

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 27 March 2026

Subject: Proposed Ashton and Stalybridge Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)

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

Purpose of Report

To seek approval from the GMCA to consult on the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) in Ashton and Stalybridge (see Appendix One). Enabling it to become the delivery vehicle for regeneration of the area and to realise the ambition to create the country's first exemplar of transport-led regeneration.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Endorse the Mayor undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Ashton and Stalybridge.
2. Note the indicative timeline, next steps and the requirement for a further report to the GMCA detailing the outcome of the consultation and detailed delivery plan following consultation.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester is recommended to:

Approve the undertaking of a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Ashton and Stalybridge.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

1. Agree in principle to the creation of an MDC for Ashton and Stalybridge; and
2. Agree that GMCA officers can explore with Tameside Councils detailed options for an MDC to be created for Ashton and Stalybridge, with these matters to be decided upon by GMCA and the Local Authorities in due course.

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	Delivery of regeneration in Ashton and Stalybridge will provide access to homes across a range of types and tenures and high quality employment opportunities to a part of Greater Manchester which has been relatively economically disadvantaged. It will also increase and enhance access to social and public transport infrastructure for new and proposed residents. The proposal recommends a consultation on the delivery route for the Ashton and Stalybridge MDC which gives the affected communities the opportunity to make their views known.
Health	G	Detailed development proposals are to be agreed but the programme of development will support the delivery of high-quality homes and encourage active travel as well as provide high quality services to help improve the health and wellbeing of its residents.
Resilience and Adaptation		The boundary covers areas of Previously Developed land and brownfield sites and proposes to increase the density of development on these sites which are located in close proximity to existing transport nodes. While the proposals are in the early stages of development the regeneration will look to improve the quality of housing, green spaces and services to create a thriving community within the MDC area.
Housing	G	Detailed development proposals are to be agreed including final housing numbers. However, the proposal will support the delivery of new homes as part of the regeneration proposals. Part of the proposition for both town centres is to deliver a proportion of homes which will be affordable. It will also support economic development with local employment benefits, enhancing access to and affordability of homes for local residents.
Economy	G	The regeneration of two town centres is a significant development project. The area presents a remarkable opportunity to deliver an exemplar for transport led regeneration. This transformative project promises to enhance economic performance and quality of life within Tameside and the City Region. It will deliver new housing and employment space with a focus on Advanced Manufacturing, this will have significant associated employment, GVA and growth implications.
Mobility and Connectivity	G	Ashton and Stalybridge MDC will bring significant investment in transport infrastructure and will seek to maximise the benefits of existing and proposed transport infrastructure investments. Alongside this will be enhancement of existing public transport provision and creation of new public transport options and sustainable travel modes serving the new developments.
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	Delivery of development will have short- and long-term environmental impacts but significant mitigation will be required as part of proposals to address these. The development proposals will primarily be located on brownfield sites within close proximity to public transport. Delivery of new low- and zero-carbon homes and commercial premises will improve the average efficiency of properties across Greater Manchester and contribute to the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2038. Biodiversity enhancement is a mandatory requirement for all new developments.
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		

Further Assessment(s):

Carbon Assessment

G Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	A Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	R Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	RR Negative impacts overall.
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Carbon Assessment

Overall Score				
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
New Build residential		Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements set out in Places for Everyone and GMS. The proposed MDC boundary includes two town centres and is therefore highly accessible and sustainable.		
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A			
New build non-residential (including public) buildings		Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements set out in Places for Everyone and GMS. The proposed MDC boundary includes two town centres and is therefore highly accessible and sustainable.		
Transport				
Active travel and public transport		Details of public transport and active travel interventions are to be determined but will represent an enhancement over existing.		
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access		Details of development proposals are to be determined but principles of decreased personal vehicle use and increased sustainable transport modes are agreed.		
Access to amenities		Details of development proposals are to be determined but principles of decreased personal vehicle use and increased sustainable transport modes are agreed.		
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
Land Use				
Land use		Details of development proposals are to be determined, however there is an overarching commitment to deliver in accordance with requirements set out in Places for Everyone and GMS.		
No associated carbon impacts expected.	High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management

None

Legal Considerations

1. It is subject to the requirements of Part 8 Chapter 2 (Mayoral Development Corporations) of the Localism Act 2011 as amended by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017.
2. The below table details the process which must be followed under the legislation to designate an area of land as a Mayoral development area and for the establishment of an MDC.

