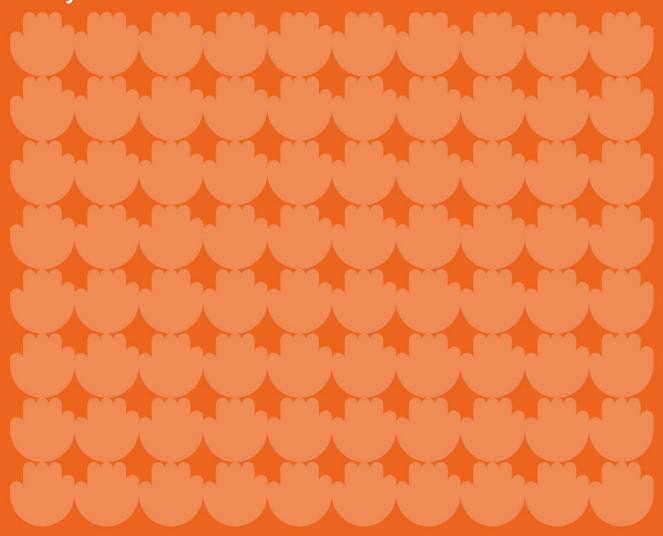


# Towards an Integrated Technical Education, Skills and Work City-Region: Starting the Conversation

Feedback from the engagement between the 19 May and 7 July 2023



## **Background**

In March 2023, Greater Manchester received confirmation of their most recent Devolution Trailblazer Deal which aimed to give more power and control over local decisions to local people. As part of the Deal, there was a number of announcements relating to the further development of work and skills across the cityregion, but included a new partnership between Greater Manchester and the government to provide oversight of post-16 technical education and skills.

On May 16, 2023 the Mayor of Greater Manchester announced plans to reform the approach to technical education across the city-region. Making it easier and more straightforward for young people to access work, skills and training when they have no desire to follow the more traditional academic route of A levels and University often kick started by doing the English Baccalaureate.

The launch of the Manchester Baccalaureate (MBacc) aims to clarify, streamline and make the route into technical education clearer, whilst at the same time looking at what the local economy of Greater Manchester needs from its future workforce to meet the ambitions outlined in the Greater Manchester Strategy. The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham said -

"The EBacc is great for young people who want to go onto university, but there is no equivalent suite of qualifications at 14 and 16 that align with the real-life employment opportunities being created in our city-region. There is also no direct link to employers, leading to skills gaps in the Greater Manchester economy and confusion from young people on what they need to do to secure a job in their chosen industry. Today is the start of the journey of creating a clear and equal pathway for technical education."

The concept for the MBacc was launched at an event with over 150 sector leaders, stakeholders and media – with the aim to take key people on the journey with us – helping to shape the implementation and delivery. Following on from the announcement, the full policy paper to support it was launched and a call for interested stakeholders to get involved and tell the Greater Manchester Combined Authority what they thought about the draft proposals.

This paper summarises the feedback received between May 19 and July 7, 2023.

- To read about the Trailblazer Devolution Deal in full <u>Greater Manchester</u> strikes trailblazing new devolution deal – "New era for English devolution" -Greater Manchester Combined Authority (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
- To read the MBacc announcement in full <u>Mayor of Greater Manchester unveils</u>
   plans to create two equal pathways for young people pursuing technical careers
   and those applying for university Greater Manchester Combined Authority
   (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
- To watch a summary of what the MBacc aims to achieve https://youtu.be/7uRhbn6Up1o
- To read the full policy document relating to the proposal of the MBacc - <u>Technical Education City Region - Greater Manchester Combined Authority</u> (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
- To watch the full launch event where the Mayor of Greater Manchester announced the MBacc proposal <a href="https://youtu.be/P52MV0i0fLw">https://youtu.be/P52MV0i0fLw</a>

## **Key themes**

The consultation's richness of the feedback from a wide range of organisations has helped to give a real flavour for the themes and discussion points within the proposals. Out of the 92 responses on the online survey, there were 50 organisations represented and over 250 detailed qualitative responses.

There was a significant response from arts and culture-based organisations who made clear their support for the proposals. The overall feedback from the consultation, came back with strong support for the ambitions set out in the Integrated Technical City Region Policy paper.

Over 60% of respondents 'strongly agreed' with the ambitions and 27% 'agreed'. Respondents reacted well to the ambitions and their suggestions of where they could go further were encouraging and appreciative of the energy already put in.

