

GMCVO Annual Review 2008



What is GMCVO?

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Our **VISION** is a strong, diverse and influential voluntary sector that:

- Promotes social, economic and political inclusion
- Enables the provision of high quality affordable services and resources to people and communities in need
- Promotes the involvement and leadership of communities, both geographical and interest-based, in addressing and resolving the issues that affect them

Our **AIM** is to strengthen the local voluntary sector, build bridges with other sectors, and influence policy. We represent, promote and develop voluntary organisations, working in partnership with other local and national support organisations.

We are the lead body for the Greater Manchester Voluntary Sector Support consortium (ChangeUp), and the Greater Manchester Learning Consortium.

Key current policy themes are equalities and public sector commissioning.

Our practical services include newsletters, a policy journal, accredited management and specialist training, consultancy, peer networks, project development, support for community hubs, research, conferences and events. We also manage the St Thomas Centre, a fully equipped conference centre used by the voluntary sector of Greater Manchester and its partners.

GREATER MANCHESTER'S VITAL VOLUNTARY SECTOR.

- includes over 11,000 organisations, 6.5% of the national and 35% of the North West sector
- is the largest and most diverse outside London
- employs 67,000 paid staff (5% of the Greater Manchester workforce) and 283,000 unpaid staff and trustees
- contributes £3.85 billion to the Greater Manchester economy

Report from Chair and Director

Proud to Support Local Voluntary Action

Recent reports* to Government have highlighted the role that the voluntary sector plays – not only in providing services but in responding immediately to crises and building communities.

Greater Manchester has an active, responsive and diverse sector, which makes a huge contribution to local people and their hopes for the future.

Evidence shows that we need to reflect on the impact of the services we offer – and the sector needs to be involved in commissioning and strategic decision-making at the local, regional and national levels to be most effective. The constant struggle for core funding can inhibit the very qualities needed for innovation especially at the local level. This is why GMCVO continues to argue for core-

funding and commissioning that appreciates the value of a diverse sector that can respond to pressing social problems and innovate as well as provide tested services.

The sector is a vital partner in the new city-region, which offers a new platform for all voluntary and community-based organisations across Greater Manchester.

In the following pages we have outlined some of the work we have been doing over the last year, under the broad categories of Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector; Representing the Sector; Supporting Infrastructure; and Understanding and Promoting the Sector. We have produced our Financial Statements in the same format, so we know how much resource

has gone into each area of activity, and also into the communications systems and governance that underpin them.

We would like to take this opportunity to mention all the people who have worked for us and with us this year – our staff, trustees and associates; our funders; our members; our advisers; colleagues from other infrastructure organisations; members of consortia and steering groups; and participants in consultations and projects. Thank you for your support and hard work; our success is down to all of you.

Dr Su Maddock,
Chair, GMCVO

Alex Whinnom,
Director, GMCVO

* Commons Public Administration Select Committee – *Public Services and the Third Sector: Rhetoric and Reality*, and DeAnne Julius Report for BERR on Public Service Regulatory Reform [July 2008]

St Thomas Centre

St Thomas Centre is both a well-used conference venue, and an important showcase for the Greater Manchester voluntary sector. Hosting 425 events and more than 11,000 visitors last year, the Centre provides GMCVO with a ready connection to a wide range of public sector, infrastructure and frontline voluntary groups and their activities, as well as allowing us to promote our other services. Having taken the hard decision to close our print and design service, we have increased the number of rooms for hire, and we are still actively considering further adaptations or extensions to the building.



Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector

This involves the support, development and capacity-building of Greater Manchester voluntary sector organisations and networks. It includes training, education, sharing of good practice, consultancy work and the dissemination of resources including information.

Training, and the provision of information, advice and consultancy are always the largest elements of this area of work, but we also support some specialisms, such as community transport, supported housing and community buildings.

We are keen to demonstrate best practice in efficiency and sustainability in our own work, and have started to use Open Source software for our electronic newsletter and websites; this is free to use and is much more flexible and accessible than commercial products.