<p>Statutory Consultation</p>	<p>Prior to the Mayor designating land in the GMCA's area as a Mayoral development area the Mayor must consult with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the members of the GMCA who are appointed by the constituent councils; • each MP whose parliamentary constituency contains any part of the area; • the district/ county council whose borough contains any part of the area; • a National Park authority if any part of area is within a National Park; and • any other person the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.
<p>Report to GMCA</p>	<p>The Mayor must put forward a report to the GMCA proposing to designate an area as a Mayoral development area and gain approval of the GMCA.</p>
<p>Publicity & Notification to Secretary of State</p>	<p>A consultation exercise must be conducted on the proposed MDC as outlined in this report.</p> <p>The designation must be publicised, and the Secretary of State must be notified of the designation and the name of the MDC.</p>
<p>Establishment</p>	<p>Once notified the Secretary of State will, by an order, establish the MDC. The order establishing an MDC is a statutory instrument which is subject to the negative procedure. This means it will automatically become law without a debate by either of the Houses of Parliament provided there is no objection from either House within a 40 day period.</p>

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

Number of attachments to the report: 1

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

- Greater Manchester's Approach to Delivering Growth Ambitions – 31st January 2025
- GMCA - Mayoral Development Corporation for Ashton and Stalybridge – In Principle Decision – 30th January 2026

Tracking/ Process

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

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

Bee Network Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In July 2025, GMCA launched the Greater Manchester Strategy 2025-35 (GMS) which is the collective vision for the next decade to see a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life. It provides the strategic framework and overarching narrative for the city region, enabling GM to develop and capitalise on the opportunities of the coming decade. To accompany this, a GMS delivery plan was approved by GMCA in November 2025. The delivery plan underpins the GMS and outlines the 7 workstreams and priority actions to be taken across the GM system to achieve our growth and prevention ambitions, supporting the realisation of the GMS vision and the fulfilment of our pledges. A collective approach is needed to ensure the continuation of a growing global city centre, along with a wider city region of thriving boroughs and vibrant town centres across GM. Fundamental to this will be the delivery of well-connected employment and housing sites with our growth plans benefitting all our residents over the 10-year period.
- 1.2 The Integrated Pipeline represents these ambitions spatially, focusing on unlocking six Growth Locations, regenerating town centres, and delivering critical transport infrastructure aligned with the Local Transport Plan. Achieving this vision requires over £10 billion in public investment over the next decade, leveraging government partnerships, utility investment and private capital. To lead this effort and to enable this, we have created and launched the Good Growth Fund, a £1 billion investment pot, to invest in our key pipeline opportunities supporting our plans for a decade of good growth.
- 1.3 Alongside this, a range of tools and vehicles are required to underpin the continued delivery of a growing global city centre and wider city region with thriving boroughs and vibrant town centres.
- 1.4 This paper sets out the approach as it relates to Ashton and Stalybridge, focusing on the proposed next steps to progress the implementation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to support the future of the towns.

2. Mayoral Development Corporations

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

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

- The focus, coordination, and consistent delivery of a dedicated body with a specific purpose to develop and deliver a strategic vision for a defined area.
- Highly visible public sector commitment coupled with broad public and private sector expertise at board level as a driver for private investment; and broad powers to facilitate delivery of the project.
- Broad powers to facilitate the delivery of the project.

2.3 The Localism Act 2011, as amended by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017, gives the Mayor of Greater Manchester the power to designate a Mayoral Development Area subject to public consultation. The powers that can be conferred upon the MDC for a Mayoral Development Area comprise:

- The provision of new infrastructure.
- Powers to hold, acquire, develop, improve, or regenerate land and buildings.
- Powers to provide financial assistance.
- Subject to a decision of the relevant LA, plan-making and development control powers can be delegated to an MDC, resulting in its own Planning Committee.
- Subject to a decision of the relevant Local Authority, powers can be delegated to grant discretionary Business Rates relief.