Over 60% of respondents strongly agreed with English Language, Maths, and Technology (ICT, Computer Science) being the core subjects of the MBacc. Digital and creative were the most common subjects cited by respondents as crucial for the MBacc.

Respondents argued that creative subjects need to be the backbone of the technical pathway. One respondents said, 'Manchester has the best network of cultural organisations and due to the funding being cut for cultural education in schools (and funding from Government to our venues for important engagement work being cut), young people across Manchester are missing opportunities to engage in the arts from school, and therefore missing out on the opportunity to engage and work at one of the amazing cultural venues in Manchester!'

The question surrounding the mitigation of what the respondents thought the policy had missed had some interesting suggestions, with a number of respondents backing working with employers and key stakeholders to shape the MBacc and technical pathway. Many argued that working with employers when shaping the proposal would also help with buy in and therefore capacity for work experience and placement. One concern that did appear in the consultation from a lot of the respondents was workplace opportunities for T Level placements and apprenticeship opportunities.

An overwhelming number of respondents thought that strong CEIAG and clear pathways was critical for young people to be able to make informed choices about their futures. It was also suggested that this careers advice extends to parents to both help mitigate against the risk that parents see the technical route as lesser than the academic, but to also help them support their children with their pathways. It was suggested that employers help form CEIAG in schools and take part in its delivery.

## **Activity**

## Stakeholder mapping

At the start of the engagement process, conversations were had about who were the people and organisations most likely to participate in conversations about developing the MBacc. Whilst it would be great if every young person and parent / carer of a

young people in Greater Manchester was involved in shaping the future offer, there is also a level of realism to people's interest at this stage and we envisage more detailed engagement to happen, as the work progresses.

It was identified that the focus for this engagement would be -

- People and organisations who work with young people (schools, colleges and other educational or skills organisations)
- Established networks from across the city-region some of which might work with young people (such as the GM equality panels, including the Youth Combined Authority)
- Businesses and representatives from the local labour market in Greater
   Manchester
- Members of the public and other organisations not focussed on young people were welcome to pass on their views, but for this initial engagement, the focus was the groups and organisations listed above.

The 'what next?' section at the end of this document shows how we plan to gather robust insight from members of the public about their thoughts and attitudes towards an integrated technical education in Greater Manchester.

## Methodology

The means to gather feedback was primarily through an online survey, using the GMCA's corporate surveying tool<sup>1</sup> known as GMconsult.org. For 2022/23 there was over 76k users to the platform, showing a significant footfall in people from across Greater Manchester accessing the site to contribute to online surveys.

The surveying tool meets accessibility requirements<sup>2</sup> and works with screen readers, which helps to mitigate some of the barriers some people might have with engaging.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> More information - Product – Citizenspace. Company – Delib. <u>Citizen Space | Recommended democratic involvement platform (delib.net)</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Accessibility - Greater Manchester Combined Authority - Citizen Space (gmconsult.org)

The survey itself was designed to give people an opportunity to answer quick and easy quantitative responses, but with the option to answer more fully, picking up detailed responses around –

- The proposals
- Areas that might have been missed from the proposals
- Suggestions for improvement

There was also a single email address promoted, to allow people to respond outside of the survey.

## Making use of established networks

As outlined above, there are established networks and communication channels which were used to gain awareness of the engagement and to encourage people to tell us their views.

#### This included -

- Head teachers were invited to take part in the consultation at an Education Summit Event that took place a little after the launch event for The Integrated Technical City Region.
- Schools / colleges were invited to take part in the consultation at an Education Summit Event that took place a little after the launch event for The Integrated Technical City Region.
- Greater Manchester Equality Panels which represent people and organisations from a range of communities and backgrounds from across the ten Districts were sent information about the proposals and invited to respond to the online survey.
- Heads of Comms network which consists of communication leads from across
  Greater Manchester were updated about the proposals and shared the social
  media assets to promote on their own channels.
- Attendees at the launch event

 Members of the Greater Manchester Public Sector Apprenticeship Network which represents public sector organisations and their apprenticeship schemes, were invited to respond to the online survey.

