

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 8 October 2024

Subject: Work and Skills Strategy Update

Report of: Director of Inclusive Economy

Summary

To provide an overview of the Work and Skills Strategy with a focus on skills, economic inactivity and construction in the labour market.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note progress on the delivery of the Work and Skills Strategy, with a focus on skills matching to meet labour market need, a focus on economic inactivity, particularly in over 50s, including the reasons for this and potential solutions, and the supply and demand of jobs in the construction industry.

Wards Affected:

All wards

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>By promoting and implementing initiatives that enhance carbon literacy, green skills, and related employment opportunities, we aim to support Manchester’s zero-carbon target. Carbon literacy will empower individuals and organizations to reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to the global effort to mitigate climate change. Green jobs and employed residents will foster a more sustainable infrastructure and economy that aligns with the environmental and social values of our city.</p>
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>The ‘Progressive and Equitable’ theme of the Work and Skills Strategy aims to address the inequalities and barriers that prevent some residents from accessing work (such as race, age, or health). Employability skills and training opportunities are offered to support these people. As part of the theme, the council works closely with VCSEs and other organizations that offer tailored support for disadvantaged groups. This allows us to understand the needs of the community and create a more equitable city</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	This report outlines the creation of an inclusive economy with fair and good quality opportunities created by supporting development and growth by developing and engaging with local businesses
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Work and Skills Strategy aligns with the Manchester Adult Education and Skills Plan 2016–2025 which outlines how adult education and training providers will make Manchester the UK's top city for adult education and skills, delivering training and qualifications for adult residents. As part of this, the Work and Skills Strategy ensures that the council connects adult education services with employers and labour market information.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Work and Skills Strategy aligns with the Manchester Poverty Strategy; the activity outlined in this report demonstrates providing support for people to access employment and better-quality employment as a route out of poverty. This is being done by working to remove barriers, supporting all our residents to thrive from a skills perspective, and by contributing to improved health and wellbeing.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The Manchester Climate Change Framework is supported by the Work and Skills Strategy, which is done by supporting development of the skills we need to transition to a zero-carbon economy
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	By increasing the supply of training opportunities that enable our residents to access services and employment in an increasingly digitised world, the work produced in line with the Work and Skills Strategy aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

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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.

- Work and Skills Strategy Update 2022-2027 – Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 5.3.2024
- Oxford Road Corridor – Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 7.11.2023
- Making Manchester Fairer – Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 5.9.2023
- Labour Market and Recruitment – Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 9.3.2023

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Work and Skills Strategy 2022-27

1.1.1 This report provides an update on the Work and Skills Strategy 2022-2027 (full report received by Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on the 4 March 2024) focusing on three specific areas below in relation to the labour market:

- Skills matching to meet labour market need (section 3)
- Economic inactivity focusing on over 50s (section 4)
- Construction industry supply and demand of jobs (section 5)
- Appendices (update on project indicators and strategy measures full year 2023-24 and case study)

1.1.2 It should be noted that the labour market response to young people is covered within the following report to Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 8th October 2024 on Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022-25. The appendices show positive full year outcomes against targets for many of the project level indicators in support of achieving the Work and Skills Strategy measures.

1.1.3 The Work and Skills Strategy aims to address many of the challenges faced by the city's economy seeking to improve the lives of our residents and grow Manchester businesses further. It also aligns with our broader goals of becoming a more inclusive, prosperous and zero carbon city.

1.1.4 To emphasise and effectively monitor these goals, the strategic priorities are under five key themes, in line with the Our Manchester Strategy:

- A 'Thriving and Sustainable' city
- A 'Highly Skilled' city
- A 'Progressive and Equitable' city
- A 'Liveable and Zero Carbon city'
- A 'Connected' city

1.1.5 Appendices 1 and 2 set out the project level indicators and measures used to performance manage the strategy. The project level indicators are delivered by activity between the MCC Work and Skills team and partners and contribute to the achievement of the overall strategy measures.

2.0 Background

2.1 City Context

2.1.1 Manchester, a driver of the Greater Manchester's (GM) economy, has been resilient to but not left untouched by the impact of national and international dynamics including the recession, low growth, Brexit, COVID and high inflation.

- 2.1.2 The city's job postings have declined by 27.4%, comparing June 2023 and June 2024, but the COVID 'bounce back' phase provides some rationale. In June 2024, Manchester had 20,394 unique job postings. This outperforms most periods, over the last 12 years, outside the COVID timeframe. Data on total unemployment and growth in jobs over the last 10 years shows unemployment has seen a 25.1% decrease in the number of people unemployed, 6,400 or 3.6 % points decrease in the rate, whilst between 2015 (357,000) and 2022 (432,000) there was a 21% increase in jobs.
- 2.1.3 The ONS annual population survey illustrates that the proportion of Manchester residents with a Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) accreditation at level 3+ (77.3% of working age population) outperforms the GM region (-11.2%) and England (-9.9%) averages.
- 2.1.4 Furthermore, the number of residents who have no recognised qualifications, 4.6%, has declined significantly over recent years, from 9.2% in 2022. The percentage of the residents with level 2 qualifications is 88.8% as of 2023, which has increased by 5.5% from the previous figure in 2022. The social diversity across the City provides rationale as to the proportion of Manchester residents with 'other qualifications' 5.7%, which is higher than the GM at 4% and England at 4.7% averages. This also underpins the high demand for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages).
- 2.1.5 Provisional figures for June 2024 shows that the claimant count in Manchester has increased to 26,040. This is an increase of 3.8% on May 2024 and a 9.5% increase on June 2023. The city's growth in unemployment aligns with a trend across many of England's core cities and should be considered in the context of legacy benefit migration to Universal Credit.
- 2.1.6 The city's pipeline of talent is underpinned by a world class education offer, strengthened by significant investment in skills infrastructure not limited to regeneration across the Oxford Road Corridor (£500million, to grow a new generation of intellectual property university spinouts) and the Manchester College expansion project (worth £38million).

