

**GMCVO**

# Submission to RSA Inclusive Economic Growth Commission

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# THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR IN AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

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## 1. ABOUT GMCVO

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO) is the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector support and development organisation (sometimes called “infrastructure”) covering the Greater Manchester city region. We would describe ourselves as “a socio-economic development agency, working with and through the VCSE sector”. We support voluntary action and enterprise by local people, with a focus on encouraging the development of initiatives on sustainable and effective business models, which can bring added value, increase the diversity of voices heard, and operate in territories where the state and the market cannot or should not act. We work in partnership with other support providers and with the public, private, academic and faith sectors and aspire to provide co-ordination and leadership.

GMCVO’s primary role in Greater Manchester is as a broker (a collector, distributor, creator and interpreter) of relationships and ideas across boundaries of all kinds (including organisational, geographic, sectoral and cultural). We aspire to be a conduit for information for and about the VCSE sector, and a large element of our work is in representing and advocating for the views and needs of people involved in local voluntary action. GMCVO is unique in carrying out this function across the city region footprint and in relating both to Greater Manchester and to its districts and neighbourhoods. We are rooted in the local VCSE sector but very well-connected within and beyond GM, and are widely known and trusted.

We are the lead body or host for a range of GM partnerships and networks including Talent Match, Ambition for Ageing, Volunteering GM, GM BME Network, GM Social Enterprise Network, GM Third Sector Research and Community Energy GM (green energy co-operative of community hubs). We also act as an accountable body and sub-contract work to local groups. We are a member of GM Futures (a formal partnership of Greater Manchester skills and employment infrastructure bodies), the GM VCSE Reference Group (a formal partnership of VCSE leaders with a shared goal to eliminate inequalities in the city region), the GM Poverty Action Group, the GM Social Value Network and the national Voluntary Sector Core Cities group.

GMCVO has another important role in the practical testing of new ideas, and carries out many projects on the basis of “test, learn and share”. Over the years we have been an early adopter of consortia, fiscal shields, community-university partnerships, asset mapping, open source software, social media, impact methodologies etc. and undertaken research and mapping exercises to understand more about the nature and role of the Greater Manchester VCSE sector. Since 2014 we have focused most intensively on testing various approaches based on multi-sector alliances involving local voluntary action, which may be able to address socio-economic inclusion, rising inequalities and poverty, and meet the ambitions of people involved in local voluntary action and enterprise in our city region in the context of devolution and public spending cuts.

Our practical services include information; accredited management and specialist training; research; project and partnership brokerage, development and delivery; support for social and community enterprises; peer networks, conferences and events; co-ordination and brokerage of support and funding from national providers (grants, social investment, community shares); hosting projects enabling start-ups in deprived communities by “unlikely entrepreneurs”; specialist support for community hubs including asset transfer, green energy, building management; database and website development enabling marketing, impact measurement and CRM.

We also manage the St Thomas Centre, a fully equipped conference and training facility. This is used by the VCSE sector and its partners as a focus for debate, learning and networking; provides a showcase for the work of the local VCSE sector; attracts visitors from outside the city region, and hosts local community and worship groups. During 2016-18 we will undertake large scale building work to maximise use of the space and celebrate the heritage of the church and the surrounding area.

We have more than a thousand members. Every year we provide direct services to 3,000 organisations; 15,000 people visit St Thomas Centre; we receive 100,000 website unique visits. Monitoring demonstrates that we reach a representative cross section of the adult population of the city region by age, sex, ethnicity, locality and whether disabled.

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## **2. THE RSA COMMISSION**

GMCVO has already contributed to other submissions to the Commission:-

- GMCVO and other VCSE leaders have already contributed to the Greater Manchester submission to the RSA Commission, and there is VCSE representation on GM Growth and Inclusion Review steering group.
  - GMCVO and a number of other VCSE organisations are members of the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (IGAU) steering group. The IGAU is a partnership project between Manchester University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, intended to develop evidenced guidance for how to create inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty.
  - GMCVO has contributed to submissions made by Wiserd / Voluntary Sector North West; and by NAVCA on behalf of the Voluntary Sector Core Cities Group.
  - The Chief Executive of GMCVO met with RSA researchers at their London office, and an RSA researcher attended a Voluntary Sector Core Cities Group meeting in Birmingham
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## **3. COMMENTS ON RSA COMMISSION EMERGING FINDINGS**

The emerging findings and recommendations of the Commission are generally very encouraging, and we are especially pleased to see the recognition of the importance of “social infrastructure” and the role of the VCSE sector. In this context it is disappointing that there seem to have been few responses to the Commission directly from VCSE organisations, but heartening to see that the recommendations nevertheless reflect many of the concerns and ambitions of our sector. In general, our feeling is that the findings and recommendations are on the right lines, but it would be good to see even more imaginative thinking, and more concrete practical ideas. In this submission, some emerging evidence from GMCVO projects and research is outlined, which may help provide some of these practical ideas.

It is our contention that VCSE activity is a critical success factor for inclusive economic growth, and that economic inclusion is inextricably connected to social and political inclusion.

### 3.1 Inclusive devolution

We are pleased to see the priority given to devolution. It is quite clear from evidence produced by the Core Cities over some years, that devolution, including over decisions to raise and spend public money, is crucial to creating a more balanced economy. In Greater Manchester we have been at the cutting edge of the devolution experiment with four devolution deals plus Health and Social Care devolution signed since November 2014. However devolution has not yet gone far enough for city region leaders to take full control of the local economy and until it does, it will be more difficult to pursue the kind of joined up thinking required to achieve inclusive growth. Devolved control over local taxation, education and welfare, more flexibility to redistribute funds according to need across current budgets and across the geography of the city region, and increased, targeted public spending on developing the physical and social infrastructure would be necessary.

We agree strongly with the emerging finding with regard to financial resources. We would argue in addition that one element of the short-term stimulus and a sustainable longer term economic model needs to be strategic investment in key VCSE institutions including

- infrastructure (which connects and mobilises multitudes of individual independent organisations);
- community anchor organisations (including those anchoring communities of place, identity e.g. LGBT, ethnicity etc. and experience e.g. ex-offenders, homeless people etc.);
- and the targeted development and growth of the VCSE sector based on evidence of what kinds of VCSE initiatives are most effective.

It has been said that the VCSE sector is the people's vote on the type of society they want to live in. If we define voluntary action as "*people voluntarily taking action on things they care about by organising into groups with a common purpose*", it is plain that successful implementation of an inclusive socio-economic strategy like Greater Manchester's *Stronger Together* will require the buy-in of ordinary residents and the leveraging of socio-economic innovation on a grand scale. This would enable residents and communities to take action on prevention and early intervention; strengthen the resilience and social networks that enable functional, empowering communities; and unleash increased numbers of volunteers. This would reduce "demand" on over-stretched public services and enable more people to participate in economic activity (thus supporting for example Greater Manchester's "growth and reform" approach). Ensuring the involvement of our existing VCSE sector and fostering targeted development of new and additional voluntary action, enterprise and volunteering is therefore a crucial enabler of the ambitions of *Stronger Together* and of inclusive economic growth.

