

Bruecken zwischen Staedtpartnerschaften und der Unternehmenswelt

Wie koennen Unternehmenskontakte deutsche-britische Staedtepartnerschaften
staerken, wo liegen Herausforderungen und Chancen – die britische Perspektive

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Chair – North West England

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Hallo!

“Mancunian” – although born in Wales!

Studied “European Business” (BA Hons) at Trent Polytechnic & **Universitaet Paderborn**

Career spanning 41.5 years at BASF, AEG & Siemens – **90% of career at Siemens** (UK & Germany)

Retired April 2024

Extra-curricular activities while at **Siemens**:

- Board member of University of Manchester (ended June 2025)
- Board member and former President, of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (on-going)
- Chair of German British Chamber of Industry & Commerce North – IHK (on-going)
- Joint founding member of DACH Business Circle North (on-going)
- Board member of Manchester Jazz Festival (on-going)

Since retirement:

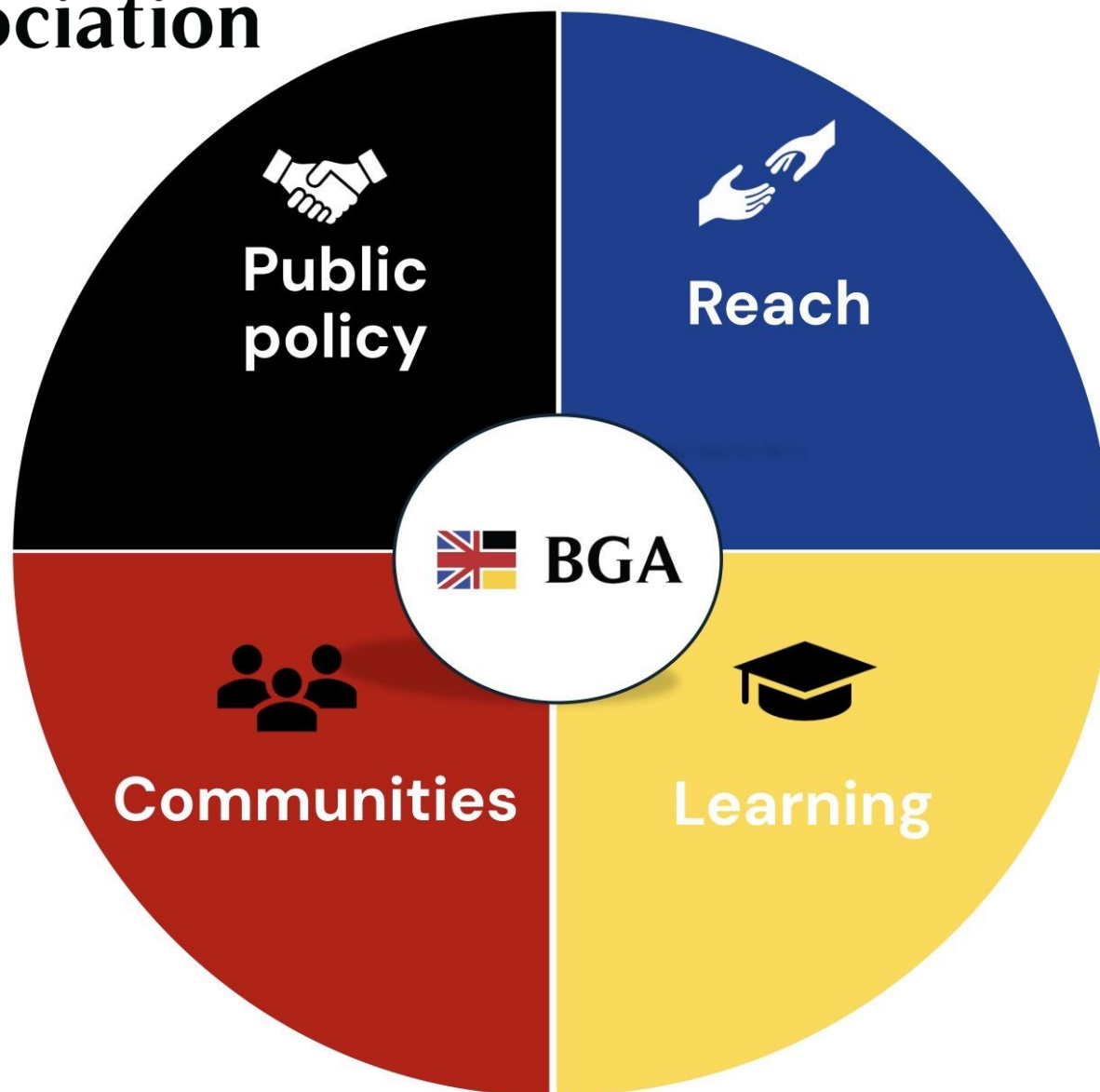
- Chair - British-German Association North West England (on-going)