3.0 Skills Matching to Meet Labour Market Need

3.1 Greater Manchester Context and Devolution

- 3.1.1 GM Devolution provides the regional autonomy to secure significant structural changes to the City Region economy that supports the delivery of outcomes. These opportunities include a regionally commissioned adult education and skills offer, streamlined employment focused commissions, integrated technical education and an all-age career education approach.
- 3.1.2 The City Council and partners play a central role in influencing and shaping the skills offer to align with business and economic needs by working with the commissioner (GM Combined Authority) and training providers. Greater Manchester will benefit from a single funding settlement from 2025, similar to the agreements in Wales and Scotland. This provides a more stable funding

model to plan multi-year provision which is place based, and accounts for current and future skills requirements.

- 3.1.3 The Greater Manchester Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) evidence consisting of a comprehensive survey, illustrates the evolving needs across the city's employment landscape. Not only are employers demanding functional skills (numeracy, literacy and digital), along with a greater emphasis on technical and vocational skills, there is growing commentary relating to emerging technologies, skills needs and sectors (i.e. those linked to 'green' careers and artificial intelligence). This research is influencing Manchester's further education curriculum development, and the devolved adult education and skills offer.
- 3.1.4 The GM devolved adult skills funding, worth approximately £150million, establishes a learning offer which includes Adult Education Budget, ESOL, Local Authority Grants, Learner Support, Skills Bootcamps, Multiply, Community Learning and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. 45,000+ Manchester residents benefit from the devolved adult skills funding each year, enhancing the city's skills for work and life.
- 3.1.5 The Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, MBacc, aims to provide a clear pathway from school to jobs across GM growth sectors. Although not a formally recognised qualification it is designed to provide an alternative to 'academia', the technical education route aims to align with employer talent needs, not limited to the digital and technology, creative, engineering and manufacturing and construction and green sectors. For those aged 16+, residents will be able to continue their technical education via T-Levels, apprenticeships, the adult education budget's vocational training offer, and Skills Bootcamps.
- 3.1.6 GM Combined Authority (GMCA) are managing the region's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, commissioning programmes such as Community Grants and Working Well: Support to Succeed (see section 4).

3.2 Manchester's Approach to matching skills to labour needs

- 3.2.1 The Work and Skills Strategy, working in conjunction with several other strategies, sets out a vision, approach and activity to respond to the employment opportunities and skills needs. The following sections showcase how MCC is supporting the development of skilled talent.
- 3.2.2 Bringing to life Manchester's ambition to become the 'best city for adult education and skills by 2025', MCC led a successful partnership application to become a UNESCO Global City of Lifelong Learning (CoLL, announced in February 2024). The approach focuses on building capacity, the impact of investment across lifelong learning, facilitating best practice and simplifying access to skills provision via a multi-agency communication strategy (targeting residents, employees and businesses). Manchester is now represented on world-wide networks linked to education for sustainable development, net-zero and lifelong learning.

3.2.3 When consulting on the City's economic strategy: Investing in Success, business told us they wanted a clearer mechanism to connect with schools and colleges. As a result Brokering Relationships with Employers and Educators (BREE), is a new system designed to facilitate connections with employers, schools, colleges, and other youth support providers to provide opportunities for our young people. To date, over 20 employers have registered with BREE, resulting in 50 successful matches. Efforts are ongoing to monitor the progress of these matches throughout the upcoming academic year. BREE will be formally launched at the end of October to encourage more of the city's businesses to sign up.

3.2.4 The Council has led several innovative skills fairs to connect Manchester residents with opportunities to upskill/re-skill. The events focussed on bringing learning to life through interactive activities. Within the last 12 months, skills fairs took place at Heaton Park, Wythenshawe Shopping Centre and Gorton Hub. Each event hosted around 20 stalls, representing a mixture of vocational sectors and self-development learning, with 40% of the 1,250+ residents that directly engaged with the stands signing up to learning activity or referred to wider support services.

3.2.5 An example of sector-specific responses to skills shortages are exemplified across the digital skills agenda. Activity includes:

- Provided strategic support to ADA (National College for Digital Skills) who moved into their new larger premises in March 2024, to enable up to 1,000 more Manchester residents to access and prosper from degree-level digital apprenticeships.
- The Council's Social Value Fund seed funded the part-time digital supported internship pilot, delivered by Digital Advantage, with the organisation growing their digital supported internship offer.
- The Council match-funded the Digital Skills Framework project, launched in March 2024, which is led by the University of Manchester. The framework aims to strengthen the connections between the digital skills offer (training providers), employer skills needs (now and future) and wider partners (including residents and employment services) to establish a digital skills system which addresses local and regional digital skills gaps.
- Facilitated a partnership Digital Skills for Life Workshop (on 28th February 2024), to explore how and where digital can be integrated as a core skill within Manchester's existing Skills for Life programme, focusing on young people.