## Making use of established channels

To promote the engagement amongst both stakeholders and the wider public, established channels were used to raise awareness. This included –

- Media release when the announcement was made, which went to a range of local and national outlets. The release covered the context of the proposal and the anticipated improved outcomes for both young people in Greater Manchester and the local economy. The media release raised the profile on the policy and subsequent engagement.
- Social media collateral was developed in the lead up to the launch event, both to promote the announcement and subsequent engagement. This included –
- A professionally voice animation to show the vision and ambition for developing the route into technical education to make it as valued as traditional academic routes.
- A full social media pack that was issued to partners ahead of the launch event which covered the key headlines of the proposals
- A full social media pack that was issued to partners ahead of and during the engagement period to encourage people to find out about the proposals and to contribute feedback.
- GMCA monthly newsletter which is issued to around 4k residents from across
  the city-region, and all elected representatives from the ten Councils within
  Greater Manchester. The MBacc survey was promoted through the GMCA
  newsletter in June.

## Who engaged

## **Completed responses -**

Whilst the number of responses overall wasn't significant (92 in total), the quality and detail provided has given rich, relevant insight into key stakeholders views towards the proposals, as well as learning about how the plans might be developed further in the future.

Out of the 92 responses on the online survey, there were 50 organisations represented and over 250 detailed qualitative responses. In addition to this, 3 organisations submitted a response via email.

During the engagement period, responses were received from representatives of the organisations listed below –

ANS Group Limited Halle Concerts Society

Bury Council HOME Mcr

Career Connect Landgate School

Cheadle Hulme School LGBT Foundation

CITB – Construction Industry Logility Inc

Training Board

CloudCo Solutions Ltd Culture Festival)

Contact Theatre Manchester City Council

Digital Advantage Manchester Digital (and

English Folk Expo Manchester Digital Apprenticeship

MACFEST (Muslim Arts and

Academy)

**Essity** 

Food Teachers Centre

Gatsby Charitable Foundation

Manchester Metropolitan University

Factory International

Manchester Museum

MFT NHS

Fred Longworth High School
Microsoft

MICIOSC

OCN London

Octagon Theatre

Odd Arts

Open Awards

People's History Museum

Pioneer House High School

Planning Consultancy

Positive Steps [multiple responses]

Progress Health Partnerships Ltd

Royal Northern College of Music

Rochdale Sixth Form College

Royal Exchange Theatre

Salford City College

Science Museum group

Sibbald Consultancy – specialist

leaders in education

Stockport school [unspecified]

TalkTALK

Tameside Educational Psychology

Service

The Association of Colleges

The Growth Company

Tottington High School

Tute Education (online alternative

provision and education provider)

Whalley Range Sixth Form

## Other responses

Three responses were received via email, this included -

- The University of Manchester
- The Colleges Group
- The Northern Powerhouse Partnership

## Impact of other activity

There has been increased engagement on the dedicated webpages on the GMCA website which focusses on the policy paper. In addition to this, the traffic to the online survey is encouraging and shows that whilst people might not have completed the survey, there were unique views which showed people looked at the content of the survey and the proposals that had been announced.

#### Details as follows -

- Work and Skills page, linking to the MBacc webpage 1,088 views by 737 different users
- Online survey on GMconsult.org across all survey pages totalled 2,706 views by 797 different users
- Media coverage press release was viewed 1,876 times by 1,331 users. The
  press release was also picked up by numerous outlets including the
  Independent, BBC and Schools Week.
- Social media on twitter the consultation promotion had a reach of 37,658 and an engagement of 316. The other posts of twitter relating to the MBacc proposal reached 68,758 accounts (with 984 engagements). Facebook had a smaller reach of 2,797 for the consultation and the wider announcement of 5,249. Instagram performed in between the two with 4,353 accounted reached (which is positive, when we have a smaller number of followers and interaction than with other channels)
- Animation there were 389 views on the two minute video online (this did not include views through socials)

## Gaps in our feedback

From the people and organisations that responded to the engagement exercise, there was a high section of arts and culture based organisations, with comparatively smaller group of responses from schools or education establishments. Likewise, there were limited responses from organisations representing specific demographic communities of interest, and an inconsistent level of geographical representation.

Future engagement will aim to minimise these gaps by targeting participation to specific people and places.