Whilst the introduction of the elected GM Mayor (part of the fourth devolution deal) is another step in the creation of the different kind of governance in the city region, we are a long way from the engagement of residents in the delivery of a shared, mutual vision. As explained below (3.4, 4.1), we believe political inclusion will be a critical success factor in achieving inclusive economic growth.

Finally, a top priority for the kind of devolution that would enable inclusive growth must be local control of the welfare benefits system. VCSE organisations and many public sector staff are currently at the frontline trying to support people whose benefits have been delayed or who have been "sanctioned" or deemed ineligible (often wrongly or unjustly). Some shocking examples were given recently at a round table of carers' organisations, which highlighted how whole families can be rendered destitute by a poor decision; meanwhile our escalating numbers of foodbanks are overwhelmed by the needs of those who have been left without money. Our sector would argue that the inefficiencies of the current benefits system and the Work Programme are a major driver of demand for support from service providers (VCSE and public); are exacerbating the kinds of problems referred to at 4.4 below (such as poor mental health), which are also a drain on services and the economy; and are

reducing the chances for people to gain and keep a good quality job as they are driven off the benefits to which they may be entitled and migrate to a “grey” economy of short term, minimum wage / below minimum wage, zero-hours-contract work in order to survive. Devolution in itself obviously wouldn’t automatically improve the speed and quality of welfare benefits decision-making, but our experience of other devolution so far is that local ownership and the redesign of systems to respond to local conditions, are very likely to do so.

### **3.2 Investment in social as well as physical infrastructure**

This is an important recommendation. And an important aspect of it must be investment in the VCSE sector (see 5 below).

The northern city regions, including Greater Manchester, have been hardest hit first by recession (first felt – at least in the VCSE sector - in 2008, and ever since) and then by public spending cuts, which have been correlated with indices of deprivation. Recession and huge public spending cuts have had a severe impact on the people of the city region and on the Greater Manchester VCSE sector, despite the efforts of most of our local authorities to continue to offer some grants and support for key VCSE institutions:- some organisations, which had grown and developed to deliver services funded through public money, have had to reduce activity; all have felt the impact of a situation which is increasingly creating unequal outcomes. An illustration of the deterioration of the situation is that in 2011 we had two food banks in Greater Manchester, catering respectively for homeless people and asylum seekers; now we have between fifty and sixty, and the largest group of users are working families (see also 3.1 above). This is not an efficient way to work. Agencies from public and VCSE sectors alike are on the back foot, fire-fighting the symptoms of a non-inclusive economic model and service culture which cannot survive the strains of recession and cuts.

New investment in physical and social infrastructure needs to be deployed differently, and should not just be deployed within the public sector, especially given the (absolutely correct) focus on “prevention and early intervention”. Prioritising prevention and early intervention is received wisdom within the GM public sector, and forms large areas of work within the Health and Social Care devolution *Healthier Together Strategy*; there is also a real strategic drive within this programme to achieve meaningful partnership with the VCSE sector. But current assumptions and ways of doing things disadvantage and exclude residents and VCSE participants even when their value is recognised and they are wanted at the table. Recommendations for the characteristics of a more inclusive culture are made below at 4 and recommendations for how to invest effectively in social infrastructure through the VCSE sector are made below at 5.

### **3.3 Inclusive industrial strategies**

We very much agree that this is not just about high-tech sectors, important though they are. A partial answer might indeed be the suggested creation of low / middle skills jobs, but this approach will have limitations as technology improves and the market drives down wages for such work. An example of this is that whilst both the GM Chamber of Commerce and GMCVO take a policy position that our sectors should pay the (real) living wage, we both make an exception for organisations delivering care under public contracts, since the level of funding provided effectively makes this impossible. Location of jobs is also very important to enable inclusion, and a focus on low / middle skills jobs could simply increase current inequalities of opportunity.

Inward investment by large companies also has its limitations. Location of jobs is focused largely in particular geographies (in Greater Manchester across the southern quartile of the city region). However there is a very large and extremely important SME sector which actually generates 85% of Greater Manchester GVA, and which is more evenly distributed. The existing economy however is still not currently enabling real equality of opportunity for all residents, and certainly not equality of outcomes.

We therefore think an inclusive economy will be much more diverse. We think there should generally be greater emphasis on encouraging SME activity and entrepreneurship, and in particular that social enterprise (SE) is the answer to enabling economic activity within disadvantaged areas and enabling residents to work who otherwise could not. SE is still a relatively new business model, but the movement is growing rapidly and evidence for its effectiveness is accumulating. We believe there is more than enough evidence to demonstrate that SEs contribute disproportionately to economic, and also social and political inclusion.

For example research from the SEUK Social Enterprise report in 2015 showed that:-

- 31% of SEs are operating in the top 20% most deprived areas in the UK
- 59% of SEs created a new product or service in the last 12 months (for SMEs the figure is 38%)
- 40% of SEs have female CEOs and 31% BME CEOs; 40% have a disabled director.

Further information from an unpublished report by New Economy Greater Manchester in 2014 showed that:

- 75% of SEs involve their beneficiaries in decision-making
- 84% of SEs recruit staff locally, and a majority actively employ people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market (e.g. long-term unemployed, ex-offenders)

Cabinet Office research (Feb 2014) based upon GHK, Evaluation of CDFIs (2010) found that for every pound invested, SEs create twice as many jobs and three times as much economic output in deprived areas as SMEs.

To get maximum value from a strong SE movement within a more inclusive economy, GMCVO believes it is especially important to encourage social entrepreneurs from more disadvantaged backgrounds and from deprived areas. There are areas of Greater Manchester which had thriving local economies based on mills and other heavy industry (ships, steel, aviation etc.) until the last of these closed or moved in the latter part of twentieth century; these areas have not recovered economically, and new work opportunities are located elsewhere. We know that local people cannot and do not necessarily travel to where the jobs are, for a mixture of practical and personal reasons, some of which could be overcome if the real barriers to access were addressed (see below 6.3, 6.5). But there are other reasons to try to foster local micro-economic growth alongside other economic strategies. A thriving micro-economy offers better access for local people to shops and services, access to “entry-level” (low / middle skilled) and part time jobs which don’t require difficult journeys, creates “third spaces” in which people meet others outside their personal networks, and creates increased community cohesion and resilience, which in turn encourages more voluntary and community action creating a virtuous circle.