3.2.6 A new Digital Toolkit encourages community organisations to embed digital into their service offer and remove barriers to residents being digitally enabled. The seed funding has supported 30 VCSE organisations to set up as Digital Inclusion Hubs, with over 23 data banks set up, 12 organisations using Learn my Way to upskill residents, and 25 digital skills volunteers being trained.

3.2.7 Match funded by MCC, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) are extending access to their nationally-awarded RISE online learning portal.

Content will be made available to all Manchester residents and employees, with the co-creation of relevant Manchester content being developed over a 3-year period. The programme will officially start in the Autumn 2024.

3.3 Mobilising skilled talent across our economy

- 3.3.1 MCC leads the city's Employment Partnership, bringing together key employability partners from across the city to develop strategic responses and form the primary gateway of support. The Partnership meets monthly to share labour market information and strategically co-ordinate activities and cross-partner plans to support business needs and put residents at the forefront of opportunities.
- 3.3.2 MCC and partners provide recruitment support linking labour market need with local skills. Citywide recruitment events support employers to meet their labour demand and secure new recruits cost effectively by delivering three citywide Recruitment Events each year in Central Library. The events connect Manchester residents wanting to secure Manchester jobs with Manchester businesses, vacancies and pathways of support.
- 3.3.3 Since November 2022, seven events have been held, each accommodating approximately 20 employers from a range of sectors (including health, public sector, education, care, retail, construction) showcasing live job vacancies. The most recent event in July 2024 attracted 266 residents who engaged with employers face to face. Selected support services also attend, including DWP, Smart Works, National Careers Service, and digital support, to ensure access to wrap-around support and further skills development opportunities. Employer feedback from the events continues to be extremely positive, this is demonstrated by a core set of employers who regularly attend. An employer fed-back through the post event survey; 'very good event and spoke to 100 people, very well organised'.
- 3.3.4 Building on the success of the events, further work is being done to enhance the offer for residents and align needs. For example, the MCC Work and Skills Team linked up with MAES and offered 1,200 residents pre-employment support. Support services can be selected based on employer vacancies and requirements and new in-work development opportunities showcased, such as PlanBEE.
- 3.3.5 Following past involvement in recruitment activity for Factory International, the Work and Skills Team has convened a cross-departmental Manchester City Council and Factory International working group. The group seeks to align priorities and develop a 12-month delivery focused action plan that will maximise Manchester resident engagement with Aviva Studios (under social value) and The Factory Academy, to develop the next generation of technicians, producers and art professionals, encouraging residents from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds to pursue careers in the cultural sector.

3.3.6 Case Study - Treehouse Hotels: *In Spring 2023, The Work and Skills Team were made aware of Treehouse Hotels' expansion into Manchester through the Employment Partnership. Officers supported Treehouse's introduction to the City's labour market and developed a recruitment and advertising strategy. Partnerships were also created with Manchester International Festival, local schools, the Mustard Tree, and Fare Share as well as Manchester Young Lives (MYL).*

Introductions were made with The Manchester College resulting in them joining their Hotel Alliance Group, where the business is one of four from the hospitality sector. This will support in the development of the curriculum, offer work experience, and promote their job opportunities to students. MCC fully supported their recruitment campaign via DWP's Employer Suite, with a Treehouse jobs fair in March 2024 that attracted 130 residents with extensive promotion of the roles via the Work and Skills Bulletin and networks. The Treehouse Hotel is due to open in Autumn 2024.

3.4 Sector approach

3.4.1 MCC works in partnership to support sector-specific recruitment needs. For example:

- **Construction:** Plan BEE aims to increase the number of Manchester residents accessing higher technical opportunities in the construction sector. The first graduation occurred with all 10 learners passing Level 4/5/HNC and all matched with permanent employment via the sponsored employers consortium. 11 new apprentices have been recruited for the 2024 cohort.
- **Health and Social Care (HSC):** the sector faces consistent challenges around recruiting and retaining staff. Via the Health and Social Care Academy working group (MCC and NHS Step into Care), we are developing an action plan to increase local resident access to and interest in HSC volunteering, training and employment opportunities to meet labour demand. A key area of focus is developing longer-term relationships between employers and learning providers to enhance the transition from relevant learning into work, for example by harnessing existing relationships, e.g. providers delivering employability projects in the City.
- **Transport:** Metroline (subsidiary of the large global transport company ComfortDelGro) is moving to the City in mid-2024 after securing contracts with Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM). Working in partnership with MIDAS, The Growth Company and other localities MCC is supporting Metroline with a strategy and locally based activity to support the inclusive recruitment of 200+ bus drivers and other roles in Central Manchester and Wythenshawe. This will involve tailoring marketing material to attract target communities, planning open day events, and bringing in partners to share information and 'warm up' the community to the Metroline's arrival.
- **Digital:** The Work and Skills Team has been providing bespoke support to Roku with their recruitment and skills development planning, linked to new engineering, digital and creative jobs.