Public sector service delivery, and the trend from grant-making to contracting, remain big challenges for our local voluntary sector for the foreseeable future. Besides lobbying (see representation section on page 8) we continue to provide practical support, especially through the Learning Consortium and the Health Partnership Project.

Key Statistics	
training days provided	1,344
management trainees	113
formal or informal consultancy	350
subscribers to electronic newsletter	1,040
events, lectures and seminars	17

Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector

● **Community Hubs**

Community Hubs has continued CTAC's legacy by providing advice and support to organisations that wish to create or improve community facilities in their neighbourhood.

Through its *Best Practice In Community Design Project* the Community Hubs team has supported 32 frontline organisations to develop/refurbish their community hub. Also support with resource audits for 12 frontline organisations and training for 24 LIOs to undertake resource audits was delivered by the Hubs' *Resource Procurement Project*.

The Community Hubs team launched COMBINE (Community Buildings Information Network), the peer support network for community facility managers, with 60 organisations at the launch and more than 300 on the database accessing information. The team worked closely with GMVSS to refresh *Resource Finder*, the directory of support services in

Greater Manchester, and also supported the establishment of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)'s facilities and buildings network.

Within GMCVO, the Community Hubs team actively supported the Transport Resource Unit with a community survey and the Rural Resource Unit by assisting the development of new rural hubs (see p9).

● **Community Transport Operators' Forum**

The Greater Manchester Community Transport Operators' Forum (GMCTOF) represents, promotes and supports the development of the community transport sector within Greater Manchester. GMCVO Transport Resource Unit provided ongoing support to GMCTOF during the year, helping the group to become a charitable company. From this, GMCTOF was able to attract significant funding which allowed for free training, the development

of a monitoring and evaluation framework, and for a marketing programme to raise the profile of community transport to key stakeholders and commissioners.

● **Voluntary sector training providers**

A series of statutory reforms began in September 2007 to regulate the qualifications required by tutors.

In response to this, the GMCVO training team researched the new requirements and developed a programme, accredited by Edexcel, to meet the needs of tutors working in the voluntary sector – an area where, traditionally, experience has taken precedence over qualifications. We obtained funding through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) ESF co-financing scheme to subsidise the cost of the programme to individuals, and between October 2007 and March 2008, 38 tutors obtained the *Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector* qualification at level 3 or level 4.

Building the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector

● **Towpath Community Grants Programme**

In December 2007, the Greater Manchester Voluntary Sector Learning Consortium was successful in obtaining its first LSC contract – to distribute small grants to frontline voluntary sector organisations working innovatively to move people nearer to employment. We have 92 grants available to allocate over the next two years, with an average award of £6,000 each (for more information see the GMCVO website www.gmcvo.org.uk).

● **ICT Champion**

The North West Regional ICT Champion supports networks in each of the sub-regions to improve the use of ICT by voluntary and community organisations. The Champion

has signposted organisations to appropriate services, promoted best practice, sought to influence regional policy and worked to improve the sustainability of existing sector-based ICT support services across the region.

● **Informing the sector**

Our monthly round-up of news, the *Digest*, continued to be available in printed and electronic formats – with subscribers to the e-mail version passing the 1,000 mark during the year.

Issues, our bi-monthly policy journal, helped voluntary and community organisations to better understand their operating environment by focusing on areas such as funding trends, governance, community assets, support from

business, and learning and skills.

● **Events**

We delivered a programme of conferences, workshops and lectures to tackle key issues affecting the voluntary and community sector and its partners in other sectors. Among the topics addressed were commissioning for health, good governance, service user involvement in health and social care, sustainable funding, and using the media. The events brought together experts and practitioners from Greater Manchester and beyond, enabling voluntary and community organisations to develop partnerships, overcome barriers and develop opportunities in our rapidly changing sector.

