**Greater Manchester Public Sector Apprenticeships**

**Memorandum of Understanding**

# Context and Aims

## Background

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out the rationale and arrangements for joint working between Greater Manchester’s public sector employers in order to maximise the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy, and to establish a set of common values and principles for those organisations as apprentice employers with Greater Manchester.

We have a vision that, by 2035, Greater Manchester will be one of the world’s leading city-regions, driving sustainable growth across a thriving North of England. It will be ever more productive, innovative, creative, and known for the excellent quality of life enjoyed by our residents who are able to contribute to and benefit from the prosperity that growth brings. Key to delivering that vision is the Greater Manchester Work and Skills Strategy and its ten underpinning priorities, one of which is Apprenticeships.

As part of the Government’s programme of Apprenticeship reform, the Apprenticeship Levy will be introduced from April 2017, payable at a rate of 0.5% of pay bill by all organisations with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million, subject to a £15,000 allowance per tax year. This will include the majority of Greater Manchester’s major public sector organisations (Local Authorities, Health Trusts, Police, Fire and TfGM), with an anticipated £20 million being paid per year. Alongside the employer contribution is a 10% top-up from Government, resulting in approximately £25m per year being available to support Apprenticeship training and assessment within Greater Manchester’s public sector.

It is crucial that investment on this scale is harnessed to deliver optimum benefits for Greater Manchester’s employers and residents, reflecting the unique role of the public sector in both delivering services and as a major employer in itself, and contributing to the corporate social responsibilities/social value agenda.

In order to achieve that unity of purpose we need to break new ground by reaching agreement to undertake collective planning and implementation around Apprenticeships across Greater Manchester’s public sector. Collaborative work has begun between the organisations to ensure that individual and collective employers’ investment in the Levy creates maximum impact for the organisations involved and for Greater Manchester’s residents and wider employer base. This MoU sets out the vision and common purpose for that work, and signifies a collective commitment from parties to this MoU to a set of core principles as Greater Manchester public sector employers of apprentices.

## Parties

This MOU sets out the terms upon which the parties will undertake this partnership. The parties do not intend that this MOU be legally binding, save for the areas covered under Terms and Conditions below.

This Memorandum of Understanding is made on [date] between the following organisations:

* The ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities
* GMCA / Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
* Greater Manchester Police
* Transport for Greater Manchester
* Greater Manchester’s Health Organisations

This list of parties is not intended to be exhaustive and can be revised as appropriate to encompass additional organisations and, following the mayoral elections in Spring 2017, to reflect the establishment of the Combined Authority as an employer in its own right and the transfer of various organisations into the CA’s employ.

All parties agree to act in good faith to support the objectives and principles of this MoU for the benefit of Greater Manchester’s residents and employers, supported by the colleges and training providers which deliver apprenticeship provision within Greater Manchester and other key strategic partners.

# The Vision

We have a vision of a public sector workforce in Greater Manchester that is fit for the transformational change that Devolution brings, with apprenticeships at the heart of employers’ workforce planning, development and talent management strategies, and offering high quality opportunities for personal and professional development for individuals.

## Common Purpose and Objectives

Our objective is for the public sector to work together across Greater Manchester to:

1. Maximise use of its apprenticeship levy investment

2. Create and deliver added value through a collaborative Apprenticeship Programme

3. Ensure that all apprentices employed within GM’s public sector , regardless of level and encompassing both new and existing employees, will receive a high quality programme of learning and development supported by elements of bespoke learning which ensures that they form an outstanding public sector workforce for the future

4. Continue to provide opportunities within the public sector workforce for individuals of all levels, both maintaining existing programmes that support individuals with additional barriers (such as Looked After Children) into initial job opportunities as well as creating higher skills programmes to develop the workforce

5. Meet Greater Manchester’s public sector employers’ individual and collective obligations for apprentices within the public sector workforce, as set out in the Enterprise Act

6. Support progression into Apprenticeships for long term unemployed and those individuals facing barriers to work

This will be achieved through:

