



# Oldham Innova Foster Action Plan

**Dec 2018**



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## 1.0 Executive Summary

This action plan for Oldham sets out the interventions to be delivered by December 2021 to accelerate business start-up, scale-up and growth in the Borough. At a local level, they support Oldham's Business and Investment Review, the Oldham Local Plan and they help ensure that the ambitions of the GM European Structural Investment Fund (GMESIF), the Greater Manchester Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy (**the implementation documents of the GMESIF**) are realized.

The Innova Foster Project provides an ideal opportunity to understand how partners from across Europe support businesses to start-up and grow, particularly, through the sharing of good practice and peer reviews of the local eco-system. Using knowledge gained from this exchange of experiences enabled Oldham Council to work in partnership with the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub to develop innovative interventions inspired by Innova Foster partners to develop the following action plan. The project also provided valuable expertise that enabled the GM Business Growth Hub to shape the wider GM business support offer, currently supported by the relevant policy instrument, the Greater Manchester European Structural Investment Fund.

The resulting actions have been approved in principle by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and will be delivered by Oldham Council and GM Business Growth Hub.

Ultimately, the delivery of this action plan will have a significant impact on achieving the ambitions of the GMESIF, GM Strategy and the Local Industrial Strategy both of which aim to support economic growth to create a highly productive, more inclusive and prosperous city region.

## 2.0 Policy context

Greater Manchester (GM) is city-region located in north-west England. It has a population of 2.79 million and is home to 10 districts: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. GM is governed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) that consists of 10 indirectly elected members, from each district, and an elected city-region mayor. The GMCA and the GM Mayor are responsible for developing policy to support the economic growth of the city-region. They oversee the delivery of the GMESIF, the 2017 GM Strategy and the emerging Local Industrial Strategy, all of which set the regional policy context for business support within Oldham and GM.

GMESIF is the Oldham policy instrument. It was developed to recognize that EU structural funds will contribute towards a much larger investment programme and as such the GMESIF sits above the other suite of investment policies such as the GM Strategy and the Local Industrial Strategy. The GMESIF is a wide ranging general policy programme that allocates the GM ERDF and ESF funds to more general areas of activity. Project allocations are then measured against these more detailed industrial policies, so in effect the GM Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy are the implementation programmes for the GMESIF. The Innova Foster project has helped us to develop a programme that will help shape delivery



of all three of these policies, but principally the GMESIF changing and shaping delivery of the ERDF allocations included in it. Oldham Council met with the Managing Agency to discuss our approach and they felt happy to endorse our action plan, recognizing the influence it will have on the GMESIF allocations.

The GM Strategy sets out an ambition to make GM one of the best places in the world. It's an overarching strategy that simultaneously addresses education and skills, wellbeing, the environment, work and economic growth through 10 key priorities including: Priority 4: A thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester, which in turn was designed to deliver the Competitive Business strand of the GMESIF.

Under-pinning Priority 4 is the ambition for GM to be recognised as one of the best places in the UK to start up, develop and grow business, fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship. Success of which will be measured by increased business start-ups and inward investment, and improved business performance. This will be reflected in the adoption of activity learned from Innova Foster by the GM Business Growth Hub, who manage a programme of business support activity supported by the GMESIF.

The GM Strategy sets the framework for the emerging GM Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). GM's LIS is designed to deliver an economy fit for the future, with prosperous communities across the city region and radically increased productivity and earning power. The GM LIS aims to create highly productive, innovative and international businesses by strengthening their leadership and management, increasing innovation commercialisation, adoption and diffusion, and raising levels of exports, foreign direct investment (FDI) and inward investment. It states that key to achieving are more strengthened and better coordinated existing business support programmes to enable more local businesses to access them and scale-up, and provide more targeted support including one-to-one advice, mentoring and peer-to-peer programmes.

This action plan will address the GM ESIF policy instrument and the implementation plans by helping to develop a business support offer that will create an eco-system to facilitate business start-up, growth and inward investment. Key outcomes that will be measured as part of this action plan that will be directly impact on these are new business start-ups and jobs created. As detailed in section 5 this action plan will help create 566 jobs and support 90 business start-ups.