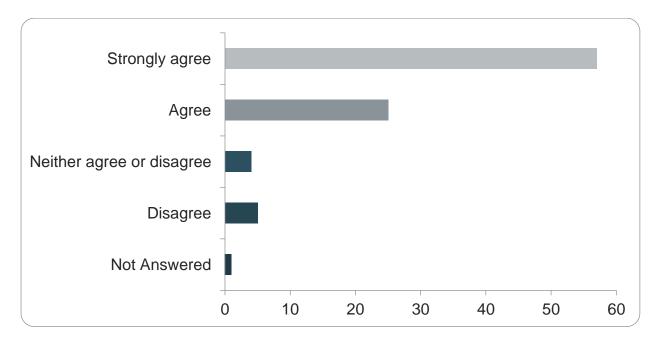
## **Findings**

As mentioned previously, the richness of the feedback from a wide range of organisations has helped to give a real flavour for the themes and discussion points within the proposals. The next few pages cover –

- The quantitative responses to the survey so clear % responses to the various questions asked
- The qualitative responses to the survey which have all been considered in two ways 1. What is the sentiment of them (positive, negative, neutral) and 2.
   What are they about (broad topics to catagorise)<sup>3</sup>
- The responses submitted via email

#### The results

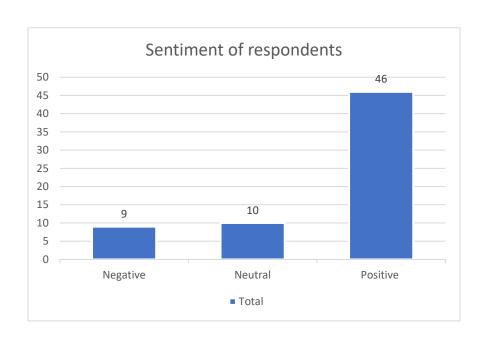
Our Ambitions - How strongly do you agree or disagree with our ambitions for integrating technical education, skills and work?

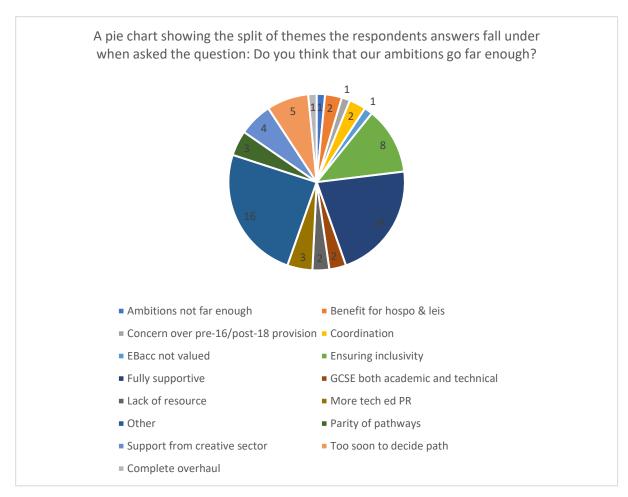


<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Full data available in the appendix

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	57	61.96%
Agree	25	27.17%
Neither agree or disagree	4	4.35%
Disagree	5	5.43%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Not Answered	1	1.09%

When asked if our ambitions outlined in the policy paper go far enough, 65 responses were received. Of which 46 were positive, 10 neutral and nine negative. The main themes on the feedback covered.





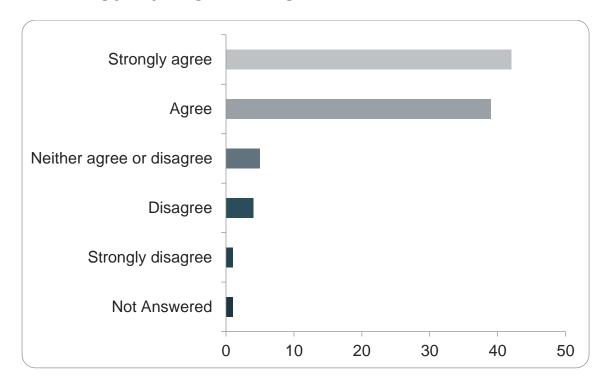
The feedback for this question was largely positive. Respondents reacted well to the ambitions and their suggestions of where they could go further were encouraging and appreciative of the effort already put in.

A large section of the responses were fully supportive of the ambitions, saying they go far enough. One response said, 'It's a powerful first step up' and another said, 'This proposal has the opportunity to rebalance some of the regions skills shortages and promote the pipeline of talent more coherently'.

There was a small but significant number that were concerned about GCSE being too young to decide between the two pathways. It was suggested in a future question that there needs to be flexibility for learners, where they can move between the two routes should they change their mind about their paths. One respondent said it was 'especially important that young people on the academic route can move into the technical at 16, 17, 18 and later as their life and career intentions develop and crystallise'.