We believe social enterprise, community business and social entrepreneurship (SE) can create economic and social impact in places and with people where the state and the market cannot, can build on the assets and resources within communities, and start to address inclusion. We are interested especially in SEs which achieve primary wealth creation through producing resources or products or services, which can be sold to the public or other businesses. Although we have some very good SEs and charities in Greater Manchester which deliver public service contracts, they will be reliant on the same shrinking pot of public funding as the statutory sector, so although they are important in offering increased added value for the same investment, these will not directly grow the economy.

The reason social / community enterprise works is because of its roots within a specific community, the social capital it draws and the empowerment of people who are disempowered by institutions, however benign. Historically in Greater Manchester there has been little effective investment in SE organisations or the eco-system required to create the

conditions in which they can thrive (“eco-system” is a term commonly used in Europe to describe the infrastructure or support systems needed to encourage SEs). GMCVO has been working with SE leaders and supporters over the last five or six years to try to understand more about the potential value of a larger SE movement to Greater Manchester, and the elements required for a good SE eco-system, and then to try to build it. If we want economic inclusion and reduced demand for public services as outcomes we will have to invest in micro-enterprise, community enterprise and social entrepreneurs through training, capacity building, networking, mentoring, replication of good models, small scale grants and fiscal shields. Out of a strong SE movement some larger social businesses will emerge but the smaller ones will drive the majority of economic growth, just as SMEs generally do.

Our own scoping so far has identified that there are some obvious SE growth sectors in Greater Manchester, such as food production and catering, digital, cultural, personal care, community buildings etc in which there are already viable tested business models which can be shared or replicated in other places or by other people. We note also the recommendations of the *GM Poverty Commission (6.5)* re social enterprise development priorities – in food, fuel and finance (such as credit unions). We also undertook a study in 2015 into the skills and development support needs of SE *Skills for Change* <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/skills-change> which provided useful insights into the barriers and enablers of growth for individual SEs.

We think two of our pilot initiatives demonstrate how it is possible to enable social entrepreneurs from more disadvantaged backgrounds and deprived areas (see below 4.5, 6.6).

We also agree that there is a great need to join up the kinds of policy issues mentioned. In Greater Manchester this is certainly the ambition, but it would require more devolution, more changes to governance and more radical change within the public sector structures for this to be done well. Our experience is that this is certainly the ambition of the city region leadership, but public policy still remains very siloed.

### **3.4 More accurate data and measurement of “quality GVA”**

We very much agree with this finding (see 4.3). Creating a framework and setting and measuring a wider range of indicators for inclusive growth / quality GVA would be beneficial.

Prior to Greater Manchester’s first submission to the RSA Commission VCSE representatives were invited to prioritise from a number of possible characteristics of “What would a GM characterised by inclusive growth look like?” These were grouped under three headings: economy, people and place, and system change. We selected the following from the available list-

#### **a. Economy:**

- No household is in poverty.
- Economic activity is more equally distributed across the LA areas.
- Everyone that can work and wishes to work can get a legitimate ‘good’ job on at least the living wage.

Eliminating poverty is an absolute priority for an inclusive economy, but how it is measured will be crucial, since the (amended) national indicators don’t give realistic results. We would back the kind of methodology used by Child Poverty Action Group. Very crude indicators would be a reduction in the number of people reliant on food banks and faith groups for their basic needs; a reduction in the number of people who are street homeless; a reduction in numbers of children receiving free school meals – although a zero count on all of these would still not be sufficient to demonstrate an absence of poverty. In Greater Manchester we have a strong Poverty Action Group which could be charged with monitoring against robust indicators.

Reducing inequality is also an issue yet inequalities of income (along with health, education etc) are steadily rising in Greater Manchester. Indicators like city region level pay ratios could be used as a proxy, with the caveat that this would only apply to those in work. The numbers of people who would like to work but cannot access a suitable job would also be a good indicator.

Distribution of economic activity is really important (see 3.3 re micro-economies) with the existence of a strong SME / SE sector an indicator of the underlying local economy (as opposed to large businesses which are not necessarily integrated into the area in which they are situated)

“Good jobs” are crucial (see comments on grey economy 3.1 and social value 3.3) and (real) living wage is a good proxy indicator. It would be helpful to add others such as access to sickness benefits, access to paid holidays and similar. It is important to note that not being on benefits is NOT an indicator of not being NEET, and some of these people are effectively destitute and out of contact with the system, relying on charity, family or crime. Also to note the increasing numbers of people who do not claim benefits but are not on a living income, or are obliged to work very long hours for it, and are without sickness benefit or pension contributions; some of these are in the grey economy, whilst others are “self-employed”.

#### **b. People and Place**

- Within every place there is a thriving VCSE sector where everyone has the opportunity to volunteer, participate and contribute to their community.
- People have the bridging social capital they need to fulfill their ambitions.
- People are satisfied with their health and quality of life.

More information is given below about the importance of the VCSE sector in fostering inclusion of all kinds. There is comment below (4.7) on social capital. Like social value this would have to be defined and is contextual but could be useful as an indicator. For example, *Talent Match* uses an outcomes star approach enabling young people and their coaches to measure their work-readiness across a range of “soft” indicators such as communications, feelings, reliability etc (we have refined the indicators and measures over the programme). Whilst indicators are soft, testing them against lived experience shows they are robust and accurate in showing both when a candidate is ready to move into employment and the specific issues that need addressing up to and beyond this point. A similar outcomes star approach could perhaps be taken to measure social capital. Assessing this, and also satisfaction with health and quality of life, would require large surveys of the population; in Greater Manchester this would be positive and would itself reinforce more inclusive governance and policy making.

#### **c. System Change**

- VCSE sector organisations are an equal partner with public services and businesses.
- Decisions making is devolved. Decisions are taken as close to the people they affect as possible.
- System changes to redress inequalities in the outcomes for those that are currently disadvantaged or discriminated against.

In an inclusive city region, we would expect the “system” to look different. There is a need for much more holistic thinking, and the leveraging of the strengths of different and diverse sectors and institutions through formal, outcome-driven partnerships. GMCVO has been testing this kind of approach (see 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7) but our public, private, academic and community partners would agree we are not alone in our enthusiasm. This kind of partnership working is apparently much more challenging than a unilateral approach, requiring time, trust, negotiation, cultural bridging and ongoing maintenance. But it works. It is characterized by a difference leadership model (see 4.1) and more inclusive governance, in particular ceding power to those most affected by the issue and best placed to identify barriers, enablers, good and poor practice etc. (see 6.3, 6.7). Involvement of the VCSE

sector as an equal partner in decision-making and activity across all aspects of city region governance and management would be a powerful indicator of a changed system.