The Local Diagnosis that was developed in the run up to the Oldham and Greater Manchester peer review gave us an opportunity to baseline existing activity for supporting businesses. The peer review was then used to highlight any perceived gaps in in the support ecosystem, and recommend good practice from partners that would help solve those gaps.

### **3.0 Working with partners to develop the action plan**

#### **3.1 GM Business Growth Hub**



Oldham Council has been working with the GC Business Growth Hub (BGH) since 2011 to deliver ERDF business support services in the Borough. In that time the GC BGH have developed their service offer beyond their core growth and start-up services to provide support on access to finance, innovation, workforce development, leadership, resource efficiency as well providing specialist expertise for a range of prime capability sectors and markets. They have also developed strong partnerships with key stakeholders, ensuring that they truly work as a 'hub', bringing together the best of both the public and private sectors to support businesses in GM.

The current GM business support programme came to an end in Dec 2018 and a new one is due to run from Jan 2019 until Dec 2021. With this in mind, the GC BGH has been working alongside Oldham Council throughout the first phase of the Innova foster programme to understand the best practice that exists throughout Europe, how this can help address GM policy instruments and how it can be integrated into the new GM business support programme to provide the best possible outcomes for Oldham and GM.

The GC BGH has developed a new programme of support that will aim to create a thriving and productive economy by unlocking and accelerating the growth potential of businesses across the whole of Greater Manchester. It is known as the Business Productivity and Inclusive Growth programme and it will form a key part of this action plan. The programme has been developed in-line with the first stage outcomes of the innova foster programme and the peer review that took place in Manchester in June 2018 as well as Oldham's Business and Investment Review. This action plan outlines how Oldham can optimize business growth and investment in the Borough and influence GM business support policy through the provision of a comprehensive business support offer, targeted business engagement and increased partnership working with key stakeholders such as the GC BGH. The GC BGH will continue to work closely with Oldham Council to deliver the following action plan throughout the second phase of Innova foster.

### **3.2 Innova Foster Partners**

The Innova Foster project has been a great source of expertise as well as inspiration that has enabled Oldham to develop the following business support action plan. The study tour visits to partner regions provided a practical overview of the business support eco-systems in a range of partner countries and subsequent peer reviews facilitated valuable discussions about how the support worked, it's relevance to difference regions, how it could sometimes be improved based on experience and the exchange of ideas and most importantly how it could be transferred to shape business support policy frameworks and local action plans. The intelligence gathered from the Innova Foster project has been used at a sub-regional level to influence the Greater Manchester Policy Instrument Greater Manchester Structural Investment Fund.

The project has provided a unique opportunity for Greater Manchester to experience alternative approaches to the delivery of business support services. Throughout the project we were able to discuss good practice in business support with colleagues from the private and public sectors, universities and



civil society organisations who were brought together in the form of peer reviews to work closely together to advance new or improved solutions designed to meet the most pressing needs of our business sector.

The shared interest in the project in Oldham and in the Greater Manchester City Region has also meant that organisations involved in business support have participated in the stakeholder group, Team Oldham, cooperating much more than would previously happened, so strengthening local delivery. More importantly, the stakeholders (Local Authorities, business support agencies, private sector partners) have been able to meet and discuss new ideas that have been highlighted during the peer reviews of the Innova Foster project.

From the study tours it was clear that Oldham and Greater Manchester have access to a diverse and well developed business support offer. However, the benefit of the project is that it enabled us to look at what was working well in other areas and improve and enhance our offer. Rather than transferring whole projects, we were able identify components of the support provision, integrate them into ours and subsequently design an improved offer.

### **3.3 How the Innova Foster Project has shaped this action plan**

Good practices shared as part of this project and the Oldham peer review that took place as part of the Oldham study tour have been used to develop the following action plan. The good practices that were used and are referred to below in the specific actions are:

#### **3.3.1 Malta – Setting up a life science centre**

Malta Enterprise facilitated the building of a Life Sciences Centre located close to the Hospital and University focused on Life Sciences and associated technologies. The centre aims to create, grow and attract knowledge based businesses by providing the space and support they need to invest in knowledge-based activities and to increase collaboration between the businesses and Malta enterprises. It also encourages collaboration between businesses via shared spaces and facilities including laboratories and meeting spaces. Also, the take up of support aimed to scale-up and grow businesses offering access to experienced and professional business and financial advice, as well as assistance for internationalization.

