

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 27 March 2026

Subject: Mayoral Development Corporation for Middleton – Consultation

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

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### Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval to consult on the establishment of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) covering Middleton (see Appendix 1), enabling it to become the delivery vehicle for regeneration of the area.

### Recommendations:

**The GMCA is recommended to:**

1. Endorse the Mayor undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Middleton.
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 Middleton.

### Contact Officers

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# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

The GMCA is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Mayor undertaking a consultation exercise in respect of the designation of a Mayoral Development Corporation for Middleton town centre.
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 a consultation.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>Delivery of and MDC for Middleton will provide access to homes across a range of types and tenures and employment opportunities to a part of Greater Manchester which has been relatively economically disadvantaged.</p> <p>The development will also enhance access to leisure, social and transport infrastructure for new and existing residents.</p> <p>This proposal recommends a consultation on the delivery route for an MDC for Middleton which gives the affected communities the opportunity to make their views known.</p>
Health	G	<p>The delivery plan will be developed over time and will consider opportunities to improve open spaces and active travel, contributing to residents physical health.</p> <p>The delivery plan will be developed over time and will look to improve the service offering within the MDC boundary.</p>
Resilience and Adaptation	G	<p>One of the purposes of an MDC is to draw investment into the area to improve the residential, commercial and connectivity in the boundary. This should result in a more resilient place and community over time.</p>
Housing	G	<p>This proposal will support the delivery of new homes as part of the MDC objectives, a proportion of which will be social and affordable tenures.</p> <p>Derelict urban land and redundant or underused buildings do fall within the proposed MDC boundary and could benefit from the MDC activity.</p>
Economy	G	<p>One of the purposes of an MDC is to draw investment into the area to improve the residential, commercial and connectivity in the boundary. This should result in increasing economic development and good jobs for the place and community over time.</p>
Mobility and Connectivity	G	<p>The delivery plan will be developed over time and will consider opportunities that will improve mobility and connectivity within the MDC boundary.</p>
Carbon, Nature and Environment	A	<p>Physical development has unavoidable impacts on local air quality but these will be managed and mitigated as much as possible and the most material impacts will be largely confined to individual development phases.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Detailed development proposals are not fixed but biodiversity enhancement is a mandatory requirement for all new developments.</p> <p>The creation of new houses and facilities will create further light pollutants. However, with the area already having significant developments within it the change will be limited.</p> <p>The creation of new houses and facilities will create further noise pollutants. However, with the area already having significant developments within it the change will be limited.</p> <p>The creation of new public spaces will create a significant positive affect on the visual amenity of the area.</p> <p>Creation of new public green spaces will improve the biodiversity of an area that currently includes significant heavy industry.</p> <p>Creation of new high quality low carbon houses will have a long term positive affect on reducing carbon emissions.</p>
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		<p>Delivery of new and refurbished 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.</p>
<b>Further Assessment(s):</b>	Carbon Assessment	
<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.
		<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.

## 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 for biodiversity, energy efficiency, and carbon reduction set out in Places for Everyone and GMS.		
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 for biodiversity, energy efficiency, and carbon reduction set out in Places for Everyone and GMS.		
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 as proportion of overall travel 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 as proportion of overall travel are agreed. Allocations within Places for Everyone include local amenity uses alongside residential and employment development, improving access to these services by sustainable modes of transport.		
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
Land Use				
Land use	N/A			
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.

<b>Statutory Consultation</b>	Prior to the Mayor designating land in the GMCA's area as a Mayoral development area the Mayor must consult with:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the members of the GMCA who are appointed by the constituent councils;</li> <li>• each MP whose parliamentary constituency contains any part of the area;</li> <li>• the district/ county council whose borough contains any part of the area;</li> <li>• a National Park authority if any part of area is within a National Park; and</li> <li>• any other person the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.</li> </ul>
<b>Report to GMCA</b>	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.
<b>Publicity &amp; Notification to Secretary of State</b>	<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>
<b>Establishment</b>	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.

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

None.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None.

**Number of attachments to the report: 2**

**Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

### **Background Papers**

1. Mayoral Development Corporation for Middleton Town Centre – In Principle Decision (GMCA approval 30 May 2025)
2. Rochdale Borough Council Cabinet – Middleton Mayoral Development Corporation (17 April 2025)
3. Rochdale Borough Council Cabinet – Middleton MDC (March 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.
2. This paper sets out the approach as it relates to Middleton, focusing on the proposed next steps to progress the implementation of a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to support the town's future.

## 2. Mayoral Development Corporations

2.1. Development Corporations can be 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:

- A focus on coordination and consistent delivery from 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 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. Middleton MDC

3. Since the In Principle decision was approved in May 2025, GMCA have been working alongside Rochdale Borough Council to assess potential delivery vehicles. Deloitte were instructed to assess potential vehicle options for Middleton, with the aim to identify the delivery vehicle that would best meet both the community and stakeholder needs for the town.

3.1 Following Deloitte's evaluation, and given the nature of the town of Middleton, its assets and aspirations, an MDC was concluded to be the optimal delivery vehicle to support regeneration across the area (Appendix 2).