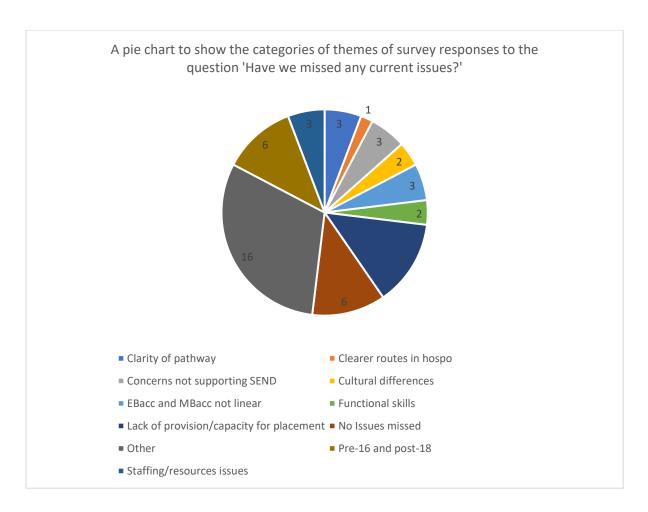
#### The route to technical education

#### How strongly do you agree or disagree with the issues that we've identified?



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	42	45.65%
Agree	39	42.39%
Neither agree or disagree	5	5.43%
Disagree	4	4.35%
Strongly disagree	1	1.09%
Not Answered	1	1.09%

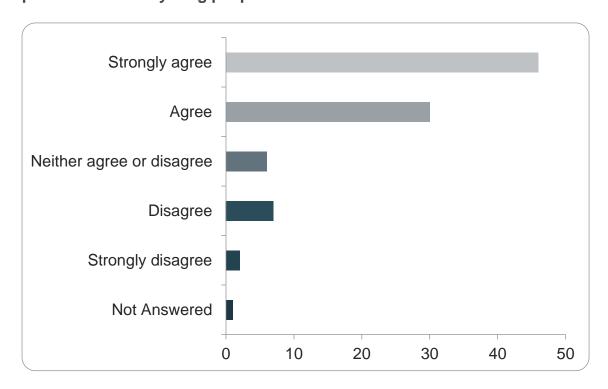
When asked if we had missed any current issues, 52 people replied with 40 of these being neutral in sentiment and 12 being positive in sentiment. The sentiment with this question was more likely to be neutral because respondents were giving suggestions therefore were more balanced.



The answers were more varied than the previous question. However, seven respondents cited lack of provision/capacity for placement as an area for concern that had been missed by the proposals.

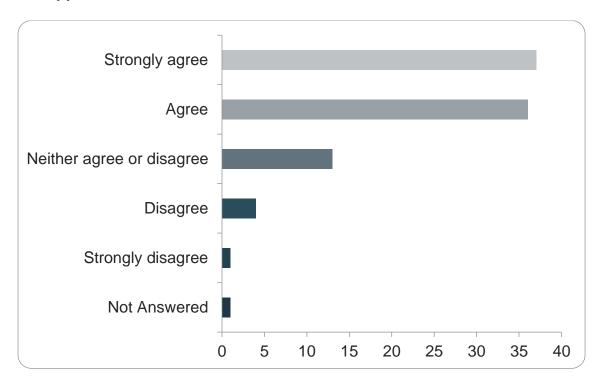
Six replied that pre-16 and post-18 hadn't been covered in the proposals, with some arguing for entry level qualifications to be included in the proposal.

# Proposing the MBacc - How strongly do you agree or disagree that this is a positive move for young people in Greater Manchester?



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	46	50.00%
Agree	30	32.61%
Neither agree or disagree	6	6.52%
Disagree	7	7.61%
Strongly disagree	2	2.17%
Not Answered	1	1.09%

How strongly do you agree or disagree that this is a positive move for employers in Greater Manchester and that the introduction of MBacc will help to support the local labour market?