#### **3.3.2 Social entrepreneurship hub - Tkalka in Maribor, Slovenia**

Tkalka is an incubator space that promotes social and economic collaboration as a way of supporting business start-up and development. It uses a bottom-up approach where businesses themselves create and maintain a space to support the growth of businesses. It has been recognized as the best co-working space in Slovenia and has over 100 users including 25 social enterprises and cooperatives offering innovative solutions to social, economic and other problems of the region.

#### **3.3.3 High Tech Aerospace Incubator, Incyde, Madrid**



This is a high-tech incubator space that allows businesses to access equipment, knowledge, technology and a partner network to help stimulate innovation and growth. The partner network provides a range of advisory services including finance, business planning, access to new markets and new technology, IP services, marketing and product testing.

### **3.3.4 Innovation Vouchers, Cork City Council**

Innovation vouchers provide SME's with access to up to 5,000 euros to explore an innovative business opportunity. Under the initiative, the vouchers are allocated on a semi-competitive basis to SMEs whose proposals, to work with public knowledge providers on specific innovation questions, meet basic criteria.

### **3.3.5 sTART-Up Day, Tartu, Estonia**

sTARTUp Day is the biggest business festival in the Baltics bringing together start-up businesses with traditional entrepreneurs, business experts, investors, government and media representatives from at least 27 countries. The purpose of the event is to create an attractive environment for businesses and startups in Tartu, turning innovative ideas into successful business models as startups are brought together with investors and the wider partnership network.

### **3.3.6 Start-up Weekend, Torun, Poland**

Start-up Weekend is aimed at individuals who have ideas for innovative solutions or new businesses. It helps to build a start-up community. Start-up Weekend Toruń is a regional edition of global event supported by Google and Techstars. Throughout the weekend, participants work in teams with mentors to share ideas and create a company to develop a prototype of an online product or service. Then, the best business ideas are picked and the winners receive a prize from the sponsors. These events are very well attended both from a participant but also from a mentor and sponsor point of view.

### **3.3.7 Oldham start-up ecosystem peer review, Oldham**

The Oldham start-up ecosystem peer review took place as part of the study tour to Oldham and Manchester in June 2018. It was of great value to us in designing this action plan as it provided us with "critical friends" who could see first-hand the eco-system in action and provide constructive input based on their knowledge and expertise about how it could be improved. The Oldham Peer review acknowledged the strong business support offer but noted gaps in terms of access to finance and concluded that improvements needed to be made mainly in the processes that surround the business support and engagement model. This is a key outcome for us as a direct result of the project and it will be used to underpin the Oldham Action Plan and to achieve two actions to:

- Create a comprehensive business support offer, and,
- Develop a simple and effective business engagement process through account management.

## **4.0 Actions**





#### 4.1 Action 1 – Create a comprehensive business support offer

##### 4.1.1 Background

The GMESIF, the GM Strategy and the GM LIS recognise the important role that businesses play in supporting and growing local and regional economies. They outline the desire for the region to be recognised as one of the best places in the UK to start up, develop and grow business, fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship. They also support this ambition by stating the key to achieving this is the strengthening and better coordinated existing business support programmes to enable more local businesses to access them and scale-up, and provide more targeted support including one-to-one advice, mentoring and peer-to-peer programmes.

To fully understand the business support offer in Oldham a year-long review of business support and investment was carried out by stakeholder group, Team Oldham in 2018. The review concluded that Oldham has access to a strong business support offer but that it could be further strengthened by the addition of financial support to help businesses grow and invest in the Borough as well as support to help businesses scale-up. **They also identified a lack of local support in the GMESIF. The development of the Business Productivity and Inclusive Growth Programme will help plug that gap in our policy instrument.** Both these products were added to the Oldham Local Plan which would identify the business support offer to be delivered in Oldham by the GM Business Growth Hub (funded through GMESIF support) via the Business Productivity and Inclusive Growth (BPIG) Programme between Jan 2019 and Dec 2021.

