.

The new strategy will set out the city's work and skills priorities that matter to the people and businesses of Manchester, and how working towards identified collective goals will help to deliver the ambitions of the Our Manchester Strategy.

An overview of the mixed-methods approach to research and engagement is also provided in this report, along with the proposed next steps through to adoption of the strategy by Executive in the new municipal year.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider, comment on and endorse the draft strategy.

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
Climate change and zero-carbon will be an important theme in the new strategy, which will seek to address how we can ensure that our residents have the skills needed to support the transition to zero-carbon and businesses have access to the skills & talent needed to deliver key programmes. The strategy will also consider how our education and training providers can become equipped to deliver the necessary courses and qualifications to support the city's zero carbon target.

Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The refreshed strategy will define how Manchester works together to create skills, employment and training opportunities that support business growth and connect employment opportunities to our residents.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The strategy will define how partners across Manchester work together to ensure that residents are able to gain the skills and experience they need to be successful in the labour market, moving into more highly skilled, more sustainable and better paid opportunities.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The strategy will directly address the theme of inclusion, and how we can ensure that more of our residents are able to benefit from the city's economic success.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The strategy will address how we can ensure that our residents have the skills needed to support the transition to zero-carbon, and how our education and training providers can become equipped to deliver the necessary courses and qualifications to support this.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The strategy will directly address the theme of digital skills and how we can ensure that residents can develop the digital skills they need to access and be successful in the labour market and that digital businesses in the city have the access to the talent they need to continue to grow.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents

are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Refresh of Manchester's Work and Skills Strategy, Economy Scrutiny (June 2021)
- Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025, Executive (March 2021)
- Work and Skills Strategy 2016-21

1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. Skills, employment and business growth remain fundamental components of Manchester's current and future economy. They are crucial to making sure that the city continues to grow and we build an inclusive economy, in which all our residents can benefit from the city's success.
- 1.2. Manchester's Work and Skills Strategy 2016-21 has reached the end of its life and is being revised and updated to respond to the significant changes and challenges that we have experienced over the last five years.
- 1.3. Since the last report to Economy Scrutiny in June 2021, officers have undertaken significant research and engagement work to determine the main themes and priorities for the new strategy. This has consisted of both desktop research using local and national sources and data, alongside a process of listening to our residents, partners and other stakeholders about their experience of the work and skills system in Manchester.
- 1.4. The first draft of the strategy, based on the findings of the research and engagement conducted, is appended to this report. It includes details of the city, policy and strategic context, and the proposed priorities that the partners across the city can work towards, in support of the Our Manchester Strategy and in alignment with other key city strategies.
- 1.5. The intention is to conduct further consultation on this first draft, particularly the proposed priorities, during February – March 2022, with a view to the final version of the strategy being adopted by Executive in the new municipal year.

2.0. Strategic links

- 2.1. In developing the new Strategy, the linkages and dependencies with and between other Manchester strategies have been mapped out, to ensure clear interfaces and avoid duplication.
- 2.2. The Our Manchester Strategy provides the overall strategic framework for the city, and the Work and Skills Strategy is one of the key city-wide strategies that support it, directly delivering on several of the Our Manchester themes. The priorities that have been developed for the new Work and Skills Strategy, in response to the research and engagement conducted, have been mapped back to at least one of the Our Manchester 'We Wills' to ensure alignment.
- 2.3. The new strategy uses the Our Manchester Strategy themes as a structural framework. This makes it clear how the strategy's priorities, outcomes and indicators will contribute to the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy.
- 2.4. The Work and Skills Strategy will support a range of other city strategies including:
 - Local Industrial Strategy
 - Manchester Climate Change Action Plan

- Our Manchester Disability Plan
- Manchester's Cultural Ambition 2016-26
- Manchester Inclusion Strategy
- Family Poverty Strategy
- Youth Offer
- Adult Education and Skills Plan
- Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older
- Powering Recovery: Manchester's Recovery and Investment Plan

2.4 The main strategies that will themselves support the Work and Skills Strategy include:

- Manchester Digital Strategy 2021-26
- Adult Education and Skills Plan 2016-25
- GM Transport Strategy and City Centre Transport Strategy to 2040

2.5 The Work and Skills Strategy also responds to the recommendations made in the Marmot report 'Build Back Fairer in Greater Manchester', which makes clear connections between work and health outcomes. The new Work and Skills Strategy will ensure that we can make the right connections into this work, as Manchester develops its action plan to deliver the report's recommendations.

