



Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 13 July 2022
Subject:	Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (North-East Growth Location)	
Report of	Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth and Skills	

Summary

This report seeks approval for the creation of a Mayoral Development Zone within the North-East Growth Location and for this to be named the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone.

The North-East Growth Location covers parts of Bury, Rochdale and Oldham, and is one of six growth locations across Greater Manchester. The aim of the growth locations is to identify priorities for investment to support new development, improve sustainable transport links, create and retain employment, offer better job opportunities and improve training and skills development for residents.

Within the North-East Growth Location, there is a specific opportunity to create significant levels of employment around three key sites – namely the Northern Gateway site, Stakehill site and the Kingsway Business Park.

These three sites, particularly the Northern Gateway site, offer the greatest opportunity to deliver transformational economic growth within Bury and across the north of the conurbation. Therefore, it is proposed that these three sites are designated as a Mayoral Development Zone, which will help to ensure that there is a committed focus in delivering these sites at district, regional and national levels. The proposal is also to brand this area as the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone to distinguish the opportunities in the area.

Governance arrangements, including the formation of a Mayoral Development Zone Board, will be established as part of the proposals, to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and investment are secured to realise the full potential and aspirations of the area.

The Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone will be very much linked into the development opportunities with the wider North-East Growth Location, including the proposals to regenerate our key town centres in Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich. It is essential that our residents are provided with the right skills to benefit from the new employment opportunities and also have the physical ability to access the sites. The emerging Economic Development Strategy and Boroughwide Transport Strategy will set out more details on how to achieve this.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Give consent to the Mayoral Development Zone, its boundary and agree for it to be named Atom Valley.
2. Give approval for the Mayoral Development Zone boundary that sits within the Bury local authority area.
3. Approve the establishment of the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone Board with the delegated authority to develop a strategy for the Mayoral Development Zone and create a business case for investment and external funding support with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
4. Delegate implementation of Bury's involvement in the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone to the Director of Place in consultation with the portfolio holder for Regeneration and Skills and the Chief Executive.
5. To note that regular reporting will go to the Council's Regeneration Board and Cabinet as appropriate.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone will support inclusive and sustainable growth that boosts and maximises the competitiveness of the northern part of Greater Manchester in relation to its local economy and will provide an influx of employment opportunities for its residents, as well as linking in the development of important sustainable transport links across the north of the conurbation.

Alternative options considered and rejected

No other options were considered/were applicable.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Through the Greater Manchester Strategy and the emerging Places for Everyone (Pfe) Joint Development Plan, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is leading on the development of six growth locations across Greater Manchester (GM) with a renewed ambition to address issues and opportunities to level up, grow and sustain the economy following years of persistent austerity and prevailing economic conditions.
- 1.2 To achieve the above ambition, a Growth Location has been identified in the north-east of the conurbation that transcends across Bury, Rochdale and Oldham. This growth location reflects the significant opportunities for growth in employment along the highway network and also the

opportunities for significant regeneration within the main town centres in this area of GM. The area is known as the North-East Growth Location (NEGL).

- 1.3 The employment growth opportunities that sit alongside the highway network (M66, M60 and M62) are of regional and national significance. As such, within the NEGL, it is proposed that a Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is created to articulate the importance of bringing these forward, which will then benefit the wider NEGL, and the wider conurbation and beyond. It is proposed that the MDZ be called the Atom Valley MDZ for branding and promotional purposes.
- 1.4 The sites that are proposed within the Atom Valley MDZ are Northern Gateway (the majority of which is within Bury), Stakehill and Kingsway Business Park. Collectively, they have the potential to deliver 1,600,000 square metres of employment space, 20,000 jobs and 7,000 homes.
- 1.5 Currently there are pockets of deprivation that exist within the three boroughs that are characterised by relatively low incomes, low house prices, low qualifications, low economic activity, low proportions of people in higher-paid managerial/professional occupations and on average, suffer with poor health.
- 1.6 The designation of the NEGL and the Atom Valley MDZ reflects the opportunities that exist in this geographical area and also underlines the ambitious development strategy set out in the PfE. These designations will help to prioritise the area and sites for future local and national funding programmes, particularly around transport infrastructure. They will also help to inform discussions with other infrastructure providers, such as utility companies and importantly, help to lever in private sector investment. The designations will therefore help to address many of the issues identified in paragraph 1.5 by accelerating the economic growth potential of these sites and improving the competitiveness of the north of the conurbation.
- 1.7 New employment opportunities across the Atom Valley MDZ will be supported by improved physical infrastructure, including considerable investment into local highways and public transport – helping to create the sustainable transport links for Bury’s residents to access the new opportunities. This includes significant improvements to the orbital connectivity between Bury to Rochdale (with linkages to the Northern Gateway). Funding will shortly be finalised within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to further develop improvements to bus linkages and tram-train between the two towns and into the key development sites.