British-German Association



British-German
Association



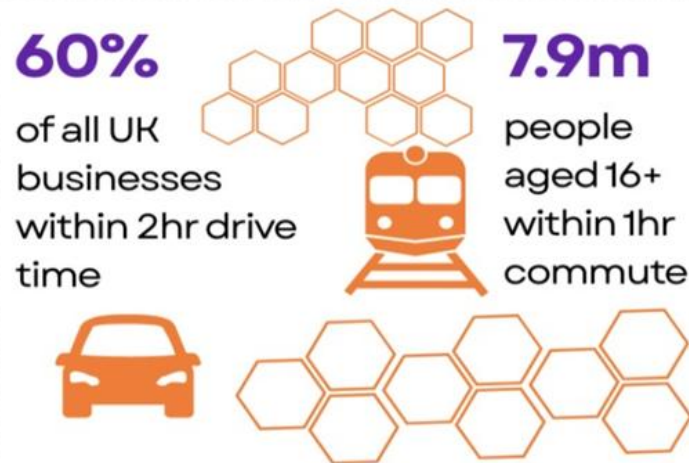
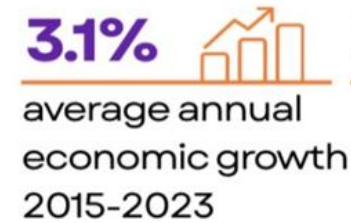


British-German Association

- Founded in 1952
- The BGA is the civil-society hub for British-German relations in the UK.
- We **promote mutual understanding** and friendship between the UK and Germany, and we aim to inform people in the UK about Germany, its culture and its language.
- Our work is endorsed by the **German Embassy in London** and the **British Embassy in Berlin**, and we have informal partnerships with many other organisations that share our aims. We are the British sister organisation of the **Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft** in Germany.
- The BGA is a registered charity in England and Wales and receives no regular financial support from any Government, so we rely primarily on philanthropic donations, membership and legacies.

Greater Manchester Overview

GREATER MANCHESTER KEY FACTS



Greater Manchester – Ruhr partnership



Photograph: State of North Rhine-Westphalia / Günther Ortman

**Memorandum of Understanding
signed in September 2021**



Five Years on ...

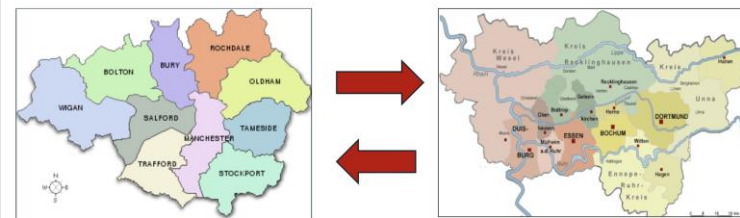
- Three Mayoral Visits to the Ruhr with businesses and universities.
- MOU between Growth Company and Business Ruhr Metropole
- University and Industry Collaborations
- Ruhr & GM Innovation Summit (September 2025)



FROM GREAT BRITAIN TO THE RUHR



The Collaboration



Policy Exchanges - Economic Links - Educational
Connections

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC)

Founded in **1794** - 230+ years of Manchester business!