3.4.2 **Area approach:** MCC provides area-focused recruitment support in different ways to meet specific labour market and skills needs in different parts of the city.

- **Central:** The Work and Skills Team's involvement in managing the social value outcomes of the MCC Our Town Hall project has seen the creation of 29 apprenticeships and 28 work placements in 2023/24, demonstrating how developments can play an important role in creating opportunities for Manchester residents. The team work closely with City Centre Growth and infrastructure team to support construction recruitment on key developments across in the City, with 4,000 jobs created in construction since 2022.
- **North:** Through the collaborative efforts of MCC, FEC, MFT and GMMH the Work and Skills Team has successfully led the development of the North Manchester Social Benefits Framework, delivering the following:
 - All employees receive it Real Living Wage
 - 14% of jobs employ North Manchester Residents up from 2% at the start of the development in 2021.
 - 40% of employees are from Tier 1 and Tier 2 localities (including North Manchester wards)
 - 119 apprentices employed
 - 3,739 Students supported through careers activities
 - 3,863 Volunteering hours committed
- **South:** Airport City is one of the largest investment and employment hubs in the North of England. The Work and Skills Team nurtures long-standing relationships with key partners (DWP, Manchester Airport Group (MAG), The Airport Academy (AA), MIDAS and employers) to ensure residents benefit from the scale of job and training opportunities available in South Manchester. MCC has supported Airport City recruitment via two large-scale events, held in the past year, and a third planned for October 2024. Over 500 live vacancies were available on the day, and over 20 employers and 1,000 residents attended.

4.0 Economic Inactivity - Focus on Over 50s

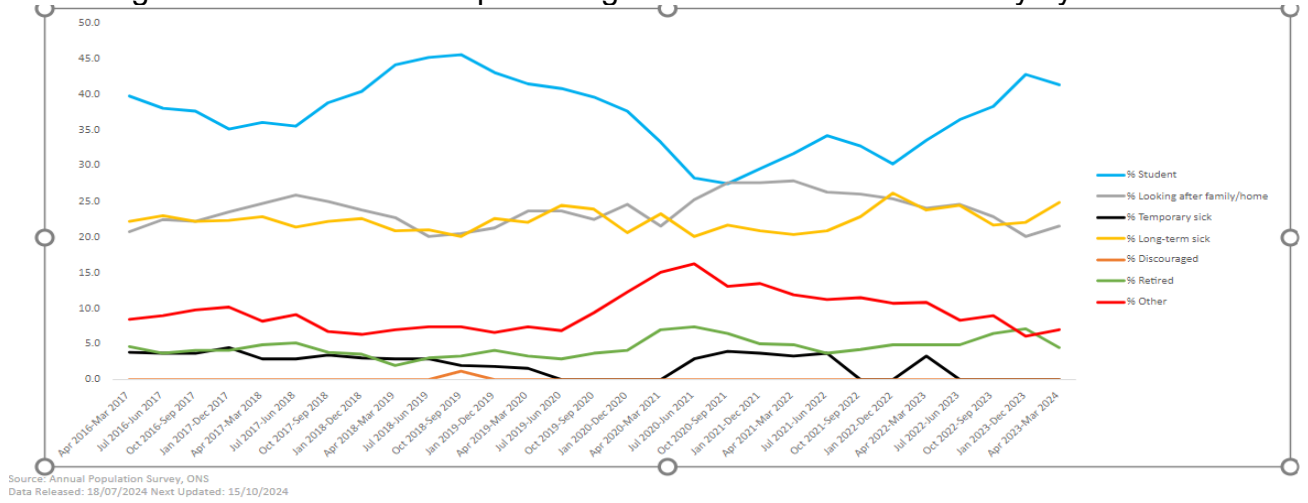
4.1 Economic Inactivity

4.1.1 The term 'economically inactive' is used to describe residents who are not involved in the labour market – they are neither working nor actively seeking employment. This includes students, early retirees, those with caring responsibilities and the long-term sick. The latest quarterly release of figures (June 2024) show the number of those economically inactive in Manchester increased by 10,700. The rate of economic inactivity has risen to 28.1%, the highest since Oct 2019-Sept 2020, the North West rate is 23.2%.

4.1.2 Students continue to be the largest reason for economic inactivity and makes up 41.3% of Manchester's economically inactive population. Those who are long-term sick is the second largest cohort with 24.8%. In the 2021 Census, the biggest increase in the percentage of economic inactivity was in those looking after home/family, increasing from 4.6% to 6.6% (18,697 to 28,875)