Devolved decision making is related to inclusive governance (see 6.1). Not all residents wish to be involved in decision making about policy or the economy, especially on issues that may appear distant, and current models for “consultation” do not usually achieve meaningful engagement – indeed there are high levels of cynicism. More people, especially those who are already disadvantaged, are disengaging from formal politics, and elected representatives, once elected, are generally left to get on with it. There is a risk here that poor decisions will be taken, but an even more significant risk that those affected do not own the decisions and therefore will not feel any responsibility for helping to ensure their success. However our experience is that people are more than willing to engage generously if they are approached by agencies and people they trust, and the method is appropriate (see 6.2). Turnout at formal elections is one indicator of devolved decision-making; it would be good to see in addition an increase in length of time and amount of resources allocated to the process of decision-making (which is a major barrier to involvement), and an increase in the numbers of people responding to formal consultation, which would be a proxy for how aware people are that the decision is being taken and how worthwhile they considered it to be involved.

Social value is another helpful methodology, to ensure maximum value is obtained from available public money, and to illustrate good employment practice generally. In Greater Manchester there is an established VCSE/public sector Social Value Network, the GMCA already uses a social value policy for procurement, and a Social Value Strategy for Greater Manchester is being developed. This has required attempting to define social value and how it could be measured. Youth unemployment levels are higher than adult in Greater Manchester, and spending time out of work at the start of adult life causes severe issues for individuals, gives rise to longer term issues (see 4.4) which affect the wider economy and public spending. Our experience with *Talent Match* (6.3) suggests that employers’ recruitment practices are accidentally debarring large numbers of suitable young people from obtaining jobs but adjustments by employers can overcome this; a social value indicator could be how many people under 25 are recruited into apprenticeships, low level and higher level jobs.

Another issue that comes up with people who have long term health conditions, are disabled, or have caring responsibilities, is that although they want to work, they cannot work full time or necessarily all the time. Yet most jobs and all apprenticeships are full time. To achieve inclusion in employment we need more part time and flexible jobs, without employees losing the employment security they need; proportion of part time and flexible employment contracts could be a social value indicator, as could numbers of employees with long term conditions or caring responsibilities.

Zero hours contracts are useful to some demographics, especially students or those looking for occasional extra work, but for many people they are completely unsuitable and can drive them into poverty (see 3.1). A useful indicator would be a default employment contract with a fixed number of hours pw, with the option for employees to choose zero hours.

Many people who would like to take apprenticeships literally cannot afford to on the current apprenticeship minimum wage; there is also a high demand for part time apprenticeships (for the same reasons as above) which do not exist. A social value indicator could be the creation of apprenticeships at a living wage, which would open them to many more people.

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#### **4. A VCSE PERSPECTIVE ON THE PRIORITIES FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

This section sets out ideas and views from within the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, and illustrates these with examples from GMCVO and some other reports.

The current model for delivering the Greater Manchester Strategy for an inclusive economy hasn't worked – or to be fair, has only partially worked. This is not just a failure of the public sector. Over forty years Greater Manchester has seen high levels of private inward investment and a growing economy, a huge well-resourced VCSE sector, and massive public investment in jobs, regeneration and public services. This has all had minimal impact on inequalities, and the numbers of people living in poverty have risen relentlessly over the last eight years. Arguably we have all failed. There is a consensus that new approaches are required but we are also facing huge constraints in the form of recession and public funding cuts which make it harder to find time to think and plan, to build relationships or adjust structures, and to create the space for changes to happen. Many organisations (public and VCSE) seem to have become more risk averse and reluctant to consider the radical changes needed, even though it is not viable to continue as they are.

GMCVO does not believe any one sector, or any one source of leadership, can have the answers. But some important insights and answers lie in the VCSE sector, which is significant enough in Greater Manchester to reach into every locality and community, and well-connected enough for organisations like GMCVO and other local infrastructure to have an overview of its experience, knowledge and capacity. This experience, knowledge and capacity is easily overlooked and not prioritised within a non-inclusive system yet they provide alternatives not found within other sectors. We would further argue that the engagement and involvement of residents and investment in the VCSE sector is a critical success factor in achieving inclusive economic growth

Within the VCSE sector, there are high levels of commitment to delivering the vision of the GM/c Strategy *Stronger Together* “By 2020, the city region will have pioneered a new model for sustainable economic growth based around a more connected, talented and greener city region, where all our residents are able to contribute to and benefit from sustained prosperity and a good quality of life” (70%) and support for GM/c devolution “I am in favour of more devolution to Greater Manchester” (93%). However 86% also believe devolution is “necessary but not sufficient if we want to address the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment and create a city region in which everyone can enjoy a good quality of life” and 94% think the VCSE sector could make a much bigger contribution (*GMCVO Devolution Survey Nov 2014*). The general opinion is that we are seen as “nice to have” but there is insufficient awareness of what VCSE organisations already contribute to the economy and society, and that people from other sectors seem to be surprised to meet leaders from the VCSE sector and find them professional, effective and approachable, with valuable things to say and offer.

To gain the collaboration of residents, and develop and deploy the power of the VCSE sector, to create the desired economic inclusion, some of the current ways of thinking have to be challenged. Based on our understanding of Greater Manchester, insights from colleagues operating in frontline VCSE organisations, and a number of projects and pieces of research we have undertaken over the years, these are our headline recommendations from a VCSE perspective:-

##### **4.1 Connect the economic, social and political in one approach**

The economy is only one aspect of an inclusive city region, and focusing purely on the economic cannot create inclusive economic growth. It is not possible to separate the economic from the social and the political – we need an integrated approach to inclusion and

for inclusion to take priority. The inextricable connection of economic and social inclusion is widely accepted within Greater Manchester, and we are very pleased to see the new draft Greater Manchester Strategy emphasises this. However the solutions so far to delivering this have been very public / private sector-oriented with emphasis on “job creation” and “services” and this is a narrow and inadequate interpretation. Meanwhile political inclusion is not yet being considered quite so radically at all. This may be because it isn’t obvious how to achieve this. We hope *Jam and Justice (6.1)* will provide some practical evidenced solutions to this, by commissioning, testing and analysing a range of replicable models for involving people at various levels in taking decisions that affect them.