Current membership – **3,500 companies**...from large Corporates to “micro-businesses”, main portion is SME’s (Small to Medium-sized Entities)

Covering **1/3 of working population of Greater Manchester**

Member of British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) – 51 accredited Chambers

The recognised “**voice of business**” in Greater Manchester

Three main business lines – **Membership Services, International Trade, Research**

“The voice of business” – Herausforderungen

Multiple issues on multiple fronts!

They are **“Uber-busy”!**

Geopolitical Market Pressures

Globalisation / Localisation

Increasing speed of technological change / AI

Logistics Challenges

Cost Inflation – General & Specific (Energy, Raw Materials, Logistics)

Brexit!

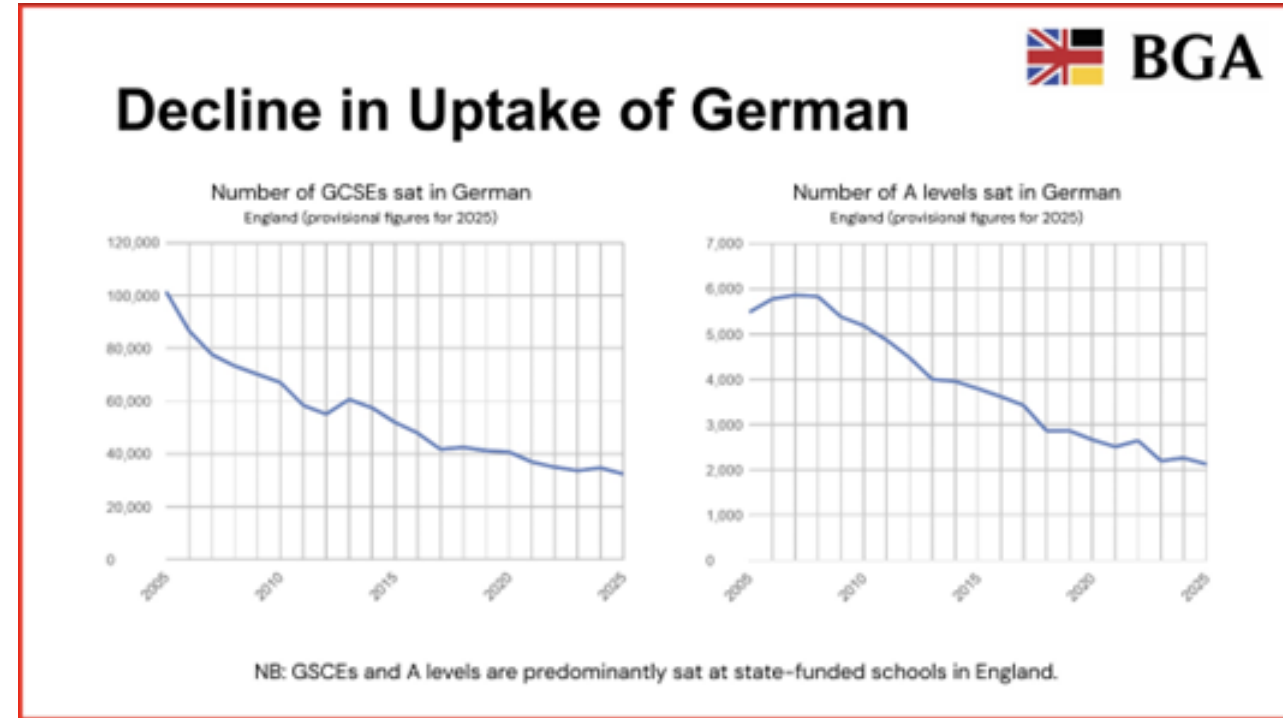
Bureaucracy – so called **“Red Tape”**

Skills - present & future

Businesses need help!

Local Councils need help! – similar pressures – cost cutting

While in the background!



