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| Report to: | Cabinet | Date: 05 November 2025 |
| Subject: | Northern Gateway (<i>Transport Framework Document; Social Value Strategy; MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan</i>) - PART A | |
| Report of | Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth | |

Summary

1. On 5th March 2025 the Northern Gateway Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved by Cabinet and provides a material consideration for and framework against which future planning applications on the Northern Gateway site will be considered. To further support and inform decision-making through the planning process for future applications, a Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document (TFD) (Appendix A) has been developed to set out a transport vision and plan for delivering the transport infrastructure and services needed to unlock the full potential of the Northern Gateway. This report outlines the detail of the TFD and seeks Cabinet endorsement of the document.
2. Further to the resolution in July 2025 by Cabinet to support the designation of the 'Atom Valley Northern Gateway' Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC), and ongoing work to develop the MDC governance arrangements, a Social Value Strategy (Appendix B) and accompanying Social Value Delivery Plan (Appendix C) have been developed. The purpose of these documents is to align the social value priorities of Bury Council, Rochdale Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) to maximise the social value potential and ensure tangible and quantifiable outcomes for local communities and businesses irrespective of the organisation commissioning work on behalf of Northern Gateway. This report outlines the detail of Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan and seeks Cabinet approval of both documents.
3. Following adoption of the Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan, and in recognition of a need for more formal working arrangements with key partners in the absence of a formal delivery mechanism for the Northern Gateway at that time, Cabinet endorsed the implementation of interim governance arrangements for Northern Gateway in September 2024. This included approval of a Business Plan which has successfully directed work for the last 12 months. In light of the imminent establishment of the Northern Gateway MDC by the Secretary of State, a 5-year MDC Business Plan (Appendix D – Part B) and accompanying annual Delivery Plan (Appendix E – Part B) have been developed by the Northern Gateway Strategic Board and Cabinet are requested to note the documents, which are currently in draft form. As the MDC is anticipated to be implemented by the Secretary of State

in early 2026, the draft Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan will allow the work of the Northern Gateway Strategic Board to move forward at pace until the point of MDC implementation. Upon implementation of the MDC, as per the requirements of draft MDC Constitution, the Business Plan and annual Delivery Plans will be approved by the MDC Board, then approved by both Bury and Rochdale Councils and GMCA, then subsequently adopted by the MDC.

Recommendation(s)

1. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - i. Endorse the Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document and delegate authority to the Executive Director (Place – Business, Growth and Infrastructure) to make adjustments to the document as the Northern Gateway project progresses.
 - ii. Endorse the Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy and Delivery Plan and delegate authority to the Executive Director (Place – Business, Growth and Infrastructure) to make adjustments to the documents as the Northern Gateway project progresses.
 - iii. Note the implementation of the MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan in advance of MDC implementation to enable the work of the Northern Gateway Strategic Board to move forward at pace and delegates authority to the Executive Director (Place – Business, Growth and Infrastructure) to make adjustments to it as the project progresses.
 - iv. Note the MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan will be brought back to Cabinet for final approval once the MDC Board has been established and has formally approved the documents.
 - v. Notes the Rochdale Borough Council's intention to take a similar report to their Executive.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

1. The Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document (TFD) sets out the transport vision for the site and its endorsement will support sound decision making through the planning process alongside Supplementary Planning Documents. The framework will also be a critical tool in making the case for and securing the investment needed to deliver the required transport infrastructure, from a number of funding sources, including financial and non-financial contributions from the private sector.

2. The endorsement of the Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy and Delivery Plan will support with maximising the benefits of commissioning for projects associated with Northern Gateway. The aligned social value priorities presented within the Strategy will mean that, irrespective of the organisation commissioning work on behalf of Northern Gateway, tangible and quantifiable outcomes will be realised for the communities and businesses of Bury and Rochdale. The Strategy and Delivery Plan will also provide a basis for provision of joined-up social value in advance of the implementation of the MDC.
3. The noting of the MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan will enable the Northern Gateway Strategic Board to move forward at pace with critical path workstreams identified as essential to drive forward the delivery of the site.