3.2 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

3.3 It was concluded that an MDC for Middleton will enable blockers to delivery to be addressed, whilst balancing the needs and aspirations of the community. It also provides a vehicle that can reflect 'co-operative' ways of working, aligning itself to co-operative principles where possible. This includes embedding values around equity, openness and social responsibility<sup>1</sup>.

4. It is for these reasons that it is recommended that work continues to establish an MDC for Middleton, with the next stage being a formal consultation.

3.4 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 MDC boundary being a joint endeavour. Rochdale Borough Council would therefore remain the Local Planning Authority and

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<sup>1</sup> [Co-op values and principles | Co-operatives UK](#)

retain overall 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 proposed 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 instance Rochdale); and
- Any other person whom the Mayor considers it appropriate to consult.

5. For Middleton, similar to the process for previous Greater Manchester MDC consultations, the consultation is proposed to be extended to all businesses, and Council Members in the district for the proposed MDC area.

4.4 Rochdale Borough Council have been working proactively with Middleton Co-operating and the community having conversations on the potential proposed MDC. This provides useful insights into the views of the local community and, if the decision is taken to proceed with an MDC, will help to shape the activity and delivery plan for the MDC over its initial period.

4.5 Accordingly, it is proposed that the statutory consultation will 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 Rochdale Borough Council and GMCA Officers.

4.6 The name and boundary of the MDC will be included as part of the consultation, as follows:

MDC Name: Middleton Mayoral Development Corporation

MDC Boundary: See Appendix 1

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 on the 6th June. After the consultation has concluded, responses will be analysed and a report drafted outlining the results of the consultation process for Rochdale Borough Council, the GMCA and the Mayor.

5.2. In accordance with the Act, when deciding whether to proceed to designate an 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.

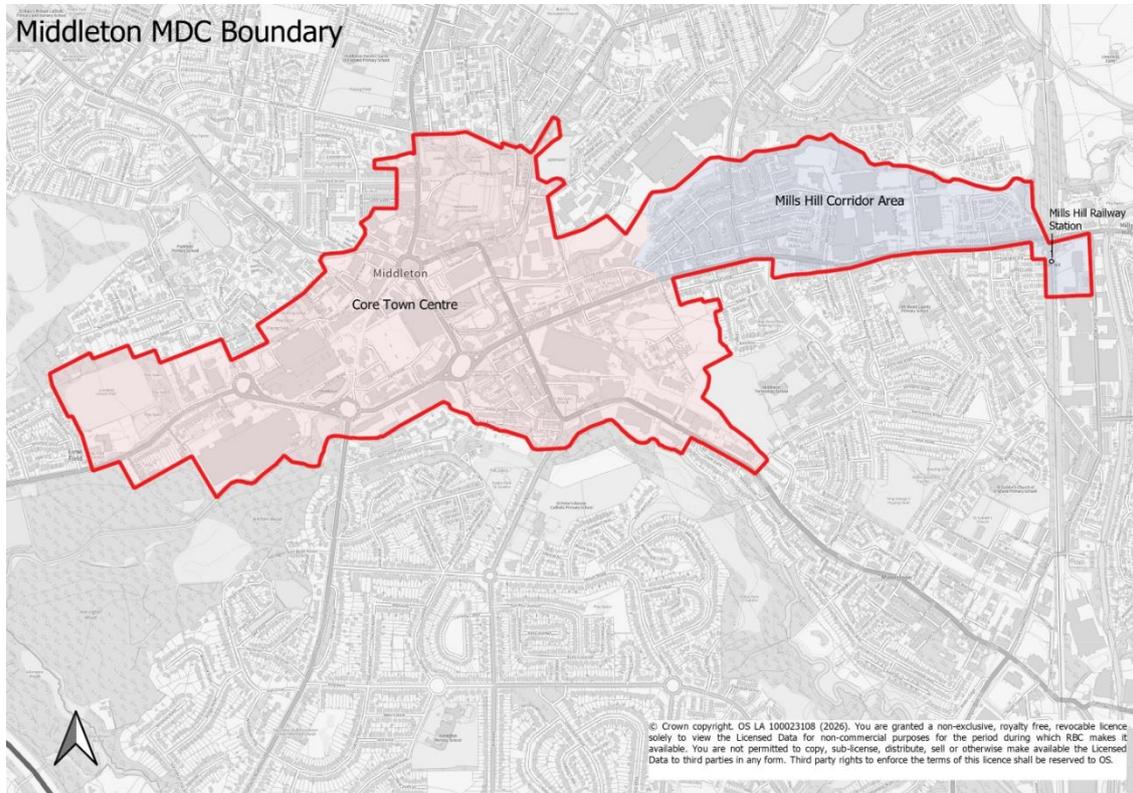
5.3. In alignment with the consultation, a Business Case will be developed to further define the detail of the key matters for determination if an MDC for Middleton was to be pursued following consultation. This would build on the work completed through the initial Business Plan and would include details 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 a Mayoral Development Area for Middleton, if designation does proceed then consultation on the Middleton 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 set out at the beginning of the Report.

## Appendix 1- Proposed Boundary



## Appendix 2- Middleton MDC options analysis (see attachment).