#### **4.2 Involve all actors in the process**

VCSE organisations start with relationships with people, and with building consensus for shared goals and the actions that could lead to them. Systems come later. We know that the process by which vision and outcomes are agreed and strategy and policy is developed, is as important as the content – unless all actors are included on an equal footing, they will not “own” the delivery, the outcome is less likely to be achieved, and valuable ideas and contributions will be lost. We need to practice generous, collaborative, consultative leadership at every level. Whilst this is standard practice in VCSE organisations, and is practised better in some other core cities (notably Leeds) it has been a weak point historically in Greater Manchester, where our experience has been that we rarely see full involvement of people and communities from an early stage before decisions are made. When it is attempted, even partially, the results are impressive, as illustrated by the *Taking Charge Together consultation (6.2)*. We found through this exercise that Greater Manchester residents are more than willing to understand the limitations of statutory health and social care services and to take more responsibility for the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families, that they know what they should be doing, and that they can name and explain the factors which enable or prevent them from doing it. The interest and commitment of residents, once they understood the challenge posed by health and social care devolution, was inspiring, whilst the factors that enable and disable them were not necessarily predictable and challenged the assumptions of all of us. Knowing this information in advance of redesigning approaches to prevention, intervention and services will save a great deal of wasted money and effort.

#### **4.3 Develop better ways of measuring what counts**

Not everything valuable can be monetised. When you ask people, once we are beyond basic needs like food, shelter and safety, what we value most are our things like our relationships with family, friends and colleagues; our health; our time; and our personal social value (what we contribute through our activities, whether formal or informal, paid or unpaid, and for which we are recognised and valued by others); these kinds of things are literally priceless. But what is counted counts so if monetisation is the default type of measurement; there is a high risk this will overlook valuables that are less easily monetised and distort indicators, targets and aims. It is also expensive and potentially intrusive. We are very encouraged by the reference in the draft refreshed *GM Strategy* to a city region characterised by “*high levels of happiness*”, which certainly suggests a desire to measure more than GVA. The VCSE’s ideas for priority indicators of inclusive growth are outlined above (3.4).

#### **4.4 Understand the real problem**

There is a real risk that the public sector and government mistake symptoms for causes. VCSE colleagues repeatedly assert that many of the problems plaguing Greater Manchester residents and institutions, such as chronic poor mental and physical health, addiction, low skills, chaotic lifestyles, unhealthy lifestyles etc - all leading to low productivity and low levels of wellbeing, and most prevalent in deprived neighbourhoods and amongst disadvantaged communities - are not characteristics of the person or place, but have been triggered by difficult life transitions (see *Taking Charge Together consultation (6.2)*), or are responses to difficult circumstances, especially poverty, ignorance and unequal life chances (see evidence provided to the *GM Poverty Commission (6.5)*). It may be indicative that within the VCSE sector it is not untypical for an individual to move from beneficiary to volunteer or

employee, or to carry out both roles at once. We need to move on from trying just to “help people” to do better within the existing system, through initiatives like Troubled Families or Adult Skills Strategies, to “fixing the system” which fails people or makes things difficult for people in the first place, and which arises partly from current economic and political assumptions. The “system” at present does not always address the real underlying problems, and findings by the IGAU show that the current economic model may even be, however inadvertently, exacerbating them.

#### **4.5 Start at the bottom**

If we want to start to “fix the system”, “*nothing about us without us*” is a useful mantra. Initiatives like Community Enterprise by “unlikely entrepreneurs” as demonstrated through the *AddVentures* and *Lead the Change* pilots (6.6), show that it is possible for local people to create useful enterprises and jobs within apparently stagnant micro-economies, if their ideas and energies are given the right kind of support at the right time. Both these projects were extremely successful, and faced enormous levels of demand from other aspiring entrepreneurs from similar backgrounds and communities. Facilitating the creation of third spaces and “person-friendly” neighbourhoods, through the leadership of older people is another similar idea now being practically explored by *Ambition for Ageing* (6.7); it is early days but we are already seeing how small, community-led changes can make an area more accessible and welcoming and reduce the social isolation which presents such high risks for individuals. VCSE organisations have of course undertaken many similar initiatives, but the scale of *Ambition for Ageing*, the rigorous academic evaluation of what principles need to be followed and the commitment to it by the public sector, will allow it to have real impact at city region scale. Entrepreneurship and connected neighbourhoods do not of course obviate the need for social services or skills training, but build these into a more holistic approach led by the voluntary action and enterprise of residents and communities and enabled by other agents as required. An important factor in both examples is understanding the wider community(s) to which individuals belong and relate. These kinds of holistic approaches to people from disadvantaged communities and deprived neighbourhoods could be scaled up to create high impact (see below re approaches to “scaling up”).

#### **4.6 Understand everyone is (potentially) both a provider and beneficiary**

We are all sometimes guilty of making assumptions about “them and us”, as if people living with issues like e.g. homelessness, addiction or unemployment were somehow different from the rest of us “professionals”. This paternalistic approach leads to further assumptions such as that “they” have nothing to give, that the views of communities of experience (such as homeless people or NEET young people) are of no value, or that “we” already know what their views are, and know best what to do to help. This kind of bias overlooks important social networks and knowledge (see *Taking Charge Together consultation 6.2* and *Talent Match 6.3*), and can create or reinforce mistrust between people who are least included and people who would in principle like to include them. It should also be noted that even if we are lucky, all of us will sometimes need to rely on the support of our own personal networks, communities or professional services. It is likely that to increase inclusion, we should focus more on strengthening our communities and building our social capital (see below); and on spotting and monitoring key life transition points and providing state-funded services to intervene only when the individual cannot negotiate them with the support of their personal networks (see *Taking Charge Together consultation (6.2)*). This would prevent much of the current waste of public and private money and voluntary action which are being deployed to sort out problems which have already escalated to the point of chronic crisis.

#### **4.7 Build social capital**

“Social capital” in the sense of personal networks and access to knowledge and resources does appear to be a crucial enabling factor in inclusion. Time and again *Talent Match (6.3)* and *Taking Charge Together consultation (6.2)* we find that the biggest barriers faced by individuals trying to negotiate a difficult transition point, or realise an ambition for a better life, comprise firstly very practical ones (such as transport, caring responsibilities, lack of ready money, lack of time); secondly low self esteem and/or a low sense of agency; and finally a

lack of the connections with the knowledge or resources that would be necessary to address the problem. The practical barriers need to be addressed of course – and often can be at little cost – but are not necessarily a full solution, and unless the other barriers are considered, people cannot progress. Participation in VCSE organisations and volunteering helps with self esteem and agency, and a trusted VCSE organisation can form the bridge to missing connections, knowledge and resources and mobilise the help the person actually requires. The involvement of the private sector, both small business and larger ethical companies, is also very important in providing and fostering social capital.