Chancen durch LSIP

Support for Local Business & Local Government

Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) – started in 2022

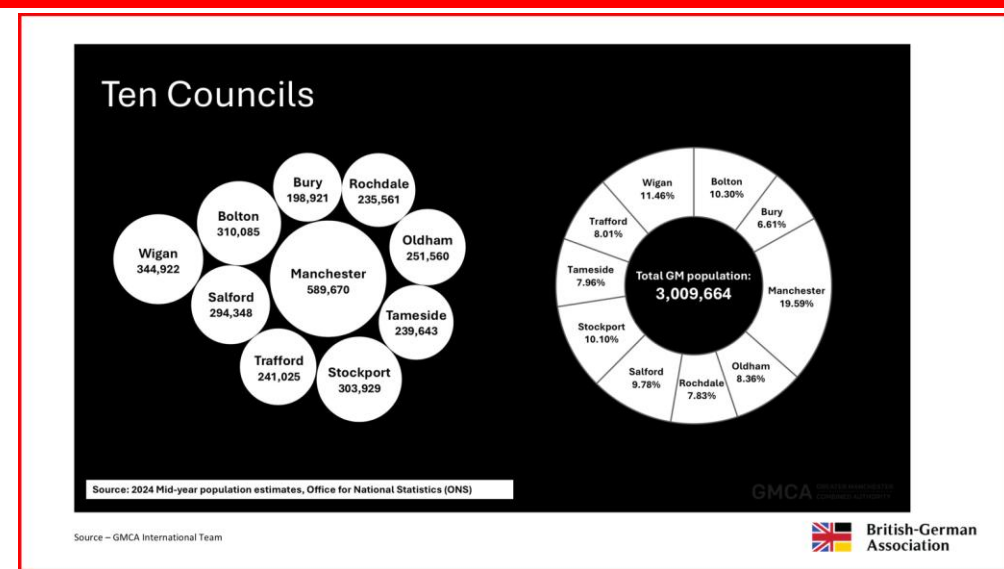
Employer Representative Bodies (ERB) were commissioned by **UK Government (DfE)** to investigate current & future skills requirements of business and create a Local Skills Improvement Plan – a plan based on businesses requirements!

DfE is now in the process of **defining how to deliver the requirements of the plan**

Of the 39 UK LSIPs, **33 have been led by local Chambers of Commerce** (Handelskammern)

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce led for Greater Manchester

- Includes a **detailed plan** for each of Greater Manchester's 10 councils
- There are **gaps** in every plan
- A **gap** is an opportunity for collaboration! Including **cross-border!**
- Sectoral skills that are missing in UK, could be supported in Germany (and vice-versa)?





Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

Chancen durch LSIP und Erasmus+

Skills development gaps / skills acceleration:

The UK is to **rejoin Erasmus+ in 2027** – fantastic news and a great opportunity!

An excellent vehicle to accelerate mutual skills development and “Staedtepartnerschaften”

Driven by business requirements – delivering real business benefit

GM / Ruhr Partnership provides a foundation for broader collaboration

Questions worth exploring:

Could NRW sector skills infrastructure help close Greater Manchester’s LSIP skills gaps, through **collaborative Erasmus+ projects** and vice versa?

Do the German “Laender” have anything similar to an LSIP? For example, in Nordrhein-Westfalen?

If yes, it based on business requirements?

If no, could the local “Handelskammern” play a role?

An initial focus on **UK Further Education Colleges & German Fachhochschulen** for skills delivery & acceleration?



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Some ideas / recommendations

Explore Erasmus+ as a vehicle for **cross-border skills acceleration**

Facilitate a meeting between GMCA, GMCC and British Council to discuss LSIP & Erasmus+

Establish if **Handelskammern** can play a similar role in Germany, as Chambers of Commerce do in UK, in establishing **LSIP** - current and future skills requirements from businesses

Consider a **“pilot” for NRW / Ruhr & Greater Manchester** – “Skills acceleration for Business”, supported by Erasmus+

Discussion at **“Koenigswinter Konferenz”** in June

Encourage UK companies in Germany, to engage with local Handelskammern & local Councils

Encourage German companies in UK, to engage with local Chambers of Commerce & local Councils

Objective - To help businesses address their declared skills gaps, through smart, data-led, targeted “Staedtepartnerschaften”



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Thank-you for your time

Any questions?