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. The development of a Transport Framework is a best practice planning requirement to set the vision led strategy for the site. The public sector has developed the TFD to ensure it adequately reflects planning and transport policy requirements and can be applied to applications across the site as they come forward. Alternative option for each developer to produce a Transport Plan for individual application areas, risking a non-cohesive approach.
2. Continue to provide social value based on commissioning organisations' individual social value objectives. Whilst on occasion this would mean the residents and businesses of Bury solely benefit from social value outcomes, there would also be occasions where no positive outcomes were realised within Bury. This option does not reflect the agreed cross-border, joined-up approach to working for Northern Gateway, nor does it maximise the social value opportunities associated with the scale and longevity of the site.
3. Continue to work to the approved 2024 / 25 Business Plan, for which many of the workstreams are well advanced, and wait until formal implementation of the MDC Board before endorsement of the MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan. As the MDC implementation is not anticipated until early 2026, interim workstreams would need to be agreed and put in place to direct work going forward for the intervening period.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Hollie Good

Position: Major Project Manager (Northern Gateway)

Department: Place

E-mail: h.good@bury.gov.uk

Background

Transport Framework Document (TFD)

1. On 5th March 2025 the Northern Gateway Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved by Cabinet and provides a material consideration for and framework against which future planning applications on the Northern Gateway site will be considered and sets out high level design principles and an approach to the delivery and phasing of infrastructure on and off site.
2. The SPD also assists Bury and Rochdale Councils to ensure that the ambitions for the site are realised and the benefits to the communities of Bury and Rochdale are maximised.
3. To further support and inform decision-making through the planning process for future applications, a Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document (TFD) has been developed to set out the transport vision for Northern Gateway, and the required transport infrastructure and services needed to bring the site forward in alignment with the vision and the GM Local Transport Plan.
4. The TFD will support sound decision making through the planning process and will be used alongside Supplementary Planning Documents to inform decisions on applications.
5. The framework will also be a critical tool in making the case for and securing the investment needed to deliver the required transport infrastructure from a range of sources.
6. To safeguard delivery of the transport vision as set out in the TFD, work is ongoing to develop a recovery mechanism and associated legal agreements with developers to secure necessary funding. This will enable required infrastructure to be provided up-front, primarily funded and / or delivered by the public sector in the first instance, to unlock delivery where developments cannot viably provide them from the outset and recoup those costs later.
7. The Northern Gateway Transport Framework identifies and sets a plan for delivering the transport infrastructure and services needed to unlock the full potential of the Northern Gateway, enabling sustainable, and inclusive growth. It defines the transport vision for Northern Gateway as:
 - *Access to, from, and within the Northern Gateway will be enabled by a package of sustainable transport measures, linking communities across Bury, Rochdale and the Regional Centre*

- *Overall mode share targets for work trips by full development build out:*
 - *20% public transport*
 - *10% walking, wheeling and cycling*
 - *70% car driver and passenger*
- *Direct, frequent and reliable local public transport connections to nearby centres in Rochdale, Bury and Northeast Manchester, supported by express transit connections to Manchester City Centre and universities, enhancing regional accessibility and opportunity.*
- *All communities within a 5km catchment of the site to have access to safe, high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling routes to/from Northern Gateway, creating an inclusive, connected active travel network that supports healthy, sustainable journeys for all.*
- *Targeted highway improvements that enhance access, mitigate capacity and safety impacts, and prioritise people and sustainable travel by embedding 'Streets for All' principles alongside well-designed access and parking strategies.*
- *Overall support for sustainable travel across the Atom Valley area and GM's ambition for zero net increase in car traffic by 2040, enabling transformational growth.*