Outcomes from Innova Foster have been used to influence the design of the BPIG Programme and will also be integrated into the delivery of it, particularly, the findings of the Peer Review. This programme of support is available to all 10 GM Local Authorities and its overarching aim is to create a single, coherent business support system for GM to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth for the GM economy using a partner-based approach. All programme activities, including those delivered by contracted partners are managed by the GC BGH. The programme addresses GM policy instruments above. Examples of best practise that have been used from the Innova foster project to shape the programme include:

- **Setting up a life science centre, Malta** - It is the collaboration aspect of this good practice that is of interest to Oldham, particularly between businesses and linking back to knowledge based activities. Traditionally, this has been achieved bringing businesses together via shared spaces. However, we would like to potentially widen this concept and encourage collaboration without the need for space using events and business networks. Also, by integrating collaborative activities into business growth plans. This good practice inspired the development of the Oldham Local Plan and BPIG programme as described below.
- **Social entrepreneurship hub - Tkalka in Maribor, Slovenia** - This good practice is of interest to Oldham because it promotes new ways of collaboration, using a bottom-up approach that could



be used to support business start-up and growth with businesses themselves proving innovative business support solutions that could be integrated into the wider Oldham offer. This good practice also inspired the development of the Oldham Local Plan and BPIG programme as described below.

- **High Tech Aerospace Incubator, Incyde, Madrid** - It is the partner network part of this good practice that is of most interest to Oldham, in particular, how it works together to provide seamless support to individual businesses without duplication and without them feeling bombarded by the support offer.
- **Innovation Vouchers, Cork City Council** - The evidence of success of this good practice was of interest to Oldham. In particular, the demand for the product, the strong network and reputational benefits to being involved in the programme and how it improved business engagement.
- **sTART-Up Day, Tartu, Estonia** - Whilst there are a range of start-up events that potential businesses have access to in Oldham, most of them focus on a particular area of the start-up journey and they take place during the working week. Tartu is doing things differently, by hosting more generalist events, bringing together a range of different stakeholders. The evidence of success of this good practice was also of interest to Oldham, particularly, how the event created the opportunity for future co-operation between the new business start-ups and the stakeholders.
- **Start-up Weekend, Torun, Poland** - The learning from this good practise is simple and doesn't focus on the content of the event but on the timing of it with the weekend obviously being a good time to hold a start-up event making them more accessible to those who may already be in employment but are looking at starting their own business.

#### 4.1.3 Description

The programme involves multiple strands of support activity under four modules:

- **Start-up support:** Individual elements covering livelihood businesses, high growth start-ups, and scale up support.
- **Business Growth Programme:** This is the largest module and covers:
  - Universal support across Greater Manchester on a light touch basis with at least 10% of the business base of each local authority area being engaged by the programme; and
  - Intensive programmes covering innovation, leadership, business strategy, skills and talent, access to finance, and specialist sector support.
- **Technology Co-Investment Fund:** a seed and early stage co-investment fund that will invest in a range of technologies and innovations.



- **Greater Manchester Targeted Programme: An integrated support programme for larger businesses with the greatest potential to grow and improve productivity.**

The table below highlights the support that businesses can access via the BPIG Programme:

<p><b>Access to Finance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent and impartial funding advice</li> <li>• Access to grants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Carbon Reduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings on energy, materials and water, including production, building use and transport</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital, Creative &amp; Tech Sector Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist tailored support targeted to deliver high impact activities to drive high growth of potential businesses within the creative digital and technology sectors. Program supported and delivered by dedicated digital sector relevant and experienced advisors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Digital Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping clients understand and implement digital technologies in order to attract new customers, generate new revenue, create new products and services, reduce their costs and transform their business processes - including digital marketing, cloud computing, web and app development, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, and cyber security.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Eco Innovation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist, practical support to help companies understand how their market may be changing and how eco-innovation could enhance their service offering</li> </ul>
<p><b>Executive Development Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service customised to meet the personal needs of the business owner / senior manager based on organisational needs analysis and individual training needs analysis</li> </ul>
<p><b>Growth Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 360 degree view/diagnostic of business growth barriers and needs</li> <li>• Scale-up support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Start-up (Start Smart)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team has the knowledge and business experience of all issues relating to starting a business.</li> <li>• Scale-up support</li> </ul>