- 1.8 Likewise, there will need to be significant investment in social infrastructure to ensure that our local residents in Bury are best placed to benefit from the opportunities emerging within the Atom Valley MDZ. The aspiration is to create a wide range of employment opportunities, including a significant number of high value jobs. Ultimately, the key driver for the NEGL and Atom Valley MDZ is to create and retain employment, offering better job opportunities and enabling training and skills development to increase the number of residents in employment.
- 1.9 In addition to the Atom Valley MDZ, the wider NEGL will seek to rebalance the economy in the north-eastern part of GM. In Bury specifically and in addition to the Northern Gateway, the focus will be in the towns of Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich. These towns already have approved regeneration strategies and plans in place that will complement and add benefit to the vision of the Atom Valley MDZ and NEGL as a whole. It is vital through these plans that Bury ensures sustainable development, including the increase in provision of highway and public transport investment.
- 1.10 The urgency to intervene at scale and in a connected way has been accelerated by the opportunity presented by Government through the publishing of the Levelling Up White paper and subsequent levelling up opportunities.

2. ATOM VALLEY MDZ – GROWTH AND REGENERATION IN BURY

- 2.1 The Northern Gateway site is of a transformative scale and of national and international significance. It has the potential to significantly change the economic growth potential of the Atom Valley MDZ, wider NEGL and beyond as it boasts having the capacity for around 1,200,000 square metres of employment floorspace, including proposals to incorporate a significant element of advanced manufacturing and major investment in transport infrastructure.
- 2.2 The site will be able to attract significant inward investment as well as stimulating increased productivity amongst companies in the area. This will build on existing manufacturing supply chains and skills enabling growth and the development of new and deeper supply chains around advanced manufacturing. An integral component of the strategy to bring forward the site is the partnership between the developer, businesses and educational institutions to ensure that training support is in place enabling local residents to access the many jobs (including high-skilled employment opportunities) that will be created to support levelling up.
- 2.3 The Atom Valley MDZ will support local training initiatives that will result in higher wages for local residents across the borough.

- 2.4 There will be beneficial outcomes to Bury's local residents through the Atom Valley MDZ and wider NEGL given the inclusion of Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich town centres and their respective approved regeneration programmes, and funding that has already been secured e.g. Levelling Up. Through emerging CRSTS monies, there are plans to develop a choice of high-quality transport links both within its towns and across GM. It is important that our residents benefit from this investment and a Boroughwide Transport Strategy is being developed to set out the key areas of intervention that will allow for a more integrated transport network, connecting to the Atom Valley MDZ opportunities. The offer and quality of these centres will attract the business and workers from the three growth sites to the newly created businesses, cultural, leisure and retail facilities these towns will have to offer, as well as access to a wider choice of residential accommodation being developed.
- 2.5 Connecting residents to employment opportunities is being seen as a vital component of the Atom Valley MDZ and wider NEGL. The ambition is for the new development locations to be a catalyst for investment in transport that will benefit both the sites and surrounding communities.
- 2.6 The specific proposals for Bury emerging through the CRSTS programme includes a proposed new transport interchange in Bury Town Centre, new tram-train connectivity from Bury to Rochdale, improved bus infrastructure and new cycling and walking facilities.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Levelling up requires a focused, long-term plan of action and a clear framework to identify and act upon the drivers of spatial disparity through focussing on the key drivers of place which include: infrastructure, housing and business space; the application and transfer of technology to improve productivity; innovation and skills of the workforce; strong and resilient communities; appropriate financial resources and place leadership. Each of these are individually important but their real significance comes in combination across the NEGL.
- 3.2 As already identified, support from national funding programmes has been secured to deliver town centre regeneration and TfGM has secured funding through CRSTS and infrastructure funding programmes. Furthermore, GMCA and Homes England have both provided revenue funding to support the delivery of the sites in the NEGL.
- 3.3 However, there is a need for a delivery route that will achieve an acceleration of the pace and scale of delivery and be able to attract further investment. It is therefore proposed that the optimal regeneration