* Workforce planning and the creation of new roles to create a public sector workforce fit for the future
* Development of a consistent and coordinated GM public sector apprenticeship programme delivering maximum impact for organisations and apprentices through a shared services approach
* Creation of more apprenticeship opportunities of consistently high quality within and across the organisations.
* Close working with GM’s programmes for the unemployed and creation of Traineeship opportunities as a pre-cursor to Apprenticeships

## Core Principles

In delivering those objectives, parties to the MoU will be guided by and will adhere to a set of common core principles:

**Collaboration: Stronger Together:** Collaboration across the full range of Greater Manchester’s public sector activity offers real opportunities to work together to add value over and above what can be achieved working individually

**Quality:** Quality must be the primary focus of GM public sector apprenticeship activity, enabling us to be an exemplar of apprentice employment, not only within the public sector but more broadly

**Impact**: As well as meeting the needs of residents, this activity will provide a flexible, collective response to the GM public sector’s needs as employers, will broaden opportunities for our residents, and will be a key vehicle for helping to meet the target of 2.3% of the public sector workforce being apprentices

**Social Value**: Looking at ways to pro-actively support the corporate social responsibility agenda as well as providing opportunities for individuals who may need additional support to secure, sustain and complete an apprenticeship

**Getting the best value for GM**: This will apply not only to value for money which may be increased by working in partnership, but also to social value for GM and to the added value GM collaboration will deliver for apprentices and parties to this activity.

# Our Commitment

All parties to this MoU commit to working towards the following:

1. The public sector will use the Apprenticeship levy alongside strategic and forward-thinking workforce development planning to create new roles and upskill existing members of staff creating a workforce fit for the future delivery of public services across Greater Manchester.

2. The above will be achieved through the creation of a public sector wide apprenticeship programme that adds value over and above existing activity (for example, by only working with the highest quality providers and by achieving efficiency savings through collective activity), and which delivers a consistent and positive impact for organisations and apprentices, reflecting the GM landscape.

3. Recruitment of apprentices will remain an individual organisation’s responsibility; however all opportunities will be advertised through the new Greater.Jobs web portal with information about roles and progression opportunities.

4. Progression in to Apprenticeships from Traineeships, the Study Programme and employment support programmes will be improved through close liaison with local providers of these activities.

5. Organisations will work towards (over the next 6 months) agreeing and adopting a common set of apprentice terms and conditions, with minimum standards for salary, eligibility, contract type and support available. Those minimum standards, which would not preclude LAs from offering more favourable terms and conditions to their apprentices should they be wish to do so.

6. Alongside common terms and conditions, there is an opportunity to work towards standardised job / role descriptions – particularly for entry level posts supporting transferability between organisations, allow progression routes to be easily identified and provide a simply understood tool for potential applicants.

7. Whilst it is recognised that not all apprentice roles will be permanent contracts within organisations, there is a need to ensure that the support invested and resource committed to any programme is available for the long term benefit of individuals and organisations. Therefore, at the end of an apprenticeship, support needs to be provided to ensure the next step on an individual’s career ladder with support to apply for vacancies, mapped progression opportunities (potentially across organisations) and a system of priority interviews for suitable vacancies across all public sector organisations.

8. A procurement process will be undertaken to develop a enhance provider list of apprentice providers meeting not only national standards but an additional range of GM added value criteria.

9. All GM public sector apprentices will undertake some bespoke common elements of learning tailored to the GM landscape and including the opportunity for apprentices to undertake work placements within other parties to this MoU.

10. If through workforce development planning, roles are identified across GM’s public sector organisations which sensibly lend themselves to an apprenticeship yet no appropriate standard currently exists, parties will commit to working together to develop a new standard and recruit apprentices into the identified roles.

11. All parties commit to working together on an ongoing basis to ensure that the Levy investment is maximised and a high quality programme for apprenticeships is developed and delivered.

# Implementation of Partnership Arrangements

Each partner will support this MoU by:

* Participating in partnership meetings and maintaining full engagement
* Committing to collaborative working and facilitating collective activity
* Disseminating information within their own organisations to facilitate progress

# Governance, Management and Reporting

The reporting of this work will be through the Work & Skills Governance Structure whilst also ensuring connection with the GM Workforce & Leadership Development Group, Reform Board & H&SC Partnership through which key measures with be identified and reported on.