<b>Innovation Growth Services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experienced Advisors with a proven track record of working with SMEs to identify and progress innovative opportunities from ideation concept stage through to implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Life Sciences Sector Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered in partnership with Trustech and Health Innovation Manchester</li> </ul>
<b>Low Carbon Sector Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experienced advisors with specialist knowledge of the sector, as a whole as well as its diverse component parts, plus of the drivers that affect it – from regulations to policy, technology and markets.</li> </ul>
<b>Manufacturing Sector Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specialist manufacturing advisors that provide tailored on-site and off-site support as part of a suite of services dedicated to drive growth in GM's key priority sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Manufacturing (pan-LEP) Grant</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant funding for suitable improvement projects with a value of £10k – this will attract a £3k grant</li> </ul>
<b>Mentoring Growth Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impartial, independent input from an experienced professional with relevant background and experience</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce Development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WFD is not primarily or entirely focused on skills/training. It also looks to identify the whole/holistic people development needs within a business to support business growth.</li> </ul>

**4.1.3 Key actions to be implemented under - Create a comprehensive business support offer**

**1) Development of the Oldham Local Plan/BPIG Programme**

This programme of support has been developed and was launched during the Oldham Festival for Business in May 2019. It was launched at the GC BGH Hub Lunch at which there were more than 50 attendees that included both partners, stakeholders and policy makers. The launch provided a brief overview of the Oldham Local Plan and BPIG Programme including aims, objectives, support available and how to access the support. Beyond the launch there will be an ongoing marketing campaign to promote the support. The Oldham Local Plan and BPIG Programme were very much influenced by the findings of the Innova foster Oldham Peer review and work that had taken place locally. The concept of collaboration, from the Setting up a life science centre good practise from Malta and Social entrepreneurship hub - Tkalka in Maribor, Slovenia, was designed into the BPIG Programme particularly



in the areas of Growth Services – start-up, scale-up, growth, mentoring and innovation. Through the programme of support businesses are encouraged to collaborate at each stage of their support and growth journey by connecting with advisors, mentors, knowledge providers and each other. This is done formally through the integration of collaborative actions into business start-up and growth plans. When a business connects with the BGH for support a bespoke business plan is created to aid their growth. Collaborative actions are integrated into this and monitored. Informally, collaboration is encouraged via the BGH's event programme through events such as *"Accelerating your Innovation Journey"* and networks such as *"Hub Lunches"*.

Steps taken to implement this action include:

- Review of business support and investment in Oldham – Sept 2018
- Creation of the Oldham Local Plan – Nov 2018
- ERDF funding final approvals – April 2019
- Launch of the Oldham Local Plan – May 2019

## **2) Creation of operational team to implement Oldham Local Plan**

This team is taken from GM BGH, Oldham Council, Midas and UK Dept for International Trade. The operational team are people from within the local business support eco-system that have specialisms for example, start-up support, manufacturing support, access to finance etc. The team is responsible for promoting and implementing the programme in Oldham through networking events and 1-2-1 meetings with businesses. They are also responsible for creating a virtual one-stop-shop approach whereby businesses can find and access all the support they need via this team. We have used the good practise from the High Tech Aerospace Incubator in Madrid to look at how we can create Partner Networks via Team Oldham aimed at helping local businesses to collaborate with each other as well as with knowledge providers to stimulate innovative products and processes to support business growth. This was very much inspired by the good practice the High Tech Aerospace Incubator from Madrid, albeit without the need for physical premises. Using, the thinking behind the High Tech Aerospace Incubator best practice from Madrid to provide a range of support for the aerospace sector focusing on growth, internationalization, financing etc provided by mentors and advisors, this action uses the same approach but with no specific premises and the one-stop-shop going to the business. We will do this by taking the steps below:

- Identification of business support stakeholders that operate in Oldham – March 2019
- Develop Terms of Reference for Team Oldham – April 2019
- Form Team Oldham group – May 2019
- Agree targets and outputs – May 2019
- Identify businesses to be targeted – June 2019
- Identify how businesses will be targeted – 1-2-1 meetings, events, networks etc. – June 2019
- Record business support activity on shared database – Tractivity – on-going.
- Report and review progress at monthly operational meetings – on-going.



- Develop Team Oldham business network – Nov 2019.