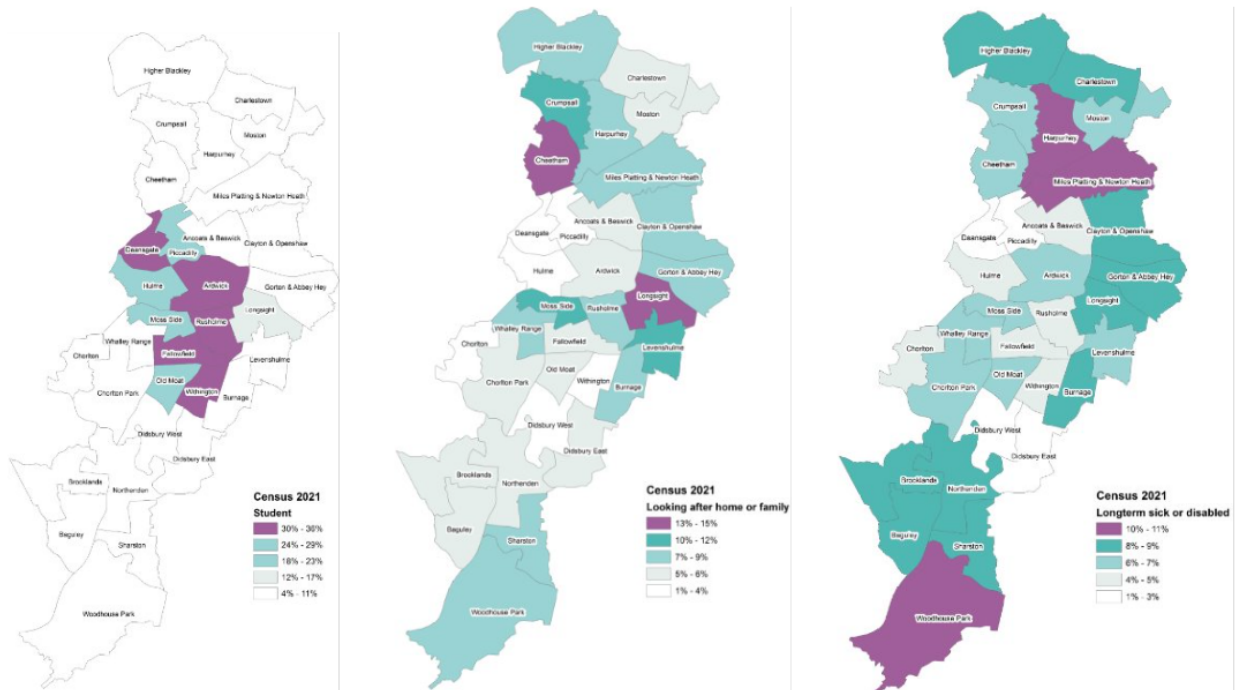
and it is the latter two groups we have focused on to improve access to employment support.

4.1.3 Figure 1 below shows the percentage rates of economic inactivity by reason



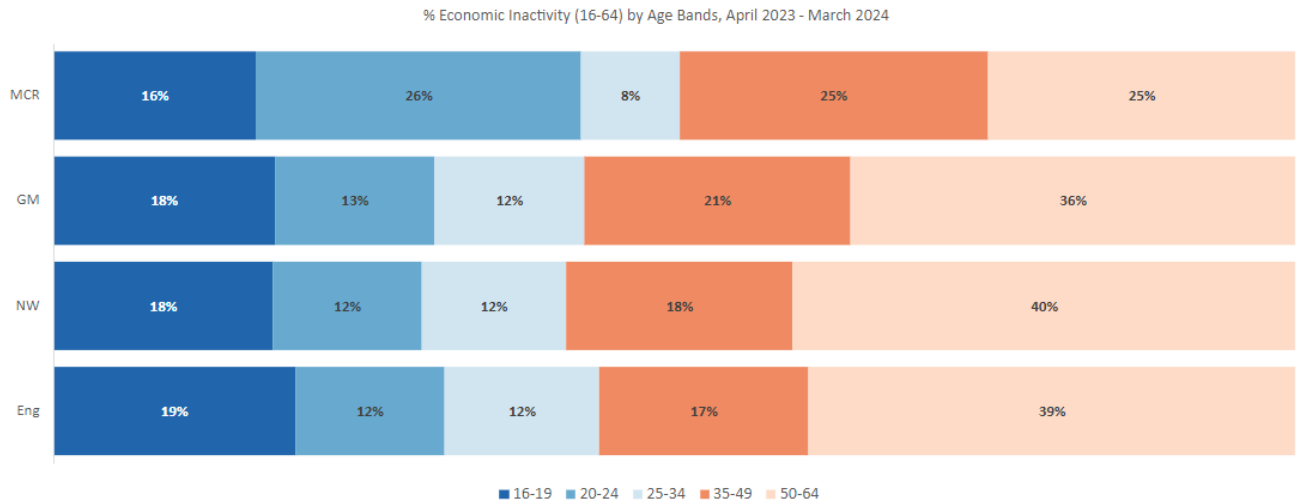
4.1.4 Figure 2 below maps the density of economic inactivity the 3 main reasons including Student, Looking after the family home and long term sick.

Economic Inactivity by Reason Mapped- Ward



4.1.5 Manchester has a larger proportion of the economically inactive residents who are aged 20-24 (in part due to the student population), and 35-49, than GM, NW and England. The 50-64 economically inactive cohort in Manchester is 14 percentage points smaller when compared to the national level, but we know that this group will have additional barriers including lower skill levels and health conditions.