mechanism for this area is the formation of the Atom Valley MDZ. Appendix 1 outlines the benefits of having an MDZ.

- 3.4 A MDZ is a non-statutory entity – it is not a Mayoral Development Corporation which is a statutory entity. Under the MDZ arrangements, GMCA and the three local authorities will incorporate the use of their own powers when required.
- 3.5 The designation of the Atom Valley MDZ and the formation of an MDZ Board will provide a clear mechanism to align public and private sector investment and ensure that there is a clear commitment to the principle of delivering inclusive and sustainable economic growth across the three sites and adjoining town centres across Bury, Rochdale and Oldham.
- 3.6 The proposed MDZ would be created around the three large growth sites as previously referred to i.e. Northern Gateway, Stakehill, and Kingsway Business Park. This will bring together the leaders of Bury, Rochdale and Oldham Councils alongside the GM Mayor and other key organisations and agencies, such as National Highways and utility companies. It is important that a partnership with such key stakeholders is developed to deliver the benefits of levelling up through a joined-up approach and to realise the potential of the northern part of GM for the benefit of, and as an integral part of, the whole of GM.
- 3.7 The Atom Valley MDZ will cover the area as indicated shaded grey on Appendix 2.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The next steps will be to establish the Atom Valley MDZ Board and supporting governance structure, the development strategy, a business case and starting to develop priority projects to attract further public sector funding:

Governance Structure

Following the establishment of the Atom Valley Board, it will firm up its relationship with Bury, Rochdale and Oldham Councils and start to look at where it can support delivery of their key strategic sites, as well as providing focus on core deliverables, both in terms of these sites and linkages to surrounding town centres and communities.

The Board will also agree its key objectives and develop a business case to aid the above, as well as attract future investment to support the delivery of the various sites.

Business Case

The Business Case will set out and refine the programme of projects (including transport objectives) that will support successful delivery of Atom Valley MDZ's stated objectives as set out in Appendix 3 of this report.

The Atom Valley MDZ Board will also prepare a Strategic Business Plan which will be approved on an annual basis by GMCA and Bury, Rochdale and Oldham Councils. Updates on delivery of objectives will be brought to Bury Council's Regeneration Board and Cabinet as required.

- 4.2 The Atom Valley MDZ Board will receive all future project progress updates, delivery plans and investment propositions to achieve the stated objectives, including delivery of the overall development programme.
- 4.3 Where required, further analytical and evidence-base work will be undertaken in respect of more clearly articulating an economic case of which specific funding will be sought.
- 4.4 The Atom Valley MDZ Board will also monitor progress against expected benefits. This will include projects being supported by risk registers and risk mitigation strategies. Key stakeholders will be identified, and a communication and stakeholder plan will be brought to an early meeting of the Board for discussion and approval.
- 4.5 Furthermore, GMCA will ensure that there will be reporting transparency and accountability for delivery of projects within the Atom Valley MDZ through respective reporting lines to the three local authorities.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 Bury and Rochdale councils, together with the Rochdale Development Agency (RDA) have led on the development of the Atom Valley brand which was revealed by the GM Mayor and local authority leaders at the New Era for GM Event in March 2022.
- 5.2 Bury Council is working with its counterparts in GMCA, Rochdale Council, the RDA and Oldham Council to ensure that there will be a communications strategy and plan for the delivery of the Atom Valley MDZ objectives and associated projects developed via the wider Atom Valley Growth Location.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The recommendations are contained at the front of this report.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

This proposal will provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise and to ensure modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for current and future generations.

