Date: 31 March 2017

Subject: Greater Manchester submission to the RSA Inclusive Growth Commission

Report of: Councillor Jean Stretton, Lead Member for Fairness, Equality and Cohesion and Dr Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Fairness, Equality and Cohesion

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report introduces the paper on inclusive growth in GM that was submitted to the RSA’s Inclusive Growth Commission. It sets out brief details of the Commission’s final report and describes how the GM paper relates to it. It updates WLT on plans to undertake further work on inclusive growth, linked to the refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the work programme that supports the GMCA Fairness, Equalities and Cohesion portfolio.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Combined Authority:

- Note the report
- Note the intention to bring a further paper to WLT on the development of GMCA’s work on inclusive growth as part of the work programme supporting the Fairness, Equalities and Cohesion portfolio.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Dr Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Fairness, Equality and Cohesion and Chief Executive, Oldham Council

Simon Nokes,
1. The RSA Inclusive Growth Commission

1.1 The final report of RSA's Inclusive Growth Commission was published on 7 March. The Commission was chaired by Stephanie Flanders, Chief Market Strategist (Britain and Europe) for JP Morgan and former BBC Economics editor. It was supported by Core Cities UK, the Local Government Association, London Councils, Key Cities, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and PWC.

1.2 The report argues that ‘If we are really going to build a nation that “works for everyone, not just the privileged few”, we need... [a]bove all, ... a national strategy for inclusive growth, agreed and supported by the centre but devised and implemented by local actors with a keen sense of place.’ It sets out a number of recommendations for achieving more inclusive growth, grouped under four main priority themes:

- Place-based industrial strategies: delivering business-led productivity and quality jobs,
- A fundamental reset of the relationship between Whitehall and the town hall, underwritten in new social contracts,
- Inclusive growth at the heart of public investment, and
- Making inclusive growth our working definition of economic success.

1.3 Greater Manchester is mentioned frequently in the Commission’s report, which borrows findings from New Economy’s research on the balance of public spending and income in different places. GM’s health and social care reform arrangements, in particular, are seen as a model upon which the ‘grown up devolution’ the Commission advocates can be built. Combined authorities are seen as playing a critical role. Core Cities have unanimously supported the Commission’s findings and are actively considering plans for how they can implement them across their cities, get other local partners to commit, and are working up detailed models with which to engage Government on specific policy areas where change is most urgent.

2. Greater Manchester’s work with and response to the Commission

2.1 New Economy and members of GM’s Public Service Reform team collaborated and shared information with the RSA Commission Secretariat during the period in which it was active. It also submitted formal evidence to the Commission on behalf of GMCA. The GMCA paper is publicly available via the Commission's website. It is appended, along with the two annexes that accompanied it, to this paper.

2.2 In essence, the GMCA submission presents a baseline review of GM’s approach to inclusive growth, as set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy, Stronger Together, and delivered through the activities of the
GM family of organisations, individual districts and other GM partners. The main paper:

- Summarises GM's developing understanding of inclusive growth and how progress towards it is and could be measured,
- Examines the opportunities and barriers to more inclusive growth in GM and draws out lessons for inclusive growth elsewhere,
- Explains GM's developing approach to delivering inclusive growth, based on a granular understanding of GM's economy, with a focus on raising productivity and innovative reform in the public sector, and
- Summarises the results of a bespoke Call for Evidence, issued specifically to inform the GM response, that illustrates the variety of activity underway across GM, complementing the Combined Authority’s growth and reform programmes, seeking to achieve inclusive growth at the local level.

3. Next steps

3.1 The notion of Inclusive growth has achieved a great deal of salience within current national and international policy debates. It is an issue that resonates with many strands of the Greater Manchester Strategy and overlays a number of the GMCA portfolio responsibilities of Lead Members and Chief Executives. In advance of further clarification of the way in which inclusive growth will be treated within the refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy, two interlinked pieces of work are being pursued.

3.2 First, members of the Outcomes Framework Task and Finish Group that is charged with developing a progress and performance evaluation framework for the Greater Manchester strategy are developing specific proposals about how progress towards inclusive growth might best be measured, both within GM and in comparison with other city-regions, nationally and internationally. Second, the implications of GM’s experience of attempting to make the growth it continues to experience more inclusive are being assessed and developed into a number of potential future priorities that could be pursued in through the work programme of the Fairness, Equalities and Cohesion portfolio.