4.1.6 Figure 3 below highlights the percentage of inactivity by age



Source: Annual Population Survey, ONS
Data Released: 18/07/2024 Next Updated: 15/10/2024

4.1.7 Economic inactivity is prevalent in the North, East and South of the City, but for different reasons. Therefore, approaches to tackle economic inactivity need to be bespoke to the reason and community impacted.

4.2 GM Programmes

4.2.1 In the last 18 months MCC has worked closely with GMCA to influence and shape the commissioning of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The provision is place-focused and enables organisations to engage all residents who are economically inactive. Manchester's influence on these programmes has focused on ensuring they are designed to provide culturally competent services for Racially Minoritised Communities, they are targeted on need and are integrated into grassroots community-based provision. These include:

- UKSPF Support to Succeed. The service launched in January 2024 to support complex adults who are economically inactive with a focused offer for participants aged 50+ and including those not engaged with mainstream provision. Delivered by the Growth Company and housing providers, 1212 Manchester residents, 20% of whom will be over 50 (243) will be referred into the programme up to March 2025. Interventions include managing debt and finances, health support and life skills.
- UKSPF Community Grants Programme. There are two main strands of activity: Strand 1 Essential Life Skills (circa £544,000 for Manchester) and Strand 2 Progression Toward Inclusive Employment (circa £380,000 for Manchester). The programme launched in March this year and is supporting local projects to help disadvantaged, excluded, unemployed, and economically inactive people to take next steps towards further learning and employment. 28 organisations have been awarded grant funding across the two strands and will support over 1700 residents through to March 2025.

4.2.2 The GM Working Well Programmes continue to provide keyworker-led tailored support to those experiencing multiple barriers to employment.

- Working Well: Individualised Placement Support in Primary Care (IPSPC) started in September 2023 supporting those with physical as well as mental health disabilities into employment. The programme is delivered by the Growth Company across Manchester and will run through to March 2025, engaging with 324 Manchester residents, 243 of whom will be out of work and 81 will be in employment. The programme is designed on a 'place and train' model with rapid job search from the start. To date, 111 residents have signed up for support. Work has taken place to create the right referral pathways from Be Well, Mental Health (Living Well) and Adult Social Care teams. IPSPC provides valuable extra resources to increase employment for people with a disability and has been influenced to provide targeted support in the North and Wythenshawe integrating and co-locating with health teams.
- Pioneer started mid-September 2023 and is part of the existing Work and Health Programme (WHP) commission. Pioneer is expected to reach 1500 GM economically inactive residents and is being delivered by Growth Company for Manchester. The programme is aimed at residents with health conditions or disabilities through a supported employment place and train model. To date, 17 Manchester participants have gained an employment outcome (29% of the target figure).

4.3 Local Provision

4.3.1 Locally, data shows that Harpurhey in the North and wards in Wythenshawe are the areas in Manchester with the highest rate of those economically inactive due to long-term sickness, and that Cheetham in the North and Longsight in the Central areas of the city have the highest rate of economic inactivity for those looking after family/home.

4.4 Making Manchester Fairer Employment Kickstarter

4.4.1 We know that poor mental and physical health is inter-linked with unemployment and puts those in employment at risk of losing their job. Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions are most likely from work-related issues. Some of this cohort may be waiting for an out-patient appointment on very long waiting lists. Whilst waiting for treatment, some people may welcome employment-related support.

4.4.2 MCC has designed a pilot with Manchester Foundation NHS Trust (MFT) to develop an approach to integrated health and work services to support those with health conditions. The pilot refers patients at various points on their MSK pathway to employment support, using a simple referral process through to the Growth Company who will triage patients into the most appropriate support programme. The pilot launched in June and will take referrals from MSK teams and GPs from the North Primary Care Networks initially, with a view to expanding this to the South teams in September. In the first month of delivery,

10 referrals were made and 4 of these have signed up for more intensive employment support.

4.5 Racially Minoritised Groups (RMC)

- 4.5.1 Over the past 12 months, we have piloted targeted work to understand the economic inactivity of women from the South Asian communities, working with trusted community organisations. In total, 130 women were engaged and provided with employment and skills support.
- 4.5.2 The Get Me Work Ready (GMWR) project was delivered by Alchemy Arts and MAES in early 2023 commissioned by MCC focusing on Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in Cheetham and Crumpsall. Thirty five women attended over 12 workshops to support them to move closer to the labour market and provide learning to inform design of future programmes. Sixteen of those went into employment and 7 went into education. The learning included that engagement must be culturally appropriate, that culture and religion has an impact on views on employment, and that trust must be built to support those already experiencing inequality.
- 4.5.3 Following this, two more projects were commissioned in late 2023/early 2024 building on the GMWR project's learnings. 85 South Asian women from Cheetham and Longsight were supported by Alchemy Arts and Women's Voices to access employability and skills training as well as self-employment support. 17 of these accessed volunteer opportunities, 15 went into further training and 8 gained paid employment.
- 4.5.4 A further commission is due to commence in October 2024 which will focus on the Black, African and Mixed Heritage community in Moss Side, the ward with the highest level of unemployment in the city. It is intended that providing early intervention to those economically inactive will support individuals into employment in the future.