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	37	40.22%
Agree	36	39.13%
Neither agree or disagree	13	14.13%
Disagree	4	4.35%
Strongly disagree	1	1.09%
Not Answered	1	1.09%

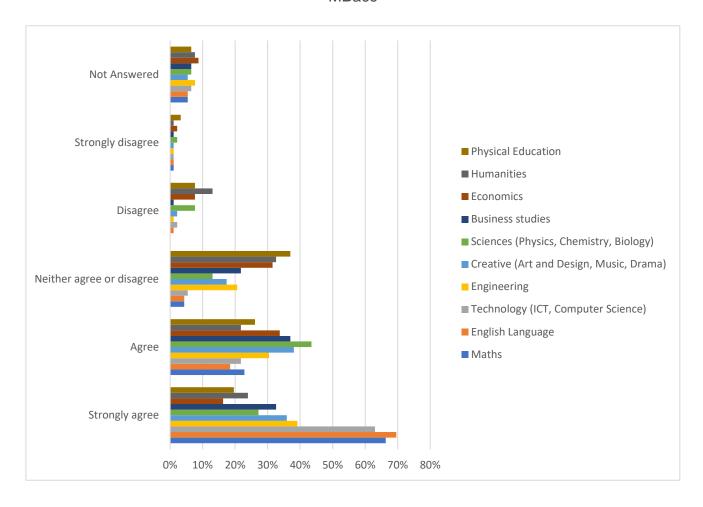
## Table showing the level of agreement relating to each subject suggested for the

#### MBacc

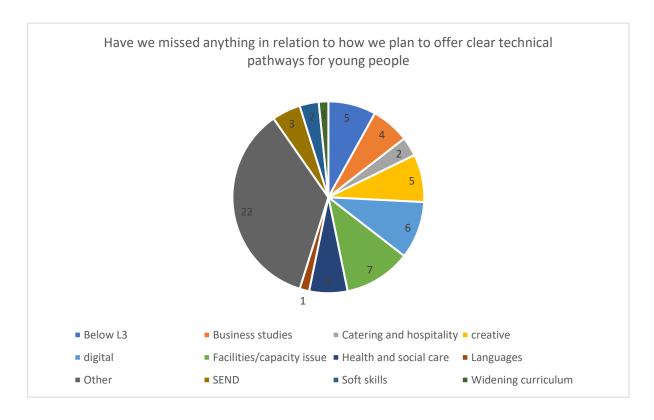
				IVIDacc			
Subject		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not answered
				disagree			
Core: English	Т	64	17	4	1	1	5
Language	Р	69.57%	18.48%	4.35%	1.09%	1.09%	5.43%
Core: Maths	Т	61	21	4	0	1	5
	Р	66.30%	22.83%	4.35%	0.00%	1.09%	6.52%
Core:	Т	58	20	5	2	1	6
Technology	Р	63.04%	21.74%	5.43%	2.17%	1.09%	6.52%
(ICT, Computer							
Science)							
Optional:	Т	36	28	19	1	1	7
Engineering	Р	39.13%	30.43%	20.65%	1.09%	1.09%	7.61%
Optional:	Т	33	35	16	2	1	5
Creative (Art	Р	35.87%	38.04%	17.39%	2.17%	1.09%	5.43%
and Design,							
Music, Drama)							
Optional:	Т	25	40	12	7	2	6
Sciences	Р	27.17%	43.48%	13.04%	7.61%	2.17%	6.52%
(Physics,							
Chemistry,							
Biology)							
Under	Т	30	34	20	1	1	6
consideration:	Р	32.61%	36.96%	21.74%	1.09%	1.09%	6.52%
Business							
studies							
Under	Т	15	31	29	7	2	8
consideration:	P	16.30%	33.70%	31.52%	7.61%	2.17%	8.70%
Economics							
Under	Т	22	20	30	12	1	7
consideration:	Р	23.91%	21.74%	32.61%	13.04%	1.09%	7.61%
Humanities							
Under	Т	18	24	34	7	3	6
consideration:	Р	19.57%	26.09%	36.96%	7.61%	3.26%	6.52%
Physical							
Education							

(T= total, P= percentage)

# Bar chart showing the level of agreement relating to each subject suggested for the MBacc



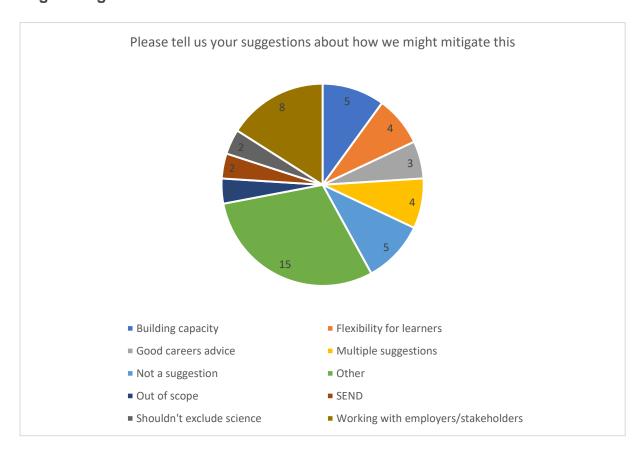
## What have we missed? - Have we missed anything in relation to how we plan to offer clear technical pathways for young people?