2.4 These powers were used by the Mayor of Greater Manchester in September 2019 to establish an MDC for Stockport Town Centre West, which has gone on to deliver the ambitious regeneration programme for that part of the town, and more recently the Atom Valley Northern Gateway MDC and Old Trafford Regeneration MDC - established in January 2026.

3. Ashton and Stalybridge MDC

- 3.1 In January 2026 GMCA endorsed progressing plans to strengthen delivery capacity through exploring the option for a Mayoral Development Corporation in Ashton and Stalybridge. Deloitte were appointed as advisors by GMCA and Tameside Council to support the assessment of the potential delivery vehicle options for the Ashton and Stalybridge area, aiming to identify the choice that would best meet stakeholder needs of project objectives. Following their evaluation, they recommended a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) as the optimal delivery vehicle.
- 3.2 Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) has been driving forward regeneration in Ashton since September 2023. The in principle paper which went to the 30 January GMCA, considered the option to establish an MDC across a broader area including Stalybridge, the entirety of the MDZ would be within the proposed boundary included in Appendix 1. It is proposed that the MDZ would transition into the MDC shadow board, widening the boundary, building on the work which has been undertaken to date and the knowledge of this area gained through the regular board meetings.
- 3.3 Ashton and Stalybridge are both well connected towns, the red line for the proposed MDC (Appendix 1) contains three train stations, three tram stops and the recently delivered Bus Interchange in Ashton. The proposed MDC is also positioned to benefit from further improvements to public transport including:
- All three train stations to be brought in to the Bee Network by 2028¹
 - Potential for Metrolink expansion.
 - Northern Powerhouse Rail route proposed to run through the Borough².
- 3.4 The existing infrastructure combined with further transport improvements proposed across Greater Manchester offers the opportunity to accelerate delivery of development opportunities across the area and realise the ambition to create the

¹ [Greater Manchester rail stations joining the Bee Network | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM](#)

² [Northern Powerhouse Rail to drive biggest travel upgrade in the North in a generation - GOV.UK](#)

country's first exemplar of transport-led regeneration.

- 3.5 Following Deloitte's evaluation, and given the nature of Ashton and Stalybridge, its assets and aspirations, an MDC was concluded to be the optimal delivery vehicle to support regeneration across the area (Appendix 2).
- 3.6 A range of Delivery Vehicles were considered as part of an options assessment undertaken by Deloitte. The longlist included:
- Private sector-led development
 - Strategic Partnership.
 - Public Sector Company (limited by shares or guarantee)
 - Local Authority Asset Backed Vehicles
 - Joint Venture
 - Local Authority Direct Delivery
 - Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ)
 - Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC).
 - Unitary Development Corporation (UDC)
 - Locally-led Urban Development Corporation (LLUDC).
 - New Town Development Corporation
 - Locally-Led New Town Development Corporation
- 3.7 Given the complexities of delivering across both Ashton and Stalybridge Town centres and the opportunities to realise a place-based solution for the proposed transport solutions and deliver densified development around the existing infrastructure It was concluded that an MDC for Ashton and Stalybridge will enable blockers to delivery to be addressed.
- 3.8 The proposal is that the MDC will collaborate with the Council as Local Planning Authority (LPA) as a key stakeholder from a plan making and development control perspective, with plan making within the boundary being a joint endeavour with the LPA. Tameside will remain the Local Planning Authority and will retain plan making and development management responsibility. The MDC would however be a key stakeholder to all planning applications submitted in the MDC boundary.

