

A Manifesto for the Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

Mayoral Election May 2021

In advance of the mayoral elections, we invite all candidates to commit to prioritising and further developing their relationship with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Our offer to GM is increasingly vital and relevant. Our ability to mobilise at scale has been evidenced during the Covid crisis. The report of the Independent Inequalities Commission 'Good Lives for All' makes frequent reference to VCSE knowledge and our tested practical solutions to tackling entrenched inequalities and Building Back Better. We now want to go beyond the principles we agreed in the current Accord. We invite the elected Mayor and all GM political leaders to commit to a set of radical but practical changes that will enable the VCSE sector to create real change at scale for the benefit of our people and communities.

THE GM VCSE SECTOR

Greater Manchester is home to 15,000+ voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. We are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership and established communications channels and have evidenced our ability to convene and act as a sector around general or specific strategic objectives. VCSE organisations work across every aspect of GM including skills, employment and enterprise; health and social care; housing and transport; environment and carbon reduction; poverty reduction; inclusive economic growth and inclusive governance. We offer:-

1. Our commitment to the vision of a city region in which all residents are valued and included and can lead good lives;
2. Our ability to engage, inform, consult, support and mobilise residents and communities, including those not reached by politicians or the public sector;
3. Our wide and deep knowledge of the barriers to attaining equality of outcomes, which are experienced by different communities of locality, identity and experience, and how to overcome them;
4. Our expertise in social and economic innovation and our learning from trialing new approaches to difficult problems;
5. Our independent resources including volunteers and funding which we can align with public and private sector resources to achieve common goals.

We therefore ask **THE GM MAYOR AND GMCA LEADERS** to commit to the following as essential building blocks for a more developed relationship:

1. Systematic consideration by the Mayor and all portfolio holders when developing other strategies of the current and potential contribution of the VCSE sector and the possible impact on VCSE activity (VCSE impact analysis) – including consultation and co-design with VCSE organisations;
2. An action plan based on the recommendations of the Independent Inequalities Commission, co-designed with the VCSE leadership, equalities networks and equalities panels, and fully integrated into the revised GM Strategy;
3. The VCSE Policy Paper and VCSE Commissioning Framework formally adopted as components of the revised GM Strategy, and co-owned by the GMCA;
4. Identification of areas of services and support, economic development and policy change on which the VCSE sector will take the lead, in partnership with the public sector and with a fair share of resources;
5. Long-term commitment (for at least the Mayoral term) to adequate funding for a GM-level 'infrastructure / eco-system' (the current funding is not adequate);
6. A development plan for a stronger social enterprise and community wealth building movement based on the recommendations of the SEAG and the IIP, overseen by the LEP and the Growth Board (or equivalent) along with representation on these bodies;
7. To negotiate a new protocol for standards we will all follow when dealing with each other (along the lines of the old 'Compact' principles), that will enable a more equal relationship.