3.0. Research and engagement

3.1. A mixed-methods approach to research and engagement has been planned and conducted by the Work and Skills Team and Strategy and Economic Policy Team. This has included:

- The collation and analysis of information from a wide range of sources including local, regional and national policy and strategy, data and statistics, and other relevant research papers and publications.
- A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to help understand the themes emerging from the research, the implications and opportunities for Manchester.
- Analysis of findings from previous recent engagement in the city including for the Our Manchester Strategy refresh.
- A first phase of engagement with residents, employers, VCSE organisations and employment support providers, learning providers, and other key groups, through 1:1 conversations, focus groups, attendance at wider meetings and online surveys. There has been a particular focus on lived experience.

3.2 A list of the organisations and groups consulted in the first phase of engagement is appended to the draft strategy.

3.3 The findings from the research and engagement have now been analysed and several priorities have emerged. These have been mapped against the themes of the Our Manchester Strategy, as shown in the appended draft.

3.4 Once Economy Scrutiny Committee has commented on the draft strategy, and any resulting changes made, a second phase of engagement will commence, primarily online, during February and March. Consultees from the first phase will be asked to comment on the draft and consider whether it reflects their input and viewpoints. Publishing online will also open the draft up to a wider audience of residents, employers and partners.

3.5 The findings of our research and engagement work shows us that:

- Governance arrangements will need to be strong and clear to ensure work between major city-wide themes is not siloed.
- Good links and working relationships between stakeholders working on linked strategies will need to be formed and maintained.
- There is an opportunity to make better use of existing data to judge progress and success, to target interventions to more specific groups or areas, and to improve connections between learning and work.
- There is an opportunity to set a target on some indicators on the direction of travel. Rather than absolute targets this could be to close a gap with an average (e.g. Core Cities).
- We can harness our strengths but we need to make better use of these strengths in capturing the benefits of our own growth for residents.
- The impact of COVID and continued uncertainty, particularly around the changing labour market, means the strategy will need to be high level. An additional action or delivery plan, operating on a shorter timescale, will enable the strategy to be responsive to change.
- The strategy needs to respond directly to issues around accessibility and equalities; this should form a major theme of future work.
- Communication and engagement should be addressed directly; a good stakeholder network exists to support with this.

4.0. Finalising and delivering the new strategy

4.1. Following the proposed phase two consultation, a final version of the strategy will be produced. This will then be presented to Executive for approval in May/June 2022.

4.2. We will also carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment and Poverty Impact Assessment, as part of the process of developing the final draft. This is in line with the recommendations made by the Council's Equalities Team.

4.3. The final document will be then be designed for wider publication. A shorter, version, focusing on the high-level messages and key priorities, will also be created. These two versions will make it more accessible to, and more easily used by, a wider audience.

4.4. A delivery plan will be created to capture the outputs that partners across the city will aim to deliver. This will be a live document that will evolve in response to change and external influences but will retain a focus on the practical actions that will enable the city to achieve the priorities of the new strategy.

- 4.5. The service plan for the Council's Work and Skills Team will draw on parts of this delivery plan. However, like the strategy, the delivery plan will be for the whole city not just the City Council. Key partners will be identified who will deliver other aspects of the strategy.
- 4.6. Delivery of the Work and Skills Strategy will be overseen by the Work and Skills Board. The Work and Skills Board is made up of strategic partners that are responsible for learning and work outcomes in Manchester, with the expertise and influence necessary to ensure that the strategy is a success. The Work and Skills Board will review progress against the agreed priorities, outcomes, and indicators on a periodic basis, taking action to celebrate success, remove barriers and solve issues or problems. The City's Economy Scrutiny Committee will be invited to review regular updates on progress.

5.0. Next Steps

- 5.1. Revisions will be made to the strategy to take into account feedback from this committee and the online consultation. An updated draft will then be prepared for consideration by Executive in May/June 2022.