#### **4.8 Use a range of mechanisms for scaling up**

Scaling up what works is crucial, once we are confident about what does work. The problems we face are large, systemic and connected and we will not see change unless it is substantial. Sometimes scaling up may be through a massive top-down system change, such as that currently taking place in Health and Social Care. But this isn't the only way to scale up, and is not the most effective way to harness the engagement, knowledge and resources of local people or to maximise social / socio-economic innovation. Just as the larger part of the Greater Manchester economy is created by SMEs rather than large companies, and SMEs will be relied on to create the “new work” on which a modern economy depends <http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Small-Business-Outlook-2015.pdf>, so does social innovation arise more from smaller (VCSE organisations) than from big public agencies – and for many of the same reasons. There are excellent, effective initiatives addressing poverty, inequality and economic, social and political inclusion, and creating personal and community resilience, taking place now in all parts of Greater Manchester, often led by the VCSE sector or its infrastructure, sometimes by others with the involvement of the VCSE sector or volunteers. In many cases, these organisations or initiatives cannot be “scaled up” without losing their original value, which may lie in their rootedness in a community, relationships between participants, and the sensitivity to respond quickly and flexibly to changes (see 3.3). So it is important to consider other mechanisms for “scaling up”, such as:-

- Replication (sharing a tested business model for an enterprise or project e.g. Enterprise in a Box; or the principles that enable the most disengaged people to get and keep decent jobs);
- Peer networking, “business” angels, coaching and mentoring to develop specific sectors e.g. BME enterprise;
- Formal and informal partnerships (e.g. those mentioned above at 1), franchises e.g. CABx, Volunteer Centres, alliances e.g. as commissioned by Stockport MBC and consortia e.g. Salford Consortium.
- Capacity building e.g. the capacity of some smaller organisations to support individuals within the community can be increased through one-off investment (see *Delivering Change 6.4*)

There are models for all and more of these kinds of mechanisms in Greater Manchester. They have in common the ability to deploy a critical mass of smaller organisations to a common goal, often achieving more than a single large entity with the same resources. To enable scaling up it is also important to create an environment which encourages a plethora of VCSE SMEs to develop and which encourages those offering the biggest impact (in this case economic, social and political inclusion) through judicious investment of public funding and other support (see 5 below).

#### **4.9 Include all relevant agents in finding and delivering solutions**

All GMCVO's projects are partnerships, and all are multi-sectoral. This is because we find different organisations and sectors have different cultures, skills and knowledge and by working together towards a shared goal we may achieve together what none of us could have done on our own. We have found that strong multi-sectoral partnerships which bring together all the agents which may hold part of the proposed solution alongside the people who are the apparent owners of the problem, and putting the latter in the lead, can solve seemingly complex, intractable problems. For example, *Talent Match (6.3)* brought together

young people who face multiple complex barriers to entering the job market, with ethical businesses keen to recruit and develop more young people, through frontline (mainly VCSE) organisations trusted by both parties – to enable our most excluded young people to fulfil their ambitions, use their talents and enter the job market. In the case of *Talent Match* (6.3) and *Ambition for Ageing* (6.7), we are also able to collect and independently evaluate large amounts of data to develop a clear, convincing evidence base for the necessary components or principles that need to be adopted to achieve the results.

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## **5. THE VCSE “OFFER” TO CONTRIBUTE TO INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **5.1 The VCSE sector**

The VCSE sector in Greater Manchester is similar to that in other Core Cities and Greater London (leaving aside the largest charities which tend to be based there). It comprises almost 15,000 constituted, connected groups, most of which are very small and do not employ staff, but a few hundred of which are medium or large, including a strong services sector and the regional branches of some national organisations. Much activity is hidden from the statutory sector and is not resourced with public money. Volunteers within the VCSE sector are contributing 1.1 million hours every week, worth £656.3m pa (New Economy methodology based on median NW wage), and 76% of organisations receive or generate income from sources other than public funds. The VCSE sector is already working across every aspect of Greater Manchester devolution including health and social care; community development; skills, employment and enterprise; housing and transport; environment and carbon reduction; poverty reduction; inclusive economic growth and inclusive governance. We have large sectors focused on children and families, young people, sport and leisure; there is a strong culture, heritage and arts movement; and a fast-growing social enterprise sector especially in some specific areas of the economy (see 3.3).

Most VCSE leaders have an overview of devolution and understand how agendas (like health and social care, work and skills, housing and transport or the justice system) are inter-connected. In addition at least a third of them are very active in community development, social movements, social innovation and poverty action. Many of them are also firefighting the symptoms (such as homelessness, addiction, hunger, poverty and abuse) of a situation (recession, cuts to public funding, non-inclusive economy) which is increasingly giving rise to unequal outcomes for people. Ninety percent of organisations report experiencing increasing demand and/or identifying unmet needs. Yet there is still enormous goodwill and willingness within the VCSE sector to deploy and align its own time, knowledge and resources and to work in partnership with other sectors towards shared goals. (*Greater Manchester State of the Voluntary Sector 2013*, Sheffield Hallam University <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/greater-manchester-state-voluntary-sector-2013> )

### **5.2 A VCSE Strategy**

To achieve real partnership we need a higher proportion of available funds to be used for voluntary action, social enterprise and volunteering, through a VCSE development strategy linked to the Greater Manchester Strategy *Stronger Together*. VCSE leaders recently developed a Manifesto for Mayoral Candidates <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/manifesto-new-relationship-between-gm-vcse-sector-and-gm-mayor> which sets out our offer and request for the benefit of candidates.

GMCVO's own current objectives are as follows:

- To catalyse resilience and re-growth in the Greater Manchester VCSE sector
- To assist the VCSE sector to be more sustainable and connected and to build on its strengths
- To enable the VCSE sector to continue to play a significant role in addressing both existing and emerging opportunities and challenges in Greater Manchester and for this contribution to be recognised and valued

We realise that voluntary action and enterprise and volunteering, although plentiful, is unlikely to be adequate to meet the future needs of people and communities, especially as the public sector reduces its activity, and that there will be a need to develop more. We acknowledge that the VCSE sector itself is unfairly distributed, with less activity in more deprived areas and by more disadvantaged people, and that the balance between care and recovery versus prevention and positive action has been wrong. But an increase in VCSE activity in itself will not be adequate to meet the needs and demands of local people and communities unless we can also change the behaviours of voluntary, public and private sectors and encourage a greater sense of solidarity between all residents. We consider that a larger proportion of available public money and private profits should be invested in enabling or undertaking local voluntary action and that all GM institutions will have to collaborate more closely around a shared Vision for an inclusive city region, each playing to their strengths. We therefore see an opportunity as well as a challenge in the current circumstances - the opportunity to address entrenched socio-economic inequalities through a changed culture and new multi-sectoral alliances. To support this we aspire to enable a stronger voluntary, community and social enterprise movement based on shared Values, and willing to work with other local institutions in alliances that enable all partners and individuals to what they do best in pursuit of common aims.

