

GMCVO

GREATER MANCHESTER
VCSE LEADERSHIP GROUP
the sector's voice in Devolution

A Portfolio of Good Practice for an Inclusive Economy

Part 1 - Community Ownership

GMCVO

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What is an Inclusive Economy?

An inclusive economy is fairer for all. It is an economy where there is equitable distribution of wealth, capital and social connection. There is equal access to opportunities for everyone in society, whether that be employment opportunities, housing, education or health and wellbeing. It includes good employment where people are supported, treated and paid well enough by their employer. It is an economy where those who are often missing out have access to opportunities to live healthy and fulfilling lives. For Greater Manchester, an inclusive economy would help tackle the growing challenges of poverty and inequality across the region.

Current and previous economic structures and previous attempts to fix the economy have left far too many people across Greater Manchester unemployed or underpaid, facing poverty and excluded from opportunities to thrive. As the economy grows, so does the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest in society and the consequences associated with this. With the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit exacerbating inequalities, it is important that action is taken to create a fairer society.

Many Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Greater Manchester, whether they are aware of it or not, are helping to build a more inclusive

economy. They do this in a number of ways, particularly in places with high levels of deprivation and poverty.

This portfolio series will delve into specific examples of this but first we will explore what an inclusive economy looks like and what enables it.

To develop a deeper understanding of what an inclusive economy is and consider the impact this can have, we must first recognise the components of an inclusive economy. There isn't a universally agreed definition for what an inclusive economy is; it will vary in different places depending on context, but there are some commonalities you would always expect to see.

The [Rockerfeller Foundation outlines a framework](#) of five, inter-related characteristics required for an Inclusive Economy:

- **Participation**
- **Equity**
- **Growth**
- **Stability**
- **Sustainability**

There is emphasis on these characteristics being inter-related, as independently they would not make an economy more inclusive.

What is the VCSE sector's role in the Greater Manchester Economy?

VCSE sector approaches mean the sector plays a pivotal role in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy vision of being 'a place where everyone can live a good life, growing up, getting on and growing old in a greener, fairer more prosperous city region'. VCSE organisations are crucial in the delivery of the Strategy, with the VCSE sector's work across every aspect of tackling inequality and inequity in Greater Manchester including skills, employment and enterprise; health and social care; housing and transport; environmental issues and carbon reduction; poverty reduction; inclusive economic growth and inclusive governance.

VCSE organisations contribute directly to the Greater Manchester economy and create more equitable local economies with their inclusive models. This may be via shared community ownership, sustainable and 'just' low carbon approaches, good employment practices and community wealth building (a people-centred approach to local economic development which redirects wealth back into the local economy). VCSE groups do not function for financial gain, rather to achieve social environmental and economic value for the communities they serve.

The [GM State of the VCSE Sector 2021 report](#) tells us that Greater Manchester VCSE sector organisations generate £1.2 billion per year in income. These organisations are not driven by profit and nearly 20% of those organisations are social enterprises who reinvest money back into the people and communities they serve, so they are already helping to create a more inclusive economy.

In addition, the report recognises that 71% of Greater Manchester's VCSE sector is made up of small community 'grassroots' groups, who are well positioned to respond to the needs and inequalities in their specific communities.

VCSE plays a role in [the foundational economy](#). The goods produced and services provided as a result of VCSE activity help to make the economy more inclusive and contribute towards reducing inequalities. Nearly 500,000 volunteers across Greater Manchester provide an estimated £692 million per year through the hours they provide which contributes towards goods and services that benefit the region. This activity mainly benefits local economies and the people who live in those communities.



Inclusive Economy characteristic	What does this mean?	Examples within the VCSE sector
Participation	People are able to participate fully in economic life. They are able to access and participate as workers, consumers and business owners. They have knowledge of rules and norms to start a business, find a job and engage in markets. Technology is more widely distributed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social investment including advice and support for getting started and growth • Community wealth building • Local charities & social enterprises • Good employment • Employment and skills support including tech
Equity	More opportunities are available for upward mobility for all, particularly poor and socially disadvantaged groups. We see declining inequality and equal access to adequate public goods, services and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networks e.g. GM Equality Alliance, BASE • Local charities & social enterprises with inclusive governance models • Community grocers & cafés • Community wealth building • Cooperative and community ownership
Growth	An economy is increasingly producing enough goods and services to enable broad gains in well-being and greater opportunity. Good job and work opportunities with increasing incomes for all. Economic growth and transformation is not only captured by aggregate measures of economic output (such as GDP), but must include and be measured by other outcomes that capture overall wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good employment • Cooperatives • Community ownership • Social enterprise • Community wealth building
Stability	Individuals, households, communities and enterprises have confidence in their future, secure enough to invest in their future and a good ability to predict the outcome of their economic decisions. Economic systems are increasingly resilient to shocks and stresses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives - banks. • Community owned housing • Social investment
Sustainability	Economic and social wealth is sustained over time. Economic and social wealth is the worth of all assets (human produced and natural capital) that contribute to human wellbeing. In the case of natural capital, human use must preserve or restore nature's ability to produce the ecosystem of goods and services that contribute to human well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens and grocers • Environmental charities • Community ownership of disused space • Social investment • Wellbeing charities • Good employment

An Introduction to this Portfolio

This portfolio series highlights different ways the VCSE sector is helping to create a fairer and more inclusive economy in Greater Manchester.