4. MDC Consultation

- 4.1 As noted above, the designation of Mayoral Development Corporations is governed in Greater Manchester by the Localism Act 2011 Part 8, Chapter 2, as modified by the Schedule to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Functions and Amendment) Order 2017 (“The Act”).
- 4.2 This provides that the Mayor may designate a Mayoral development area only if consultation has been concluded in accordance with the Act. Authorisation is sought within this Report to carry out this consultation.
- 4.3 The consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Act, which stipulates the following statutory consultees:
- Members of the GMCA;
 - MPs whose parliamentary constituency contains part of the proposed area
 - Each district council whose areas are within the proposed boundary (in this case Tameside); and
 - Any other person whom the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.
- 4.4 For the Ashton and Stalybridge area, similar to the process for other MDC’s in Greater Manchester, the consultation is proposed to be extended to all residents and businesses within the red line, and Council Members in the district for the proposed MDC area.
- 4.5 Accordingly, it is proposed that the consultation will also be publicly accessible through the GM Consult engagement platform, providing information about the proposal and appropriate supporting materials which will run for six weeks. The consultation materials will be prepared by Tameside Council and GMCA officers and hosted on the GM Consult website.
- 4.6 The name and boundary of the MDC (in Appendix 1) will be included as part of the consultation, as follows: Ashton and Stalybridge Mayoral Development Corporation.
- 4.7 At the end of the consultation, if the Mayor wishes to proceed, and designate the area as an MDC, the Mayor will notify the Secretary of State, who will then make the Order to establish the MDC.