Priorities for VCSE investment enabling the above should be in the key infrastructure and community anchor institutions that connect the VCSE sector with itself and others and in driving growth within the VCSE sector (as outlined in 3.1)

In Greater Manchester the existence of a well-established, fairly resourced, well-led, well-connected local infrastructure organisation like a CVS in a borough is correlated with a large, diverse and active VCSE sector, as is the expenditure of public funding over time on through suitable models such as small grants and accessible contracts. This suggests expenditure on infrastructure and direct provision of funding is important. Other than preserving good current institutions thus maintaining continuity and memory, assumptions need not be made about the specific model, and our experience is that infrastructure works best when it reflects natural demographic boundaries and adapts its activities to the current needs of the local population i.e. how it looks should be expected to vary according to who, where and why.

Far from trying to limit the number of organisations or demand their rationalisation into a few large ones (as is sometimes suggested), we should welcome the emergence of as many organisations and initiatives as possible, because each draws primarily on its own resources (volunteers, donations etc) and is the result of residents taking positive action for themselves or others. Over the last five years GMCVO has observed that there appear to be many more new organisations emerging, even as some more established ones are struggling, but there appears to be an inverse correlation with deprivation; this means there is an important role for the public sector, local businesses and VCSE infrastructure in intervening to encourage more voluntary action and enterprise in communities that lack the capacity or knowledge needed to get going without it.

In Greater Manchester there are very large numbers of people who would like to contribute through volunteering and who, if deployed into meaningful activity, could make a huge difference to the quality of life of themselves and others, making a significant impact on our collective happiness (see 3.3 re *“high levels of happiness”* as an aspiration of our city region). These include people in work or retired wishing to use their professional skills, people who are unemployed and want to develop their skills and/or make new relationships, people who need to volunteer (such as young people who are NEET, people from BME communities with poor English, people recovering from mental health issues etc). The current VCSE sector however cannot absorb more volunteers because it lacks the resources to support them – volunteer managers, training, DSB checks, equipment, expenses etc. The brokerage system to place volunteers suitably is also inadequate. Investment in volunteering would have a major impact.

A third area for action is social and community enterprise as outlined above in 3.3.

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## **6. EXAMPLES (REFERENCED ABOVE)**

A number of references are made above to projects and reports. More details about these are given here. More information about any of them can be requested from GMCVO.

### **6.1 Jam and Justice**

In a context of rapid social change and austerity, the effectiveness of traditional systems of urban governance is in doubt. *Jam and Justice: Co-Producing Urban Governance for Social Innovation* aims to create a unique space for social innovation to co-produce, test and learn from new ways of governing cities. 'Jam' is about trying to bring together different partners in the city to experiment and innovate to address shared problems. 'Justice' is about re-connecting with those who have been disenfranchised and excluded from the search for solutions.

Through the development of an Action Research Cooperative (ARC) in Greater Manchester, the project aims to bring together academics, practitioners, citizens and political leaders to exchange knowledge and develop creative responses to emerging urban governance challenges. In addition to a series of 'learn and do' activities to generate primary data, the project will also promote live debates, online communities and learning exchange visits within the UK and internationally. This will enable critical reflection on how to organise knowledge better to make positive urban transformations happen that are inclusive and equitable. It is early days yet, with the ARC just established, and two pilot research projects under way.

<http://www.urbantransformations.ox.ac.uk/project/jam-and-justice-co-producing-urban-governance-for-social-innovation/> and <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/jam-and-justice>

### **6.2 Taking Charge Together consultation**

A programme of work took place in February and March 2016 intended to bring the Greater Manchester public up to speed with health and social care devolution, make them aware of the nature of the step-change required in the relationship between them and public services, and test to what extent they are ready to "take charge" of staying fit and healthy.

A partnership of 30 VCSE infrastructure organisations and Healthwatches, led by GMCVO, was commissioned to engage and consult with people least likely to be reached by the mainstream *Taking Charge Together* campaign.

With the help of almost 100 frontline voluntary and community groups, partners held 138 face-to-face 'conversations' (focus groups) with 1,837 people. In addition, our partnerships generated a total of 1,746 responses to the standard online survey (a third of the overall sample).

The kinds of people involved included refugees, young unemployed people, BME elders, deaf people, people with learning disabilities, and people who abuse alcohol or drugs. Groups were asked to discuss:

- Do you think you know what people should do for themselves and their families to stay fit and healthy?
- What do you think encourages people to do these things?
- What do you think makes it difficult for people to do these things?

The findings are were encouraging, challenging and to some extent surprising. For example:

- Almost everyone, although they had previously been unaware of the aims of Greater Manchester devolution and proposed changes to health and social care, was very enthusiastic about it.

- There really didn't seem to be a lack of knowledge about what people should be doing
- The problems people had with doing the things to stay fit and healthy, and the solutions they proposed, had little to do with health and social care services as such
- Changes to the environment were seen as vital, using the legal powers of public sector organisations, e.g. access to fast food versus fruit and vegetables; having pedestrian crossings and benches in the right places
- Social connections were also seen as crucial to wellbeing and motivation
- Life transitions really matter (e.g. losing a job, children moving away, gaining caring responsibility) as they can have a huge impact on wellbeing both short and long term in terms of motivation, connections and access to time and money

We think both the approach taken and the findings themselves are more widely applicable to a holistic model of an inclusive city region.

<https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/taking-charge-together-final-report-vcse-and-healthwatch-organisations%E2%80%99-community-engagement-strand>

### 6.3 Talent Match

*Greater Manchester Talent Match* is a Big Lottery-funded programme (£9.6m over 5 years) bringing together the private, public and voluntary sectors to support young people aged 18-24 who have not been in employment, education or training for twelve months or more and who need extra support to help them along their pathway to work. The governance and delivery of the programme is devolved to a formal partnership of voluntary, private and public sectors, led by GMCVO. It was co-designed with the young people who are the intended beneficiaries and our Youth Panel remains at the heart of governance, decision-making and quality assurance.

From GMCVO's perspective, this is not really about assisting individual young people, but about evidenced system change. The research we undertook, including a major consultation with young NEET people, led by other young people, suggested that:-

- The assumed barriers to work (poor qualifications, addiction, mental ill-health etc) whilst present for some individuals, were not in fact the main or only barriers. The more substantial barriers were practical, related to self-esteem and agency, and to social capital.
- NEET young people lack a knowledgeable adult enabler to guide them along an appropriate pathway to work that suits their talents and interests
- The institutions that reach NEET young people themselves lack knowledge of the opportunities that might be available
- Employers and businesses with opportunities struggle to employ suitable young people, and have vacancies in apprenticeships and entry-level jobs they cannot fill

We therefore designed a programme that for the first time brought together all the relevant parties. We invested heavily in "Talent Coaches" to provide what young people told us was missing – a highly personalised, holistic approach that supports them to overcome personal and practical barriers to employment. We prioritised employer engagement and have around 50 larger Greater Manchester businesses working with us. We have created the Greater Manchester Opportunities Hub, an online portal bringing together information about existing opportunities available for young people with those we are sourcing exclusively for young people on the programme. We recognise the value of volunteering opportunities to young people and are working to further develop these within the region.