Each chapter of this portfolio will focus on a specific aspect of an inclusive economy, we will explain how each aspect works and how the approaches delivered by the VCSE sector help to make our economy fairer. We will share profiles of organisations that showcase practical examples of how the sector works with and in communities and illustrate how the sector increases participation, equity, growth, stability and sustainability; all of which are required to make our economy more inclusive.

Over time, we will add new chapters to this portfolio, focused on different aspects of an inclusive economy, highlighting more examples of the VCSE sector’s role in creating a fairer economy and their contribution to achieving the commitments of the Greater Manchester Strategy.

We hope these examples will be shared widely with colleagues across sectors to raise the profile of the VCSE sector’s impact in achieving the Greater Manchester vision.

The first chapter of this portfolio looks at Community Ownership.

Creating an Inclusive Economy through Community Ownership

Community ownership enables local communities to take power of capital (money) or physical assets. This might be to have control or ownership of local assets, such as land, buildings or businesses. This gives communities a voice in the operation of things like housing schemes, community centres, parks, and green spaces. Community ownership not only gives a community power and responsibility in their local area, it also shares wealth within the community, helping people and business to become more self-sufficient and sustainable, reducing inequalities and

inequity, thereby helping the local economy to be more inclusive.

Community ownership helps limit the use of resources and the need for individual wealth and so is a key component to creating a fairer and sustainable economy.

In this chapter, you will find an overview of the ‘Communities in Control’ week of action as well as profiles of VCSE organisations who have taken ownership and/or power of assets within their community, demonstrating the contribution they are making to the creation of a fairer economy.

‘Communities in Control’ Week of Action

Monday 4th - Friday 8th July 2022

‘Communities in Control’ was a week of action held in July 2022. Led by GMCVO in partnership with GM VCSE Leadership Group, the week showcased some of the ways in which VCSE organisations are enabling people and communities to take control of power and assets and help create an economy that is more inclusive of those that have been increasingly left behind.

how communities can take more control of local assets to benefit many, including those who are disadvantaged.

Over the week, a number of events took place across Greater Manchester that demonstrated

The week of action not only highlighted some of the fantastic work happening across Greater Manchester, it also helped VCSE sector organisations recognise how their work contributes to a more inclusive economy and has enabled them to think about what more they can do to help build a fairer economic model.





Manchester Urban Diggers (MUD)

Organisation type: Community Benefit Society

Based in: Fallowfield, Manchester, with additional collaborative projects in Chorlton, Salford and Stockport.

What they do: MUD benefit local communities, particularly those with mental health issues and/or experiencing loneliness.

They promote food sovereignty and work with others to develop food production sites on disused urban plots of land. They provide educational services and grow fruit, vegetables

and herbs, which are made available to the local community. MUD use organic growing methods and improve local biodiversity and soil health.

The MUD Platt Fields Market Garden is a community garden, which is used to supply fruit vegetables and herbs (grown using organic techniques) to residents and businesses locally. The garden is maintained with support from volunteers who participate in educational workshops and programmes, wellbeing sessions, courses and volunteering days. As well



as participating in a range of events held at the garden, there is a café for all members of the community to enjoy. The site includes a children's play area, an outdoor kitchen and a kiln for making pottery to enable a range of therapeutic and wellbeing activities.

They promote sustainable food production and support other grassroots and VCSE groups in creating their own community gardens on disused land across Greater Manchester.

How MUD create a more Inclusive Economy: Local residents, who worked with Manchester City Council to take ownership of disused space within Platt Fields Park, created MUD. They are a non-profit social enterprise and any money that they make goes towards

developing their projects, providing free services and events for the community and creating employment opportunities for their volunteers, thereby increasing community **participation and equity**.

Workshops hosted at MUD help local communities learn the skills needed to grow their own food and to become more self-sufficient. They also sell their produce to local residents and businesses, benefiting the local economy while being environmentally **sustainable**.

MUD also consult on, create and help maintain new community gardens in multiple local communities, which widens the economic benefits to the region.



Greater Manchester Community Led Homes



Organisation type: Company limited by guarantee without share capital.

Based in: Manchester, with support offered Greater Manchester wide.

What they do: [Greater Manchester Community Led Homes](#) (GMCLH) provide advice, training, funding and practical support to local groups, councils, and developers looking to develop community-led housing. They can provide support at each stage of the process including checking if a project is

eligible for government funding, supporting the application process, helping to broker relationships and providing advice to engage with local stakeholders such as other local groups and councillors.