Again, as stated with the previous question, the responses for this were all neutral as they were suggestions.

As with previous questions, respondents are concerned about capacity to implement these proposals. Digital and creative were the most common subjects cited by respondents as crucial for the MBacc. Respondents argued that creative subjects need to be the backbone of the technical pathway. One respondents said, 'Manchester has the best network of cultural organisations and due to the funding being cut for cultural education in schools (and funding from Government to our venues for important engagement work being cut), young people across Manchester are missing opportunities to engage in the arts from school, and therefore missing out on the opportunity to engage and work at one of the amazing cultural venues in Manchester!'

# What have we missed? - If so, please tell us your suggestions about how we might mitigate this

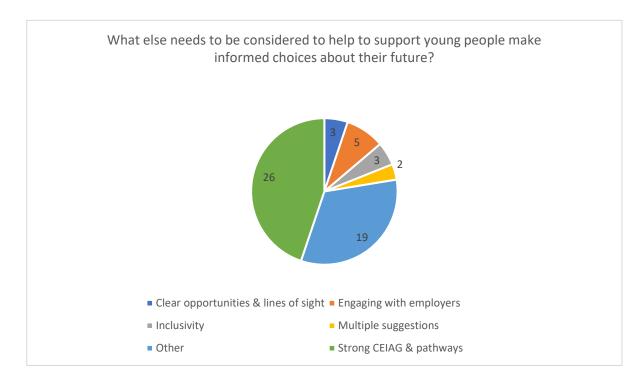


The suggestions for mitigating what was missed were overall neutral, with an equal split of negative and positive responses making up the total number.

This question had some really interesting suggestions, with a number of respondents backing working with employers and key stakeholders to shape the MBacc and technical pathway. Many argued that working with employers when shaping the proposal would also help with buy in and therefore capacity for work experience and placement.

A small but significant number reasoned that flexibility for learners was an important mitigation. The ability to move between the academic pathway and the technical pathway was suggested multiple times. One respondent put it: 'Students must be able to move between the two routes. The general direction of travel for young people is from full time education to the workplace. It is therefore especially important that young people on the academic route can move into the technical at 16, 17, 18 and later as their life and career intentions develop and crystallise.'

What have we missed? - What else needs to be considered to help to support young people make informed choices about their future?



An overwhelming number of respondents thought that strong CEIAG and clear pathways was critical for young people to be able to make informed choices about their futures. It was also suggested that this careers advice extends to parents to both help mitigate against the risk that parents see the technical route as lesser than the academic, but to also help them support their children with their pathways.

One respondent put it: 'Dedicated and integrated careers and progression advice for young people; parents/carers; involving employers, colleges and universities - this needs building in as a part of any curriculum offer.'

Another key outcome and linked to the strong CEIAG was a connection with employers, especially with careers advice. A respondent stated that: 'In order to appropriately shape the MBacc offer, we need to ensure that employers are both engaged in co-design to reflect their needs, but also engaged directly with schools on careers and curriculum delivery to make this a reality on the ground in schools.'

#### Most common themes throughout questions:

- Ensuring inclusivity of the pathway by including SEND students in the proposals.
- Ensuring employers and stakeholders are included in the shaping of the
  pathway as well as the deliverance. Employers should be the backbone
  of the delivery and have consistent interactions with students in schools
  to offer careers advice and guidance that is sector specific.
- Flexibility for learners learners need to be able to move between the two pathways if they change their mind about their futures.

## **Email responses**

The email responses to the consultation followed a different template to the online survey, therefore we thought it pertinent to include them separately. All email respondents started off their responses with their overall support for the new policies proposed by the Mayor in the policy paper. One response said: 'technical education can play a more central role in enabling GM's workforce to be better equipped with the skills employers need to become more productive. In turn this will accelerate economic growth, making more of GM's communities more prosperous.'

The email responses thought the wrap around support that included free public transport was an important part of the proposals and a vital way to support young people. All three of the email responses emphasised the importance of the student being able to switch between the pathways if they change their mind. One respondent reasoned this would 'maintain motivation and provide a more rounded individual'. As with the online consultation responses, the emails responses support the proposals for stronger careers advice within schools.