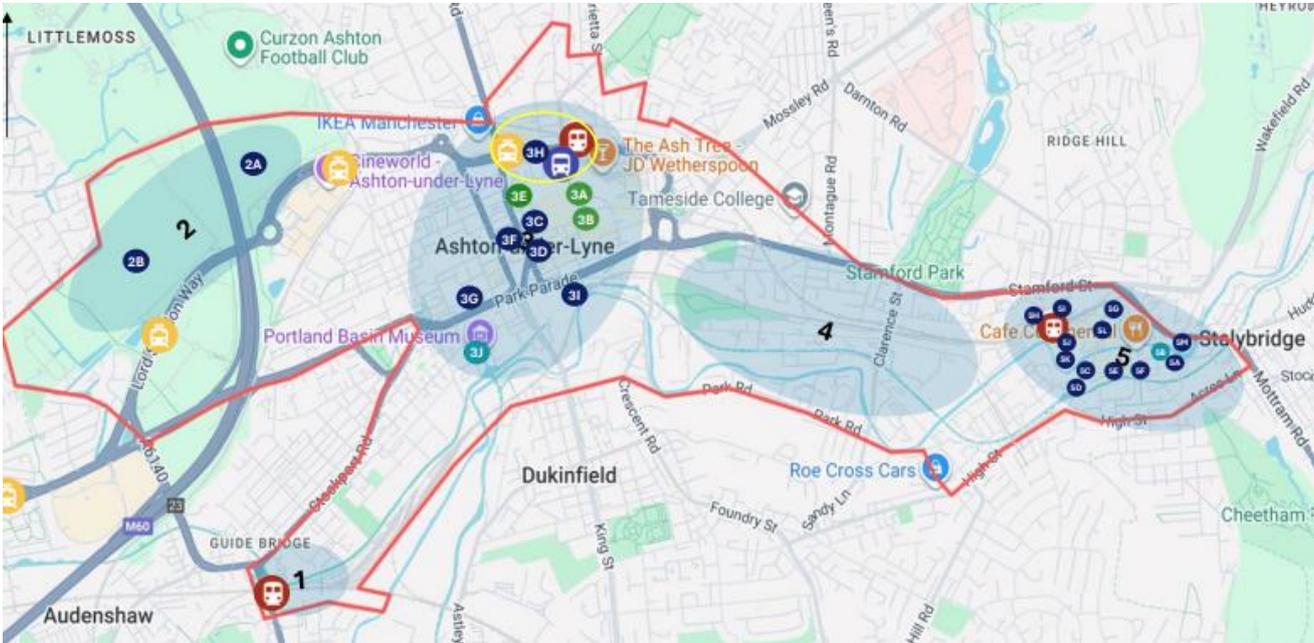
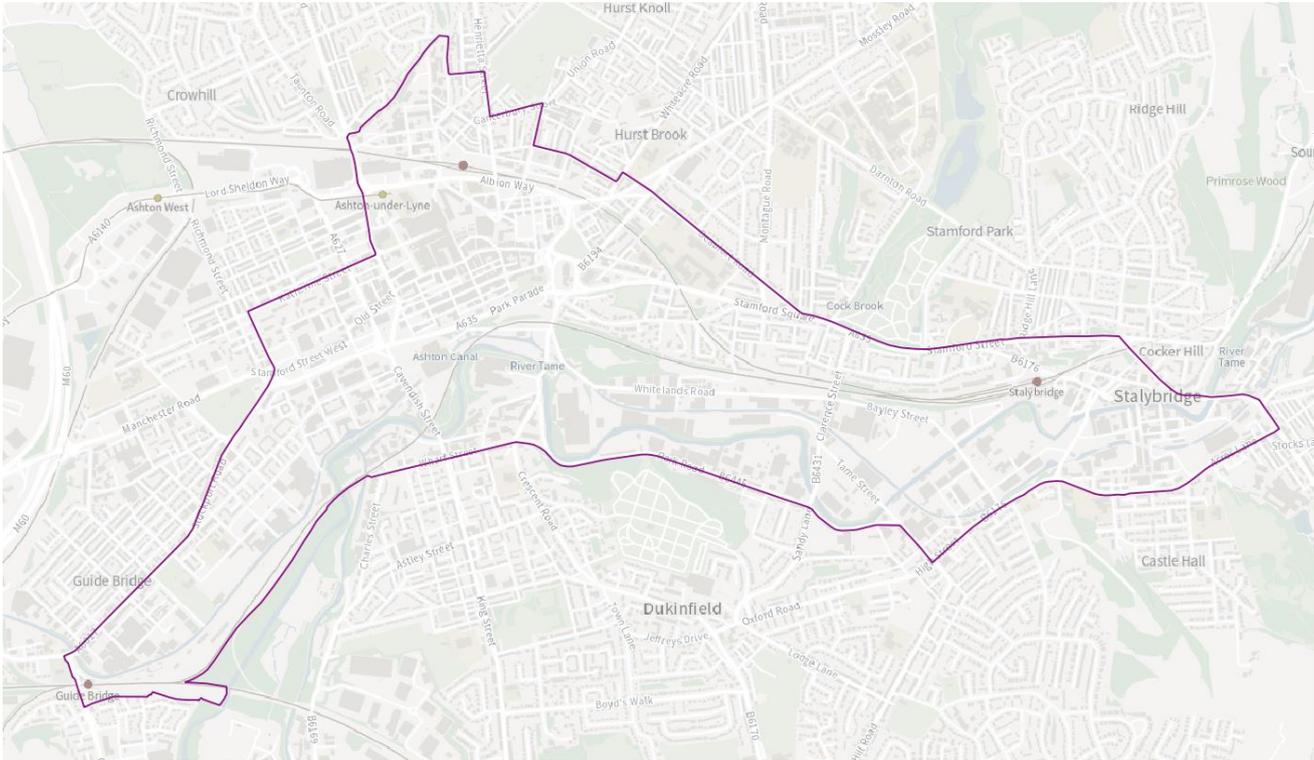
5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If approved, it is proposed that statutory consultation will open in May. After the consultation has concluded, responses will be analysed and a report drafted outlining the results of the consultation process for Tameside Borough Council, the GMCA and the Mayor.
- 5.2 In accordance with the Act, when deciding whether to proceed to designate a Mayoral Development Area, the Mayor must have regard to any comments made in response by the consultees; and in the event any comments received are not accepted by the Mayor, the Mayor must publish a statement giving the reasons for non-acceptance.
- 5.3 In alignment with the consultation, a Business Case will be developed building on Deloitte's work and define the detail of the key matters for determination if an MDC for Ashton and Stalybridge were to be pursued following consultation. This work will include details of a developed rationale for intervention; purpose, aims and objectives of the MDC; governance and decision-making; financial considerations; risks and resources. These will be set out in a future report to GMCA alongside the consultation responses.
- 5.4 As well as assisting the Mayor in deciding whether or not to designate on a Mayoral Development Area for Ashton and Stalybridge, if designation does proceed then consultation on the Ashton and Stalybridge MDC will allow statutory and additional consultees to provide responses that can be reflected as part of subsequent work to progress the implementation of the MDC, including the development of a constitution and confirmation of resources.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations are as set out at the beginning of the Report.

Appendix 1 – Proposed boundary



Appendix 2 -