8. The framework highlights key transport challenges and opportunities associated with the development and establishes the principles that will shape how people move within, to and from the Northern Gateway. It identifies a programme of transport interventions which prioritises sustainable transport to facilitate the development and ensure that new jobs, homes and community spaces are accessible, well-connected, and environmentally responsible.
9. The TFD presents short, medium and long term measures for improvements to public transport provision, prioritisation of walking, wheeling and cycling, and highway mitigation. It acknowledges that given the scale of the site, full delivery is expected to take place over a 20-year period and development is likely to come forward in phases, alongside provision of necessary transport infrastructure. Therefore, a flexible approach is needed to be responsive to opportunities, as the phasing may change over time depending on the needs of future occupiers. Determining the scale of the mitigation required, and bringing the most effective transport interventions forward at the right time will be crucial for the sustainability of the site from the outset.
10. A Technical Appendix to the TFD has also been produced. This document illustrates how the TFD vision and measures have been developed in an evidence-based way according to the scale and development mix across Northern Gateway. This is a live document, which will be updated as the Northern Gateway site is developed, to maintain flexibility and responsiveness to opportunities.

Social Value Strategy

11. As outlined in previous Cabinet Papers, the Council is working in partnership with Rochdale Council, GMCA and TfGM to bring forward the Northern Gateway sites, providing a significant boost to employment opportunities, infrastructure and economic growth locally.
12. Following previous Cabinet resolutions to create a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) to drive forward the delivery of Northern Gateway and reflecting the importance of the site regionally and nationally, proposed governance and operational arrangements for the MDC continue to be developed in advance of the Secretary of State formally designating the MDC in early 2026. In alignment with this, and in recognition of the scale and longevity of the Northern Gateway development, the cross-border complexities, and the objectives of the MDC, a Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy and Northern Gateway Social Value Delivery Plan have been developed.
13. The purpose of the Strategy is to set direction for a joined-up approach to the delivery of Social Value between key partner organisations, for the benefit of communities and businesses within both districts, irrespective of the organisation commissioning work on behalf of Northern Gateway. The Strategy aligns the social value priorities of Bury Council, Rochdale Council, GMCA and TfGM to maximise the social value potential and ensure tangible and quantifiable outcomes.
14. Evaluation and cross-referencing of both Council's, GMCA and TfGM's corporate priorities and social value goals has taken place and identified four key cross-cutting themes, which the priorities and principles within the Strategy are focussed on, and will be used to inform activities and targets to be implemented during the delivery of specific workstreams. These themes are:
 - Environment
 - Employment
 - Community
 - Economy
15. Whilst each commissioning organisation will need to work within the bounds of its own organisational requirements, the Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy places obligation on the need to consider the key themes presented above and acknowledge the cross-boundary nature of the development. Northern Gateway provides opportunities for residents and businesses from both Bury and Rochdale to directly benefit from the development and delivery

of the sites and the Strategy requires that social value objectives and targets should be tailored as such.

16. The Northern Gateway Social Value Delivery Plan outlines objectives for the delivery of each theme presented within the Strategy, provides contractors with a basis for developing Social Value Action Plans and details targets and measurements. The Delivery Plan also sets out how a Social Value Delivery Group will work to support implementation of meaningful social value and ensure that contractors are linked into relevant programmes and initiatives within Bury and Rochdale.
17. To inform the Strategy and Delivery Plan a Local Needs Analysis has taken place to understand the needs within Bury and Rochdale. The analysis includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, and the Corporate Priorities of key partner organisations. This has identified the needs and opportunities of each area and helped to determine how social value activities can be targeted to provide relevant support.
18. The Social Value Strategy and Delivery Plan will be reviewed as a minimum on an annual basis by the Social Value Delivery Group and on a 5-year basis by the MDC Board.

MDC 5-Year Business Plan and Annual Delivery Plan

19. Building on the momentum of the 2024 / 25 Northern Gateway Business Plan and in light of the forthcoming Northern Gateway MDC, for which support was provided by Cabinet in July 2025, a 5-year MDC Business Plan and accompanying annual Delivery Plan 2026 /27 have been developed. As the MDC is not expected to be implemented by the Secretary of State until early 2026, the noting of the Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan will allow the work of the Northern Gateway Strategic Board to move forward at pace until the point of MDC implementation.
20. The MDC Business Plan and annual Delivery Plan have been reviewed by the Northern Gateway Strategic Board. Upon implementation of the MDC, as per the requirements of the draft MDC Constitution, the Business Plan and annual Delivery Plans will be approved by the MDC Board, then approved by both Bury and Rochdale Councils and GMCA and subsequently adopted by the MDC.
21. The 5-year MDC Business Plan sets out the priority pipeline of short-to-medium-term activities for the 5-year period between 2026 and 2031 and provides detail of critical activities beyond this 5-year period to look to the long-term. See Part B.