### **3) Launch of an Oldham specific Business Growth and Investment grant scheme**

The grant scheme has been recently launched in Oldham. It provides grants of up to £10,000 at an intervention rate of 25% based on at least 1 job being created for every £2,000 of funding offered. The grants aren't meant to duplicate other sources of funded and are only available to existing businesses where there is no other funding support available. The grant scheme is being run as a pilot scheme and has £100,000 allocated towards it. First stage expressions of interest are currently being received and reviewed with a view to the first grant offers being made in July 2019. This was developed in line with the Oldham Peer Review and inspired by the Innovation Voucher good practise from Cork City Council. This good practise uses funding using innovation vouchers of up to 5,000 euros to stimulate knowledge development or problem solving within a business linked to R&D. The Oldham Business Growth and Investment Grant uses a similar incentive to help businesses accelerate their growth in the Borough either by investing in new productivity related capital equipment or the extension of their premises to increase output. It is also being used as a hook to increase business engagement and stimulate business growth by linking businesses into the wider support offer and access to business networks.

Steps taken to implement this action include:

- Develop business case for grants programme – Jan 2019
- Agree eligibility criteria and grant administration – Jan 2019
- Gain approval for funding – March 2019
- Launch of grant scheme – April 2019
- Marketing of scheme including promotion of successes – on-going
- Review of scheme including demand, impacts, outputs and potential improvements – on-going

### **4) Development and implementation of a marketing and communications strategy to promote the Oldham offer**

A strategy needs to be developed and implemented to provide on-going promotion of the business support programme. This includes using channels such as social media, websites, events, local influencers and PR campaigns. A draft strategy has been produced and should be formally approved at the next Team Oldham Meeting in June. The ambition is for at least 500 businesses in Oldham to access support over the next 2 years. Allied to this will be the opportunity to investigate the creation of a business support and investment brand that could be used to promote Oldham as a good place to do business. Events will form a key part of this strategy and two good practices particularly helped shape our thinking around this action in terms of using events to promote the support offer.

The sTART-Up Day from Tartu and the Start-up Weekend from Torun made us look at how we use events to market our offer whilst proving a practical access solution. An annual start-up day is already held by GM BGH known as Venture Fest. However, this event tends to focus on just the investment side of starting up. The Tartu event demonstrated that there is appetite for a more general start-up help



detailing what other support start-ups can access. Secondly, the Start-up Weekend from Torun enabled us to have a rethink about hosting events. Traditionally, business events are held during the week but this good practise showed that events may be more accessible and practical to attend if they are held at the weekend. These 2 good practises inspired us to look at our marketing strategy and whether the components of it are fit for purpose and accessible to all.

Steps taken to implement this action include:

- Develop and agree a shared marketing strategy revolving around key messages, campaigns and events – June 2019
- Identify and develop key channels for sharing key messages, campaigns and events – June 2019
- Develop an Oldham business support and investment brand – Aug 2019
- Develop business case-studies promoting success – Aug 2019

#### **4.1.4 Players involved**

- Oldham Council
- GC Business Growth Hub
- Midas
- UK DIT
- Chamber of Commerce
- Oldham College
- Private sector businesses.

#### **4.1.5 Timeframe**

All the above key actions will be complete by the end of 2021. However, monitoring of the programme will extend beyond this time period so that the true impacts of it can be assessed.

#### **4.1.6 Costs and funding**

The cost of the BPIG programme across the 10 GM districts is approx. £44m. The exact cost of delivery in Oldham largely depends on the take up of the offer. This is being funded through ERDF OP Priority Axis 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (The GMESIF). The costs of the Oldham grant is £100,000 plus staff time to deliver and administer it. This is being funded via Oldham Council's capital budget. The cost of the development and implementation of the marketing strategy is approx. £30,000. This also is being funded via Oldham Council's capital budget.

## **4.2 Action 2 - Develop a simple and effective business engagement process through account management**

### **4.2.1 Background**

This action has been identified in line with the ambitions of the GM Strategy and GM LIS which as well as identifying the need for a comprehensive business support offer, also highlights the need to close the



productivity gap which in part can be achieved by encouraging businesses to access start-up and growth support via a simple and effective engagement process. This action has also been shaped by the Oldham Peer Review and the Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model from Barcelona. The Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model engages with and targets specific groups of people to ensure maximum take-up and impact of the support. This is something that inspired the adoption of this action whereby all businesses have access to support in Oldham but specific businesses are being identified, targeted and account managed to maximize business engagement, support take-up and business growth. The Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model is a package of support that uses physical and on-line channels to provide differing levels of support, offering both individual and group coaching in cooperation with the city's ecosystem. It has 4 levels of support:

- **Universal** - that is open to everyone. This starts with a welcome session where all the available on and off-line support tools are presented. All the attendees can then access different services according to their needs including: personalised advice from entrepreneurship experts, online toolkits, business plans, information about legal procedures, access to funding and market intelligence and training seminars.
- **Blended** – a combination of on-site and on-line services provides the model with a flexibility for those entrepreneurs facing mobility and time restrictions.
- **Tailor made** - programs designed for those groups that face specific hindrances due to their social/personal circumstances.
- **Integrated** - it has the ability to refer those who reach out to Business Advisor but are not ready to start a business to other services (i.e. those offered by the employment or training depts).

The Model is implemented in permanent contact with the different stakeholders operating at economic and social levels in the city of Barcelona, which enables to adapt to the changes of the society and economy.

The Oldham Peer Review was also key to developing this action. This action wouldn't have taken place without the Innova Foster Peer Review. Participants highlighted that Oldham had access to a strong business support offer and were particularly impressed by the quality and breadth of the funded support provided by the GC BGH. However, participants did note that take-up rates of business support could be improved through improved business engagement and raised concerns about the impact that Brexit could have on local businesses. To achieve the ambitions set out in the GM Strategy and GM LIS, we need to ensure that businesses in Oldham are aware of, and access the funded support that is available to them.

The operational delivery of business support was reviewed as part of the Oldham Local Plan with the view to developing an improved model. There are several key drivers behind the evolution a new engagement model. These changes were primarily client driven, but also considered the need to deliver against local policy developments including the revised Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and the





emerging Local Industrial Strategy as well as the emerging national policy framework set out in the Industrial Strategy.

Through this process GC BGH has developed a new mission: *“To create a thriving and productive economy by unlocking and accelerating the growth potential of businesses across the whole of Greater Manchester”*. This vision captures both the desire to create a growing “thriving” economy where the productivity gap identified in the GMS starts to close. It also highlights Greater Manchester’s desire to create a business support programme founded on inclusive growth where localities and individuals across the whole of Greater Manchester benefit from growth and productivity improvements. The new approach will also tackle the specific objectives set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy including:

- Nurturing and developing all industries, attracting new businesses and ensuring strong and productive sectors across the city-region.
- The cities’ desire to be recognised as one of the best places in the UK to start up, develop and grow business, fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship.
- Becoming a top 20 global city by 2035.
- Being recognised as a top 5 European digital city-region, with strengths around: E Commerce, Cyber Security, Media/Creative, Data Analytics
- Developing its science and innovation assets to maintain world-class excellence and stay at the forefront of international scientific development.

#### 4.2.2 Description

Whilst it is important that Oldham and GM moves towards a more proactive way of business engagement it must also be recognised that businesses will still make contact with the Council and other support agencies. It is important that this process is simple and straight forward. The ideal scenario would be one point of entry for all enquiries that are then logged on a shared system, allocated to the relevant lead/organisation, shared for information and potential cross-working, actioned and monitored for outputs/outcomes and PR opportunities. Or via a physical business hub that businesses could drop-in to and receive the support they need there and then.

The proactive approach would work in a similar, albeit, more targeted way through an account management system and key sector networks. Already a lot of work has been done to understand which businesses should be account managed and more work is needed to understand how to connect to and support key sectors. Private sector champions from the Oldham Economy and Skills Partnership are currently leading on this activity to get a more detailed understanding of the key sectors, the issues and challenges they face and how to best engage with them. However, there is a need for this activity to be centrally coordinated and supported.

Working in this way would encourage more businesses and investors to get in contact to find out about the Oldham and GM offer. Equally, it would also facilitate the engagement of a greater number of key



sector and growth businesses necessary for the growth of the Borough and wider sub-region and potentially increase take-up of the business support offer.

Differing levels of access to support based the Inclusive Entrepreneurship Model will be adopted to ensure that all business in Oldham have access to business support to help them start-up or grow. A model will be developed providing businesses with support in-line with their needs, potential and growth aspirations. Businesses in key sectors and with high growth potential will be targeted and subject to take-up will be provided with a bespoke service that is tailor made to their needs and linked to an account management approach. A more universal type offer of support will be used for lifestyle businesses based on support that is open to all and available as part of a range on and off-line support.