Representing the Voluntary Sector

This includes the formal and informal representation of the interests, concerns and needs of the Greater Manchester voluntary sector and its clients within relevant forums and with relevant organisations at sub-regional, regional and national levels; development and brokering of cross-sector partnerships; responding to consultation and/or enabling relevant voluntary sector organisations and their clients to respond.

GMCVO recognises three levels of activity:

- **Opinion** – offering an informed professional view
- **Representation** – providing a response on behalf of the

voluntary sector, having consulted relevant organisations

- **Voice** – enabling relevant voluntary organisations to express their own views directly to policy-makers

We continue to represent the sector at the Greater Manchester Forum, the City Strategy Group (employment and skills) and the Health Leadership Group. We also work with sub-regional organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council and Greater Manchester Probation.

City-region governance and partnership structures are changing to afford Greater Manchester more autonomy, and

national government has approved a multi-area agreement (MAA) for 2009 which covers employment and skills, transport and housing/planning. GMCVO was responsible for ensuring the MAA includes full reference to the important role of the voluntary sector in implementation.

It can be difficult to judge the impact of representational work, since other individuals and organisations may be lobbying on similar grounds, and the effects of discussions or papers may not be felt immediately. However some highlights of the year are described on the next page.

Key Statistics

organisations consulted on policy issues

1,605

events and meetings attended to represent the sector

366

responses to consultation

informal 34

formal 16

Representing the Voluntary Sector

● Public service procurement

We continued to lobby for recognition of the impact on the local voluntary sector of public sector procurement practice, particularly to raise awareness at national level. GMCVO and one of our members, the Wai Yin Women's Society, gave evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee on the topic. It was pleasing to see that the report of the Committee, *Public Services and the Third Sector: Rhetoric and Reality* (July 2008), reflected many of our concerns.

● The rural fringes

The Rural Resource Unit was a two year project to support the rural voluntary and community sector. In the first year we strengthened understanding and identified the challenges facing our rural areas as detailed in *On the Edge* (GMCVO, 2007). In the second year we engaged in work which would help highlight how rural community development

could take place in an urban fringe environment. This included supporting networking activity and sharing good practice but also developing four rural community hubs in Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Stockport. We ended the project by consulting with all partners in order to understand how this work can carry on in future years.

● Health partnerships

The Health Partnership Project started in October 2007. We built up positive relationships through a steering group, which includes representatives from public health authorities, the Commissioning Business Service (CBS), Greater Manchester PCTs and directors of commissioning. And we informed the commissioning process by completing and disseminating the results of a survey of third sector commissioning in Greater Manchester, and producing regular bulletins about

commissioning. As a result of this work, the CBS pursued the subject with more in-depth research using the Health Partnership network, while frontline groups were given an overview of the commissioning profile across Greater Manchester. The Audit Commission review of the Greater Manchester Health Strategy (2008) praised the work of the Health Partnership.

● A champion for bus passengers

The Transport Resource Unit responded to a national consultation on the creation of a bus passenger 'champion' and represented the concerns of the sector at an 'experts panel' chaired by Transport Minister Rosie Winterton. This had an impact on the proposed design of the body, by putting an emphasis on a research-based approach and marginalised communities.

Supporting Infrastructure

This includes the support, development, capacity-building and co-ordination of voluntary sector infrastructure organisations and services in Greater Manchester; relationships with regional and national infrastructure; dissemination of information about infrastructure services; and representation of sub-regional infrastructure organisations.

We continue to enable infrastructure providers in Greater Manchester to work together through the Voluntary Sector Support (ChangeUp) consortium. The VSS consortium

continued to work collaboratively and strategically throughout 2007/08, and the agreed programme of work was delivered. In addition a transformational strategic plan and business plan were developed with commitment from the whole range of consortium members. The plan sets out a programme of change to improve the accessibility and availability of support services through closer collaboration and co-ordination. Members are agreed this is the right way to fulfil our vision – that all voluntary groups in Greater Manchester have access to high

quality, relevant support.