4.6 Age-Friendly Employment Support

- 4.6.1 Provisional figures for May 2024 show that those aged 50 and over, claiming Universal Credit, has continued to increase to 21,907. This cohort has seen a 24.6% rise in the last 12 months.
- 4.6.2 Age Friendly employment work is delivered through Manchester's Over 50's employment Support Group, a collaborative team including Work & Skills Team, DWP, housing providers, MAES, Growth Company, Ingeus and voluntary sector groups. The group oversees a work plan of activity that delivers a range of initiatives tailored to the needs of older jobseekers.
- 4.6.3 Influencing and guiding age-friendly employment and business cultures: Several business networks including Our Manchester Business Network, South Manchester's business network and North Manchester Social Value sub group have been visited this year, specifically to raise the profile of age-friendly employment practice and facilitate discussion on how best to

incorporate age-friendliness into business culture. A leaflet has been developed for use at employer networks and events that contains a QR code link to the vast range of resources available to employers when looking at developing their age-friendly employment practice. The leaflet will also be used to seek further commitment from employers to become more age friendly.

- 4.6.4 Promoting volunteering as a way back into work: A new leaflet has been produced promoting volunteering as a route back to employment, providing case studies of Manchester people that have successfully used volunteering to develop their career. Over the next 6 month, plans will start to maximise the benefits of events, including volunteer week and attendance at volunteering fairs to promote volunteering as a route to employment or career development.
- 4.6.5 Ensuring the 50+ focus and commitment is embedded across employment support providers. All work and skills providers now have a 50+ commitment in their work, making sure that their offer responds to people's needs as they grow older. Work is underway to secure a recommitment to this focus across the work and skills provider partnership.
- 4.6.6 Planning the 'Olderpreneurs' self-employment and enterprise support programme for those age 50 and over to re-run the self-employment and enterprise support programme for those 50 and over later in the year, in partnership with the BIPC following last year's successful webinar and in person events.
- 4.6.7 Manchester's Work Clubs have been recommissioned for the next two years, subject to year two funding being in place. The work clubs, based in local community settings across the city, already have a high number of people aged over 50 using their services (47% are between the age of 40 and 64). A range of employability support, access to job opportunities, and training provision is offered.
- 4.6.8 "Uncertain Futures" is a unique art and research collaboration addressing intersectional inequalities facing women over 50 in the workforce. Developed by artist Suzanne Lacy in association with Manchester Art Gallery and the Work & Skills Team, supported by an advisory group of women from Manchester's communities, the project is also backed by research teams from the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. The 5-year project is in its third and final phase, which includes promoting the report and manifesto which can be found at [Uncertain Futures Project](#). Conversations have begun with key policy makers within the City Council to ensure that the recommendations are considered and embedded within the City's strategies. This work has also been highlighted in the UN (United Nations) Decade of Healthy Ageing report 2021- 2023.

4.7 Economic inactivity in younger people

4.7.1 Please see report for Economy & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 8th October 2024 on Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022-25 – Progress Update for information regarding this.

5.0 The Supply and Demand of Jobs in the Construction Industry

5.1.1 Manchester's construction pipeline remains strong and continues to underpin Greater Manchester's economic growth and is a significant employer. The GM Chamber of Commerce latest Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) estimates 11,000 new jobs by 2027, in 'traditional construction' skill sets and trades, as well as new and emerging methods and technologies around low-carbon construction and a significant uplift required around the retrofit of existing properties.

5.1.2 Retrofit GM estimated that over 880,000 homes and 2,700 public buildings will need some form of retrofit with no estimates available yet for commercial property. This is likely to create 90,000 new jobs. Whilst net zero will have significant sector-wide impacts, it is within construction and new energy and building efficiencies that this will first manifest itself. There are also increasing digital skills requirements from managing projects to ensuring building management is as efficient as possible.

5.1.3 The GMCA Sector insight reports that roles in the Green Economy are fairly well spread across GM – transport roles concentrate in the city centre but roles relating to buildings and energy are broadly distributed. The main roles in GM (March – May 24) according to GM sector analysis include:

- Sustainability Specialist (73)
- Environmental Planner (59)
- Safety Manager (43)
- Safety Specialist / Coordinator (27)
- Recycling/Sanitation Worker (19)

5.1.4 Construction continues to be a key growth sector and is stimulating opportunities locally. Training organisations and colleges continue to provide construction skills training and, in many cases, embedding retrofit and green disciplines into basic courses.

5.1.5 The health and wellbeing of construction workers continues to be a priority theme and there is universal acknowledgement within the industry that more needs to be done, particularly to support and raise awareness mental health in a male-dominated environment. The North Manchester framework as a model of best practice is serving as a catalyst for opportunity on wider key developments including ID Manchester, Holt Town and Wythenshawe Civic as a mechanism for delivering a more inclusive economy.

5.2 Health impacts in the sector

5.2.1 The construction industry has, for a long time, focused on protecting the physical wellbeing of its workers. However, people working in the construction

can be more vulnerable to suffering from poor mental health because of several contributory factors such as:

- The hours can often be long and work can be physically hard and stressful
- Construction managers in particular having to meet tight project deadlines
- On site conditions are not of great quality sometimes with job insecurity

5.2.2 The sector also remains male-dominated and the working environment can lead to a 'culture of silence' and a stigma around raising mental health issues however this mindset is now changing.