The interventions that will be supported by the proposed Atom Valley MDZ will deliver against the aims in the areas of job creation, modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment.

The proposal will help to maximise employment to aid economic recovery and, in particular, will help to:

- Grow our business base in both existing and emerging sectors;
- Develop the conditions and capacity for businesses to grow; and;
- Generate investment in town centres.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

There are no negative impacts on equality and a positive impact recorded.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

The developments in the Atom Valley MDZ will support Bury's and GM's local carbon ambitions.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Some sites for future development are not in local authority ownership/control. This may impact on the ability to deliver and within expected timescales.	GMCA, supported by the three local authorities will look to formalise existing relationships where required and develop good relations with any new ones required.
Lack of capacity within the Council and partners to deliver against the stated objectives in the strategic business plan.	Early engagement to understand requirements and make best use of resources will be undertaken, alongside identification of funding opportunities that could help aid delivery and consideration of procured external resources.
Lack of funding and investment opportunities.	Risk register and risk mitigation plan and an investment strategy will be developed.
Failure to deliver against the stated objectives.	Risk register and risk mitigation plan and early identification of the potential to share resources.
Adequate funding is not available and/or secured to deliver on the entirety of the masterplans in Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich.	Early funding opportunities have been identified and secured. The Council is committed to sourcing and securing additional sources of funding.
Failure to invest in a significant scale of infrastructure in advance of the employment and housing development will not deliver a zero-carbon development that connects through sustainable and accessible transport modes to the surrounding communities.	This will be mitigated by the local authorities and GMCA working collaboratively to plan and galvanise investment with the joint venture developer to deliver the agreed objectives.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Northern Gateway (and Stakehill) are currently designated greenbelt, and these sites are included in the PfE. Failure to remove these sites from the greenbelt through the PfE process will make the transformational growth objectives less certain.	The PfE examination and resulting work will determine the outcome of the sites being (or not) removed from the green belt.

Legal Implications:

The governance section as set out in 4.1 of this report sets out the remit of the steering group. It is important to note that neither the steering group nor the working group have the power to make any formal decisions. The designation as a Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is non-statutory.

The proposed MDZ Board will not have any powers to make formal decisions. Therefore, the delivery and specific governance for Bury's Northern Gateway site will still remain a Bury function with decisions being made through the Council's usual decision-making processes.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications from the establishment of a Mayoral Development Zone, but this does offer potential further opportunities for securing external funding for future developments. All future developments within the zone that require funding from Bury Council resources will be required to be reported and approved through the appropriate Council governance routes.

This development does fit with the Council strategy of promoting regeneration and opportunities for new skills and jobs for Bury residents, which in turn does have a positive impact on the wider public sector financial resources.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Benefits of the Atom Valley MDZ
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Mayoral Development Zone
- Appendix 3 – Atom Valley MDZ Objectives

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ)	The designation of an MDZ means that an area will receive support from GMCA in establishing frameworks and securing development funding where there are opportunities.

Term	Meaning
North-East Growth Location (NEGL)	This is the area that includes the proposed Atom Valley MDZ and specified surrounding town centres of Bury and Rochdale boroughs.
Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)	GMCA is made up of the ten GM councils and GM Mayor who work with other local services, businesses, communities and other partners to improve the city region in terms of transport, regeneration, economic growth, attracting investment etc.
City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)	A funding stream that will enable significant investment to be made in local transport networks.