Using their experience of developing community-led homes they also provide guidance and signposting for technical elements of projects, such as planning permission, builders and suppliers.



How they create a more inclusive economy: Many non-occupier or buy-to-let landlords are driven by profit and have little interest in the needs of communities. GMCLH provide the support, tools and knowledge to enable people to build affordable housing owned or controlled by local communities, thereby preventing the issues with private landlords. This approach is particularly beneficial where there is too high a demand for housing leaving people struggling to secure housing,

or struggling with high rent or mortgage payments. And because local people **participate** from the start, new housing is more appropriate for the needs of specific communities. Community-led housing is a **sustainable** solution to create safe and affordable housing where people can feel connected and in control, improving **equity** and **stability** for communities.

Chorlton Community Land Trust



Organisation type:
Community Benefit Society.

Based in: Manchester.

What they do: [Chorlton Community Land Trust](#) is a group of local residents with an interest in ensuring local people are in control of the design and development of their homes, and the long-term stewardship of the places where they live.

The Trust is made up of local people who help to develop and manage homes and other community assets in the best interest of the community, with the view to permanent community ownership of land and buildings.

They have worked to influence the development of Ryebank Fields, working with stakeholders in the development of the land to ensure that any homes built there in the future are affordable and suitable in size and tenure for a range of residents and their families. They have produced an alternative proposal for the land and have ensured that development partners continue to consult with local residents.

Housing and building plans are developed with the environment in mind, to protect and enhance the natural environment and embedding greener transport infrastructure.

They are currently working to influence the future of a building in the heart of Chorlton and save it from demolition, providing alternative plans to make this space a community owned commercial hub for local business.

How they create a more inclusive economy: Community Land Trusts are made up of people who live and work in the area. Everyone has the opportunity to join and contribute to how the group is run and make decisions they make to benefit the community.

They want to ensure that land and housing remain affordable for the people who live in that local area based on what the residents actually earn, both now and in the future. The community ownership model encourages **participation** from a wider range of people in the economy. As well as ensuring housing is affordable, trusts ensure that it is suitable for the people who live there. This supports people financially and helps to ensure local people are not forced out of their community to find more affordable housing elsewhere, thus improving **equity** and providing more **stability** across the community.

Creating community owned spaces for local business to operate further benefits the economy locally by enabling **participation, growth** and providing **stability**.

Firs Community Benefit Society



Organisation type:
Community Benefit Society.

Based in: Sale West, Trafford.

What they do: [Firs Community Benefit Society](#) is a community owned and controlled organisation that is driving forward plans to build a community centre that will host sports and wellbeing activities.

Run by a dedicated team of volunteers the organisation plans to create a long-term future for well-established clubs that currently occupy the Sale West Community centre, attract new activities and forge strong links with local schools and GP practices.

The group have drafted plans for the new Community Centre building and have shared these with the wider community as part of a consultation. Local residents also



have the opportunity to become members of the Community Benefit Society. Being a member enables people to voice ideas and opinions. It is a democratic way to ensure the plans will benefit as many people in the community as possible.

How they create a more inclusive economy: Firs Community Benefit Society provides equal shares to the members and involved members of the community will own the centre.

Having a shared community-owned space gives people and small businesses more opportunity for economic **participation** and **growth**.

The services and activities that will be provided at the centre are shaped around the specific needs of the people who live in the area and can help to improve **equity** across the community. This will also bring more **sustainability** into the community with regard to social wealth and wellbeing. A centre that is owned by the community will provide more **stability** to those who operate from there and access the services.

Grass Roots Oldham Women’s Enterprise (GROWE)

A partnership between Northern Lily CIC and Support Action for Women Network (SAWN)

Organisation type: Company Limited by Guarantee.

Based in: Failsworth, Oldham

What they do: GROWE offers local people a place to meet, learn sustainable gardening skills, grow fruit and vegetables and support the environment.

Northern Lily CIC and Support Action for Women Network (SAWN) partnered to acquire Oldham Council-owned land when it became vacant, and in summer 2022 they occupied the land. They are arranging for an asset transfer to formally own the land.

Since they acquired the land they have carried out a lot of work to make the grounds safe and suitable for indoor and outdoor activities, ensuring that the projects operating from there will thrive.

GROWE provides space for people to come together to socialise, learn new skills and support the environment.

The one acre of land is used to grow plants, fruit and vegetables, utilising

the pre-existing orchard as well as growing throughout the land and in polytunnels. The land gives multiple women-led small businesses the space to operate and trade from. As well as the GROWE partner organisations, in future this will include space for a community café, water sport wellbeing activities and space to care for animals.

How they create a more inclusive economy: By providing the space and skills for women to run their own business or find work, they are providing opportunities for economic **participation**, and enabling economic **growth**.

Growing food which will be available for the local community, as well as teaching the skills for people to grow their own food will help the community and the local natural environment to become more **sustainable**. The activities they hold will help empower people and build their skills and confidence, both now and in the future.