5.2.3 The construction industry is working hard at raising awareness for workers with a particular focus on the help available. Extensive resources have been developed and rolled out across construction sites through the Construction Industry Training Board - [Under The Hard Hat: Mental Health In Construction](#)

5.2.4 Manchester Airport's Transformation Programme highlights a great example of a construction contractor fully embedding mental health and raising the awareness of mental health in the workplace through an initiative called 'Andy's Man Club' (AMC). AMC is a men's suicide prevention charity offering peer-to-peer support groups across the UK and online. AMC delivered a session at Manchester Airport attended by the Mace team, for the site team working on the Transformation Programme. The session was on the importance of talking, and how their services can be accessed. This was attended by 60+ staff. Feedback was that it was a "brilliant presentation from Dan Rowe @Andy's Man Club, bringing awareness to Men's Mental Health and giving a clear message that it is ok to talk".

5.3 Skills Provision Priorities

5.3.1 The (LSIP) has identified the key construction skills requirements in GM:

CONSTRUCTION	PRIORITY FOR ACTION
Retrofitting	Urgent Priority
Steel Erection	High Priority
Structural Fabrication	High Priority
Construction Process Management, Site Engineering, Project Management	High Priority
Quantity Surveying	High Priority
Building Envelope Design	Medium Priority
Digitalisation in Construction methods	Medium Priority but provision will need to be increased and become more specialised
Core Construction Skills	Currently low priority but increasing demand means the volume of courses will have to expand to meet demand.

5.4 Retrofitting

5.4.1 To support retrofit skills in Manchester, the Council’s Work and Skills Team has embedded retrofit within the Liveable and Zero Carbon priorities in the Work and Skills Strategy.

5.4.2 The Work and Skills Team provides support for the development, delivery and reporting of social value on key funded Strategic Housing retrofit projects, including Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and HUG2. The Social Value outputs delivered to date include:

- 50 volunteering hours completed in May and June 2024 at Beswick Urban Growers
- 8 unemployed Manchester residents supported into employment through ‘Procure Plus’ contractors
- £24,387 funding paid to local community groups (see table below) and a further £64,129 commissioned:
-

Volition	£2,710
Barlow Moor	£3,613
Tree of Life	£2,710
Broughton Trust	£3,613
Yes Manchester	£11,741
Total Spent	£24,387

5.4.3 The Work and Skills Team works with GMCA, providing support and promotion of commissioned activities to improve the provision of retrofit skills in Greater Manchester. GMCA have provided a summary of work and skills activity from the Retrofit Taskforce Performance Framework:

Number of MCS (industry certified and accredited) installers registered and active in GM (running total)	82 (Q4 2023/24)
Number of construction workers upskilled into Green related disciplines (achievements)	1532 (Jun 2024)
Number of related Green Careers engagements	1449 (Jun 2024)

5.5 Construction Design, Engineering, Quantity Surveying and Management

5.5.1 PlanBEE [Manchester](#) provides a unique higher apprenticeship in Design, Construction and Management and alternative pathway to University. The flagship programme is supported by over 50+ businesses including architects, engineers, QS, project managers and contractors on key development projects in the city and beyond. Since its launch in 2021, over 60 placements have been created with 100% attainment for completing apprentices and over 90% securing employment from within the PlanBEE employer group (see appendix 3).

5.6 Building Envelope Design and Digitalisation in Construction Methods

- 5.6.1 The University of Manchester is undertaking a PhD Studentship on theme of Revolutionising Construction: Harnessing Digital Transformation for Sustainable Futures. The goal is to steer the construction sector towards better sustainability and operational efficiency.

5.7 Core construction

- 5.7.1 Training and provision remains healthy in Manchester via the recently GMCA-funded [Greater Manchester Skills Academy](#) based in the city centre along with a continuation of the existing provision. Demand for construction related training including T-Levels is high, with waiting lists for places at the start of the academic year.
- [The Manchester College Construction and Engineering Courses](#)
 - [Growth Company Construction](#)
 - [Skills Construction Centre \(skillscc.com\)](#)

5.8 Opportunities

- 5.8.1 Social Value is a key lever to achieving our objectives within the Economic strategy "[Investing in Success](#)" to ensure our residents have access to opportunities and benefit from the development taking place locally. Where possible opportunities are being maximised for residents via our strong relationships with developers, construction contractors and partners including DWP, Restart, Career Connect, Work Clubs and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations. An example of how this is being delivered is the [North Manchester Social Benefits Framework](#).

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In conclusion, progress against the Work and Skills Strategy is good despite some metrics like economic inactivity increasing for a range of reasons outlined in this report. This report has detailed the Strategy's robust response against the areas of skills matching to meet labour market need, economic inactivity, and the supply and demand of jobs in the construction industry with many notable achievements, events and outcomes.
- 6.2 Whilst there will always be challenges, Manchester remains proactive and forward-looking to anticipate changes needed for delivery. The progress made moves us towards the goal of an inclusive economy with fair and good-quality opportunities. Examples of high-level areas of focus in these areas for the remainder of 2024 and into 2025 are:
- Technical education
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund
 - UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning
 - Supporting several strategic regeneration frameworks to capitalise on Social Value
 - Strategic Housing Retrofitting