#### **4.2.3 Key actions to be implemented under - Develop a simple and effective business engagement process through account management**

##### **1) Create a comprehensive business database**

To enable a greater use of business intelligence to thoroughly understand the requirements and issues faced by the existing Oldham business base and inward moving businesses. Ideally, it will contain a list of all businesses currently located in Oldham, as well as information on what they do, how many people they employ, referral history etc. It will also help identify and target growth companies and sectors to ensure that the sectors and companies that are going to have the greatest impact on the growth of the borough are engaged and supported via the Oldham offer. This will be created by merging several existing and fractured databases from a range of partners into a single database that all Team Oldham partners can access, use and update. This will also require the resolution of data sharing protocols within the partnership. From this database a top 100 business list will be created that will contain key strategic businesses and those with high growth potential. The intention is to work with these businesses and keep in touch with them on a regular basis to ensure that they maximize their growth potential.

Steps taken to implement this action include:

- Create a single list of active businesses in Oldham – June 2019
- Import list of businesses into a single database – July 2019
- Use database and stakeholder knowledge to identify growth businesses and lifestyle businesses – July 2019
- Maintain database – on-going

##### **2) Creation of an Oldham account management system**

To encourage a collaborative approach to client engagement a GM BGH account management process is being established. The ever-changing nature of business support services presents a considerable barrier in the ability of companies to access the required help. Significant changes at both national and local level have resulted in business owners faced with a raft of offerings from multiple delivery agencies, notwithstanding the private sector. Navigating this maze requires a level of time and



commitment that few business owners can spare. Research shows that a trusted business advisor is the most important source of information on support services. Creating a long-term relationship with the client can enable them to access the right support, both from within the GC BGH and external organisations, as services, providers and brands evolve and change. To encourage this relationship development the GC BGH is moving towards a relationship management approach centred on identifying and fulfilling the client's needs to manage and improve the client journey.

Steps taken to implement this action include:

- Appoint Account Manager for Oldham – May 2019
- Identify top 100 growth businesses in key sectors in Oldham – July 2019
- Make contact with top 100 businesses introducing the support offer and complete a diagnostic of needs – ongoing but complete by March 2020
- Update database – on-going
- Organise regular Keep-in-touch meetings – on-going
- Review list of top 100 businesses – on-going.

#### **4.2.4 Players involved**

- Oldham Council
- GC Business Growth Hub
- Midas
- UK DIT
- Chamber of Commerce
- Oldham College
- Private sector businesses.

#### **4.2.5 Timeframe**

All the above key actions will be complete by the end of 2021. However, monitoring of the programme will extend beyond this time period so that the true impacts of it can be assessed.

#### **4.2.6 Costs**

The cost of compiling and maintaining the database is largely staff time but is estimated at £10,000 pa. It. The Account Manager will be funded from the overarching Business Growth Hub Services ERDF project. The approximate cost of this is £60,000 per annum. All teams across the CG BGH portfolio of services will work closely with the central Account Management team to ensure SME businesses receive a fully integrated offer across all ERDF projects operating in Greater Manchester.

#### **4.2.7 Funding sources**

This is funded via ERDF **allocated from the GMESIF** and via the 10 Local Authorities OP Priority Axis 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (GMESIF).



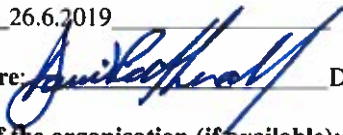


**5.0 Key Performance Indicators**

The action plan outlined above would result a positive shift away from current ways of working. The benefits of working in this way are more effective business engagement and take-up of business support programmes. The results of which will be in the form of key performance indicators

In order to assess the extent to which the action plan is achieving its objectives, the following KPI's will need to be measured on an ongoing basis.

KPI	Target by Dec 2021
Percentage of GM support accessed	10%
Business enquiries	3,000
Business assisted	593
Jobs created	566
New businesses	90

 <b>Innova Foster</b> Interreg Europe	 <b>Interreg Europe</b>
Date: <u>26.6.2019</u>	
Signature:  Dave Catherall, Head External Funding	
Name of the organisation (if available): <u>Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council</u>	