We remain concerned by the fragility of much of the infrastructure. This year we assisted organisations in Bury to develop a new support organisation after the closure of Bury CVS. And at its request, staff and projects of the Community Technical Aid Centre were absorbed into GMCVO following CTAC's closure in March 2007. The team has been fully integrated with GMCVO and has benefited from working within a larger, well-connected organisation.

Key Statistics

information and briefings to infrastructure staff	151
meetings of infrastructure organisations and networks	67
regional infrastructure meetings	12

Supporting Infrastructure

- **VSS quality assessment**

During 2007/08 all ChangeUp consortia across England were externally assessed by Capacitybuilders (which manages ChangeUp funding on behalf of the Office for the Third Sector) to ensure they were 'fit for purpose'. VSS scored 'green' (best possible), acknowledging the good quality of the work done and its inclusive approach. Capacitybuilders also welcomed VSS' commitment to developing a strategic focus as Greater Manchester moves towards city-region status and develops a multi-area agreement. Capacitybuilders' positive assessment of VSS ensures funding for 2008-11 through a Consortium Development Grant.

- **VSS Performance Monitoring and Case Management Project**

VSS members have been developing a shared system for monitoring the sector and our collective work with it across

Greater Manchester. This will enable us to understand what interventions are most effective and to monitor how the sector is doing.

- **VSS Diversity Steering Group**

The VSS Diversity Steering Group held a series of events across Greater Manchester to build links between frontline groups, and support providers and encourage take up of support services. The group also developed a tool to help remove barriers to infrastructure support services.

- **VSS resources for frontline groups**

Four projects were delivered by VSS to identify need, best practice, resources and support on commissioning and contracting for the frontline in Greater Manchester. These projects have helped inform future VSS activity and the development of support services.



www.gmvss.net

Supporting Infrastructure

- **Bury Third Sector Development Agency**

GMCVO was asked to manage the establishment of a new 'local infrastructure organisation' for the borough. Our role was to assist the shadow board of the proposed Bury Third Sector Development Agency (B3SDA) to set up the new organisation. Premises were secured in the preferred location, furnished and IT equipment procured (some at no cost to the project). By August, B3SDA were constituted and operating, fully staffed and with draft policies, office procedures and stationery. An induction over fresh croissants set them on their way.

- **Five Counties and the North West Infrastructure Partnership**

The Five Counties Partnership comprises the sub-regional

organisations from each area of the North West. It exists to share best practice, undertake joint work and ensure a sub-regional voice at regional level. Five Counties initiated the North West Infrastructure Partnership to inform and influence regional policy and strategy development in ways that benefit the voluntary and community sector. It acts as a 'one-stop shop' for regional public sector stakeholders to engage with voluntary sector infrastructure providers. Membership reflects the diversity of providers across the region.

- **BASIS consultation**

GMCVO and VSS were consulted by the Big Lottery over work to be funded through the second round of BASIS, and it was pleasing that the final list of preferred projects included some of our own priorities.

Understanding and Promoting the Voluntary Sector

This includes undertaking, commissioning or co-ordinating research about the voluntary sector of Greater Manchester; correlation and interpretation of research findings; dissemination of findings to relevant audiences; and general promotion of the voluntary sector, especially the Greater Manchester sector, to relevant stakeholders, including evidencing the value of the sector and enabling it to secure resources.

Besides research and publications, we also ensure that the voice of the Greater Manchester voluntary sector is heard by regional and national infrastructure organisations, since the nature of the sector in the large city-regions of the north is quite different from that of London or of rural areas.

● Commissioning experiences

As part of the Health Partnership Project, we began conducting research on voluntary organisations' experiences with commissioning in spring 2008. In-depth, semi-structured interviews

with 20 organisations will yield information on such topics as the nature of application processes, examples of voluntary organisations influencing service specifications, and the impact of contractual arrangements on service delivery. We hope to use the findings to inform commissioning practice in future.