The Greater Manchester Talent Match is one of a suite nationally. It is considered by the funder to be one of the most effective, particularly in enabling "hidden" young people to gain sustainable employment, and in supporting employers to make the changes they need in

order to recruit young people. It also enjoys extremely high levels of approval and low drop-out rates from participants.

The Talent Match model has already influenced the design of Greater Manchester's Working Well programme, and we expect to leave a long term legacy.

<https://gmtalentmatch.org.uk/>

#### **6.4 Delivering Change**

This report of a pilot project is included to illustrate how "scaling up" capacity can be achieved at low cost by selective investment in existing voluntary and community organisations. The pilot was supported by Greater Manchester Probation, which wanted to test whether it was possible to have more ex-offenders supported long term within the community through one-off investment. To understand how to invest we relied on linking two levels of evidence so that impact would be easily measured, and on identifying "asset rich" organisations. The Probation Service's desired outcome was reduced reoffending. One evidenced factor in reducing reoffending is having something to do, therefore we concluded that if an organisation was involving an increased number of ex-offenders, they would in general contribute to reducing reoffending. This meant there was no need for intrusive tracking of individuals, or attribution of effects (as required under SROI type models) and little monitoring burden for the organisations. We classified "asset rich" organisations as those who were not dependent on public funds, were able to attract and deploy volunteers from their user group and community, and had independent resources such that they were not at risk of closure. They were not necessarily set up to relate to the justice system nor target ex-offenders as participants, but were willing to do so.

We made small one-off grants and in some cases also offered business development support. Both were effective in increasing capacity (numbers of ex-offenders engaged), but the offering the support was more effective. Most of the 12 organisations involved successfully increased their capacity. The total cost of Delivering Change, including administration, communications and diagnostics, was around £50,000. Through business support organisations brought in £135,376 additional funding (a further £379,000-worth of funding applications were awaiting a decision at the time of the report). Across both programmes, competence was built around existing assets. The capacity of participating organisations was increased permanently, enabling them to support over 200 additional beneficiaries so far.

<https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/delivering-change-testing-new-approach-selective-investment-local-voluntary-organisations>

#### **6.5 GM Poverty Commission**

In 2012 the outgoing Bishop of Manchester established a poverty commission to set out baseline information about poverty in the city region and make recommendations for addressing it. GMCVO supported the Commission, eliciting more than 100 written pieces of evidence from VCSE organisations based on their knowledge of working with people living in poverty. This was put together with other evidence collected by the Diocese, MPs, Church Action on Poverty and (future) members of the Greater Manchester Poverty Action Group which remains an active force. The report has now fed into the work of the IGAU.

<http://www.povertymanchester.org/>

#### **6.6 Addventures & Lead the Change pilots**

GMCVO has supported social and community enterprise for many years and has been testing the components needed in a social enterprise "eco-system". We are especially interested in how to enable "unlikely entrepreneurs" to set up and sustain enterprise in communities where the micro-economy is stagnant or with people who cannot work in the mainstream.

AddVentures is the Greater Manchester brand for a fiscal sponsorship initiative, similar to the Tides model in the United States of America. GMCVO tested this approach initially in a pilot in 2012-13 (it remains ongoing within GMCVO at present as it is self-funding). We established that 30% of the resources of a new organisation are spent on maintaining the organisation itself, and that people with brilliant ideas for community enterprise, and the support of their “market”, are not necessarily also skilled in finance, HR and so on. We thought a fiscal shield could be the answer, and provided initial testing of the business idea, financial administration, insurance and legal advice. We insisted business ideas must be sustainable without the need for long term grants – through trading, volunteers and contracts – but sourced one-off sponsorship (about £500) for initial membership.

Of the 12 projects in the pilot:-

- Three projects didn't get going
- Two projects tested the water but couldn't justify paid for membership
- Six projects converted to fee membership (one of which has closed)
- Three projects have floated as new legal entities (one straight from the pilot; two from membership status)

These projects created:-

- Nine full/part-time jobs
- Three jobs were safeguarded
- Work for a eighty-three regular volunteers

The AddVentures pilot projects generated £65,513 income, varying from £0 to £29,332; an average of £7,276 per active group.

There was enormous interest in the project from aspiring social entrepreneurs, and we think there would be a huge market for this model.

*See attached evaluation of AddVentures Appendix A*

Lead the Change in 2015 was a partnership project with UnLtd, which allowed us to award grants totalling £25,000 to 21 social enterprises alongside support and training to ensure each awardee had the best chance possible for success. Awardees said they benefitted greatly from peer support, so we offered regular sessions where they could network and learn. Several alliances have been formed which will continue long after the programme has ended. Again we were successful in attracting some “unlikely” entrepreneurs.

## **6.7 Ambition for Ageing**

*Ambition for Ageing* is a £10.2 million Greater Manchester level programme aimed at creating more age friendly places and empowering people to live fulfilling lives as they age. It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Ageing Better programme, which aims to reduce social isolation of older people. Led by GMCVO, the 5 year programme is delivered by a partnership of public and VCSE sector organisations with Local Delivery Leads (LDLs) leading on the work in 25 neighbourhoods across 8 local authorities in Greater Manchester and an ongoing analysis conducted by MICRA at Manchester University, to ensure evidence of what works is robust. As with Talent Match, there are important panels of older people and of equalities groups at the heart of governance and evaluation.

Our hypothesis (borne out by earlier research with parents of young children for Greater Manchester's unsuccessful bid to the Big Lottery Better Start programme, and the findings of the Taking Charge Together consultation) is that a series of small changes within our communities will remove barriers, create opportunities and bring large scale success in creating inclusive communities – the result being that we help to reduce social isolation. Age-friendly can mean different things to different people but when we use the term within the Ambition for Ageing programme we refer to people of all ages being respected and able to actively contribute to decisions about the places that they live in. The term does not just

refer to neighbourhoods but creating age friendly businesses and workplaces which are again shaped by people's knowledge and experience.

Our vision is to connect communities and people through the creation of relationships. The LDLs put older people at the heart of designing the places in which they live, and the programme will facilitate the development of existing assets within communities allowing older people to direct investments in the community. In 2016-17 a broader range of scaled programmes will be designed with older people to help use the lessons learned from local work to influence the developing strategy for an age-friendly Greater Manchester.

<http://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/>