22. See Part B - key objectives of the 5-year Northern Gateway MDC Business Plan.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

23. A key part of the Places for Everyone Plan is to rebalance the Greater Manchester economy by significantly boosting the economic output from the north through the delivery of new housing and employment that will benefit both Bury and its residents. The plan sets out strategic site allocations that will guide future growth and development in the Borough. The 'Let's Do It' strategy specifically refers to Places for Everyone as having a key role to play in the delivery of its objectives and priorities, in addition to the Corporate Plan 2024/25 seeks to deliver the Vision for 2030 which is for the Council to Achieve Economic Growth.

24. As Bury's largest employment allocation within the Places for Everyone plan, Northern Gateway supports delivery of the Vision 2030 and 'Let's Do It!' to stand out as a place that is achieving faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation through the development of employment space to enable job creation and upskilling of residents, leading to economic growth:

Local – The project will generate jobs for local people, enhance economic regeneration and provide links with existing and new communities.

Enterprise - the project will drive economic growth and inclusion by creating more employment space for existing businesses to expand into and to encourage more local, national and international businesses to open in the Borough; helping to ensure residents have the best chance to access good jobs.

Together – Ensuring sustainable access into the site to maximise inclusivity and access to opportunities for members of the local community and working with partners to maximise social value opportunities to shape outcomes.

Strength - the project will provide space for new and expanding local business within a site that is well connected to local communities. This will provide opportunities for community wealth building through new business start-ups, increased local spend and the adoption of new skills whilst providing opportunity for all through provision of sustainable transport modes.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

25. The attached Equality Impact Assessment concludes that impacts are positive and will continue to be assessed as the project progresses.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

26. Environmental impacts and concerns will be assessed and monitored as project delivery commences and will be in-line with existing Council policies. The Northern Gateway Development Framework will seek to meet policy requirements, including physical, social and environmental impacts including biodiversity net gain.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

| Risk / opportunity | Mitigation |
|---|--|
| <p>The Transport Framework Document is not endorsed, impacting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ability to support sound decision making through the planning process or alongside Supplementary Planning Documents to inform decisions on future planning applications;• position when making the case for and securing the investment needed to deliver the required transport infrastructure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a robust basis for the Transport Framework Document through ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, alignment with policy and development of strong technical base (Technical Appendix);• Seek endorsement of the Transport Framework Document. |

Legal Implications:

There are no procurement or legal implications at this stage. The client department confirms procurement and legal will be contacted when advice is required.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document (Part A)

Appendix B - Northern Gateway Social Value Strategy (Part A)

Appendix C - Northern Gateway Social Value Delivery Plan (Part A)

Appendix D - Northern Gateway MDC 5-Year Business Plan (Part B)

Appendix E - Northern Gateway Annual Delivery Plan 2026 / 27 (Part B)

Background Papers:

Places for Everyone Plan. Available on request.

Cabinet Report September 2024 - Northern Gateway Governance / Investment Zone. Available on request.

Cabinet Report March 2025 – Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document. Available on request.

Cabinet Report March 2025 – Northern Gateway MDC Approval to Consult and Collaboration Agreement. Available on request.

Cabinet Report July 2025 - Northern Gateway MDC Approval to Proceed. Available on request.

Transport Framework Document: Technical Appendix. Available on request.

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

| Term | Meaning |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| SPD | Supplementary Planning Document |
| PfE | Places for Everyone Plan |
| TFD | Transport Framework Document |
| MDC | Mayoral Development Corporation |
| GMCA | Greater Manchester Combined Authority |
| TfGM | Transport for Greater Manchester |
| SRN | Strategic Road Network |
| SoS | Secretary of State |