● Regional database of voluntary sector information

In March 2008, GMCVO on behalf of the Five Counties Partnership commissioned a regional database of voluntary sector information based on data from Guidestar. The system will report on the size, income, staff levels and areas of interest of registered charities in the region.

● ICT needs analysis

Throughout the summer of 2007, GMCVO researched an ICT recommendation report. The report's primary finding was that whilst the sector has access to competitive ICT support services, there is an unmet need for impartial advice.

● Wake Up Saddleworth

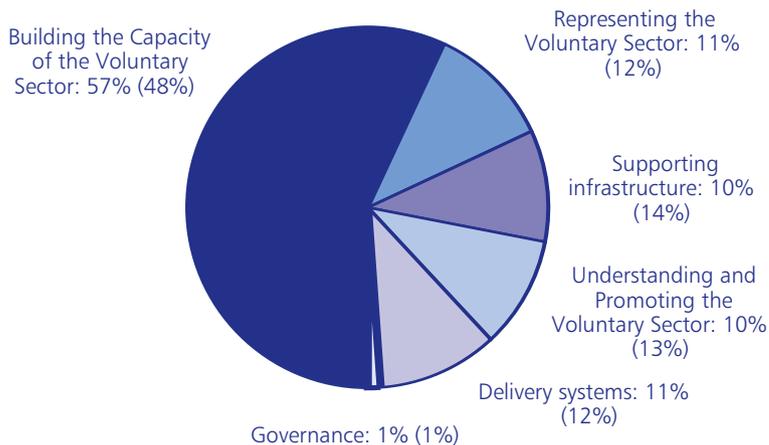
This research project, carried out by our Rural Resource Unit, examined the issues affecting the parish of Saddleworth (in Oldham MBC) and explored the role the voluntary sector in a rural area might have in delivering services as part of the Local Area Agreement process, highlighting the possibilities and potential in the area.

Key Statistics	
research projects	4
publications	17
speakers and exhibitors at non-GMCVO events	28

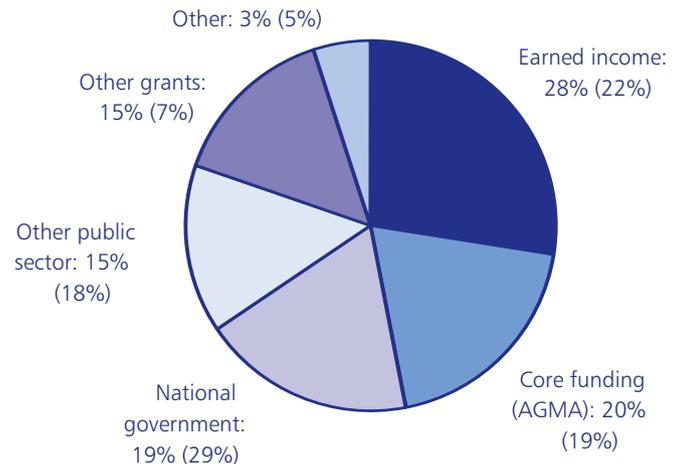
Finances

	Total Funds £ 2008	Total Funds £ 2007
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	1,511,153	1,646,545
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	-1,731,459	-1,463,025
NET (EXPENDITURE) INCOME FOR THE YEAR	-220,306	183,520
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD	778,885	595,365
restricted	388,648	319,609
unrestricted	390,237	275,756
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD	558,579	778,885
restricted	144,344	388,648
unrestricted	414,235	390,237

Use of resources



Income sources



(previous year's figures in brackets)

Financial information is taken from GMCVO's audited financial statements and annual report 2007/08. For a full copy please contact the Finance Department at GMCVO.