One respondent made the case for the continuation of 'more practically orientated Level 3 Technical qualifications', arguing that T Levels are still very academically demanding and don't suit all those wanting to follow a technical route. The respondent said 'it is the Level of the occupation not the course which should drive our technical

education system' and argued for a system that supports learners who cannot immediately enter Level 3 or those who will not suit or choose the Level 3 T Level route, those who wish to remain at Level 2 and then move into Level 2 employment.

The MBacc was broadly supported by the responses: 'we strongly support the proposal to more systematically develop the "soft skills" needed for employment in so far as this is practicable in the schools system in years 10 and 11. We would welcome increased delivery of technical qualifications in schools alongside GCSE's as long as they are appropriately resourced. Capacity and resource permitting, colleges can play a role in supporting this approach in their localities.' However, there was some concern over how schools would be able to receive funding for retakes of MBacc subject, just as they receive funding for Maths and English retakes.

There was some concern about bridging the divide between the academic route and the technical route with one response arguing that 'A-levels and BTECs (when studied at level 3) are technically equivalents but have never been seen as such'. One response claims that the creation of the MBacc may in some way perpetuate the academic/vocational divide. One respondent did not endorse the common application process.

Some key questions from the emails responses:

- How will student, parent, teacher and institutional recognition of the MBacc be assured?
- What is the purpose of the MBacc?

## What next?

As the MBacc develops, and the technical education route becomes clearer, there is an ongoing commitment to continue to engage with key stakeholders in the plans.

There is also a commitment to learn from the people who live in Greater Manchester who might have a view, or be impacted by these proposals. As such, GMCA will

commission independent polling to gather feedback from a representative sample of parents and carers from across the city-region.

This is also the first phase of ongoing engagement with stakeholders and the public about our plans.

## **Appendices**

Below are the coded lists for the qualitative data that we took from the survey. The open text answers were coded by their sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) and theme general theme they follow (different for each question).

Our ambitions - Do you think that our ambitions go far enough?

Sentiment	Count of Code / subject
Negative	9
Neutral	10
Positive	46
<b>Grand Total</b>	65

Reason	Count of Code / subject
Ambitions not far enough	1
Benefit for hospo & leis	2
Complete overhaul	1
Concern over pre-16/post-18 provision	1
Coordination	2
EBacc not valued	1
Ensuring inclusivity	8
Fully supportive	14
GCSE both academic and technical	2
Lack of resource	2
More tech ed PR	3
Other	16
Parity of pathways	3
Support from creative sector	4
Too soon to decide path	5
Grand Total	65

The route to technical education - Have we missed any current issues?

Sentiment - positive, negative or neutral	Count of Code / subject
Neutral	40
Positive	12
Grand Total	52

Issues missed	Count of Code / subject
Clarity of pathway	3
Clearer routes in hospo	1
Concerns not supporting SEND	3
Cultural differences	2
EBacc and MBacc not linear	3
Functional skills	2
Lack of provision/capacity for placement	7
No Issues missed	6
Other	16
Pre-16 and post-18	6
Staffing/resources issues	3
Grand Total	52

What have we missed? - Have we missed anything in relation to how we plan to offer clear technical pathways for young people?

Sentiment - positive, negative or neutral	Count of Code / subject
Neutral	62
Grand Total	62

What has been missed	Count of Code / subject
Below L3	5
Business studies	4
Catering and hospitality	2
creative	5
digital	6
Facilities/capacity issue	7
Health and social care	4
Languages	1
Other	22
SEND	3
Soft skills	2
Widening curriculum	1
Grand Total	62

What have we missed? - If so, please tell us your suggestions about how we might mitigate this

Sentiment - positive, negative or neutral	Count of Code / subject
Negative	3
Neutral	43
Positive	3
Grand Total	49

Mitigation	Count of Code / subject
Building capacity	5
Flexibility for learners	4
Good careers advice	3
Multiple suggestions	4
Not a suggestion	5
Other	15
Out of scope	2
SEND	2
Shouldn't exclude science	2
Working with employers/stakeholders	8
Grand Total	50

What have we missed? - What else needs to be considered to help to support young people make informed choices about their future?

Sentiment - positive, negative or neutral	Count of Code / subject
Neutral	54
Negative	2
Positive	2
Grand Total	58

How to support YP	Count of Code / subject
Clear opportunities & lines of sight	3
Engaging with employers	5
Inclusivity	3
Multiple suggestions	2
Other	19
Strong CEIAG & pathways	26
Grand Total	58