BOARD MEMBERS 2007/08

Su Maddock (Chair)
Stephen Little (Vice Chair)
David Black (Honorary Treasurer)
Colin Barson
Caroline Beard
Paul Harris
Paul Martin
Martin Miller
Elma Plant
Councillor Bill Risby
Mohammed Saleem
Nick Trotter
Councillor Patricia Young

DIRECTORS OF SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES

Guy Bartlett
Adrian Carradice-Davids

FUNDERS 2007/08:

Ability Net (ICT Hub)
Association of Greater Manchester Authorities – AGMA
Association of Greater Manchester Primary Care Trusts – PCT
Big Lottery Fund
Capacitybuilders
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
European Social Fund – ESF
Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council – LSC
Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority – GMPTA

STAFF (August 2008)

Alex Whinnom	Director
Alison Crush	Community Hubs Design Officer
Andrew Ward	Facilities and Business Manager
Anne-Marie Wroe	Finance and Administration Officer
Annie Freiha	VSS Administration Officer
Beth Sharratt	Communication Administration Officer
Chris Heard	VSS Manager
Darren Aylwin	Building Supervisor
David Sutcliffe	Information Officer
Gill Dixon	Training Centre Co-ordinator
Ian Taylor	Community Hubs Manager
Jackie Cowman	Finance Officer
John Hannen	Representation Manager
Karen Rigg	Training Centre Development Manager
Lee Gosling	Skills Officer
Lesley Wild	Finance Manager
Louise Jackson	Conference Centre Co-ordinator
Melanie Jeffs	Transport Resource Unit Development Officer
Morag Rose	Community Hubs Development Officer
Nasir Hussain	Policy Officer
Neil Walbran	Health Partnership Officer
Oliver Gibson	Communications Media and ICT Officer
Prue Yeoman	Five Counties Partnership Co-ordinator
Shakirah Ullah	VSS Diversity and Access Co-ordinator
Susan Barrett	Systems Administration Officer
Susanne Martikke	Researcher
Tanya Coutts	Operations Manager

Thanks also to the following who worked for us during 2007/08:
Anne Shackleton, Dharmila Khimani, Emma Clarke, Filipina Moore, Gregory Crouch, Hyacinth Walters-Olsen, Kathy Rigby, Marie Matlack, Paula Hall, Pauline Baker, Sarah Armstrong, Shahida Sidduqe

GMCVO SERVICES AND PROJECTS August 2008

St Thomas Centre

A fully equipped and accessible conference venue near the centre of Manchester

Community Hubs

Support for organisations to acquire, develop and manage community-based assets and resources

Training and learning

A range of accredited and specialist training including management qualifications

Consultancy

Directory of accredited consultants; project management and hosting; constitutional and governance advice etc.

Newsletter and journal

A monthly newsletter and bi-monthly policy journal available online, by e-mail or as hard copy

Representation

To enable the voluntary sector of Greater Manchester to influence policy and decision-making that affects their clients and organisations, especially at city-region level

Greater Manchester Learning Consortium

A procurement consortium of training organisations, developed in partnership with Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council; currently delivering the Towpath Project to assist people towards employment

Conferences and lectures

An annual programme of events addressing key policy and practice issues affecting the voluntary and community sector in Greater Manchester

ICT projects

NW ICT Champion and Greater Manchester e-communities network for ICT support agencies, supporting best practice

Greater Manchester Equalities and Human Rights Forum

A forum of organisations specialising in equalities work, which provides an inclusive approach to diversity and seeks to provide specialist knowledge to influence policy and decision-making that affects their clients

Health Partnership Project

Advises and enables the public health sector to overcome barriers to commissioning from local voluntary organisations; enables voluntary and community groups to influence policy on health and access to public services

Transport Resource Unit

Advises and enables voluntary and community groups to influence transport policy; support for community transport organisations.

Voluntary Sector Support (VSS)

A partnership of organisations involved in providing support (infrastructure) to voluntary organisations, currently funded through ChangeUp www.gmvss.net

Five Counties

A partnership of sub-regional organisations in the North West, currently acting as lead bodies for ChangeUp consortia in the region

Research

Original research into the voluntary sector in Greater Manchester; collation and dissemination of research findings; voluntary sector research library



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VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION**
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