

**GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY**

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Subject: Update on Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission

Report of: Councillor Brenda Warrington, Portfolio Leader for Age-friendly Greater Manchester and Equalities, and Pam Smith, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Age-friendly Greater Manchester

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To provide an update on progress with the establishment of the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission, which has been established to respond to long term systemic inequality issues present in Greater Manchester as part of the Greater Manchester Living with Covid Resilience Plan, and provide the projected programme for its activities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

GMCA are asked to:

Note, comment on, and endorse arrangements for the Independent Inequalities Commission

**CONTACT OFFICERS:**

Amy Foots, Head of Implementation GMCA [amy.foots@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:amy.foots@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Anne Lythgoe, Strategy Principal GMCA [anne.lythgoe@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:anne.lythgoe@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

**Equalities Implications:**

*The GM Independent Inequalities Commission seeks to respond to equalities issues present in Greater Manchester. It will develop a detailed evidence base, explore the intersectionalities between equalities characteristics and issues such as education, employment, housing and poverty, before making a number of recommendations aimed at tackling systemic discrimination and addressing inequalities between communities.*

**Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures:**

*The work of the Commission will enable the view and representations of members of GM society into the design and delivery of relevant policy and activity, including access to green spaces, sustainable transport options, alternative working models and maintaining and supporting ongoing environmental improvements.*

**Risk Management:**

N/A

**Legal Considerations:**

N/A

**Financial Consequences – Revenue:**

*Any revenue implications will be small and can be contained within the amount delegated to the CA Treasurer for approval.*

**Financial Consequences – Capital:**

N/A

**Number of attachments to the report: N/A**

**Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2020, the Combined Authority approved a paper which described proposals for a Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission to support and influence the Covid recovery work across Greater Manchester and to shape and inform the city-regions renewal following the pandemic. The Commission would be a catalyst for transformation, helping to develop ideas, providing expert opinion, evidence and guidance as Greater Manchester's economy and society reshapes over the coming months and years. It is a key action in the one-year Greater Manchester Living with Covid Resilience Plan.
- 1.2 There is now a substantive body of evidence that the worst effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have traced and amplified pre-existing patterns of inequality in our communities. As Greater Manchester lives with Covid, and moves into recovery and renewal, responses to the pandemic and any recovery activity must ensure that it is inclusive and aims to address structural inequalities, limits the long term negative effects of the pandemic and strengthens the resilience of GM. This goes beyond the equalities agenda as set out in the Equality Act, and should include groups of citizens now facing poverty, poor health and wellbeing, and struggling to retain or secure employment, for example.
- 1.3 This paper provides an update on early work to establish the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission, and its early focal areas.

## 2. GREATER MANCHESTER INDEPENDENT INEQUALITIES COMMISSION

- 2.1 The mission of the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission is to better understand the pre-existing and emerging inequalities in the city-region, consider how tackling these inequalities should feature in a refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy, and outline a small number of specific and hard-hitting recommendations.
- 2.2 In addition, the Commission aims to shift the balance away from collecting evidence and into taking action, by adopting an approach which involves hearing the key issues, identifying the root causes and honing ideas for development. The Commission is a space to be bold, brave and ask searching questions.
- 2.3 The Commission sits independently of all decision-making structures, and acts in an independent, advisory capacity. Its independence allows the Commission the chance to challenge, to explore powers and levers and to set out a road map for tackling inequality in GM. The commissioners' report will be presented to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and Leaders of the 10 local authorities, as well as partners involved in the Tackling Inequality Board for their endorsement and action.
- 2.4 The Commission is chaired by **Professor Kate Pickett** of the University of York. Kate is Professor of Epidemiology, Deputy Director of the Centre for Future Health and Associate Director of the Leverhulme Centre for Anthropocene Biodiversity, all at the University of

York. Her research focuses on the impact of inequality on health and wellbeing. She served on the York Fairness Commission, the national Living Wage Commission and is a member of the European Independent Commission for Sustainable Equality. Kate is a co-founder and chair of The Equality Trust and a Global Ambassador for the Wellbeing Economy Alliance.

## 2.5 Kate is supported by the following:

- **Saeed Atcha** MBE DL is CEO of Youth Leads UK, Deputy Lieutenant of Greater Manchester and Government Social Mobility Commissioner. He established the charity Youth Leads at the age of 15 and has supported more than 12,000 disadvantaged young Greater Mancunian's access volunteering opportunities and skills development programmes.
- **Miatta Fahnbulleh** is Chief Executive of the New Economics Foundation. She has a wealth of experience in developing and delivering policy to empower communities and change people's lives. Prior to joining NEF she was Director of Policy & Research at the Institute of Public Policy Research, and has been a political advisor to the Leader of the Opposition and spent eight years at senior levels in the Cabinet Office, including as Head of the Cities Policy Unit, where she was responsible for driving forward the Government's economic devolution agenda in England.
- **Ruth Lupton** is currently an Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester, having stepped back from her full-time position there in July 2020. Ruth is a researcher and writer whose work focuses on poverty and inequality in the UK, with specific expertise in education, spatial inequalities and cities. She formerly worked at the Institute of Education in London and at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion at LSE, where she wrote her book *Poverty Street: the dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal*, and led a major research programme on the impacts of New Labour and Coalition social policies on poverty and inequality. Most recently (2016 -19) Ruth led the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and UoM funded Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (IGAU) researching inequalities in Greater Manchester and working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop policy solutions.
- **Neil McInroy** is CEO of CLES [www.cles.org.uk](http://www.cles.org.uk). CLES is a 'think do' organisation and is at the forefront of actioning workable progressive policy and practice at scale and pace, in response to the growing climate, economic and social crises. Neil is a leading economic development thinker and doer and has worked with a range of local, regional and national governments, politicians and agencies across UK and in Europe, Asia, US and Australasia. He is currently, seconded part time to the Scottish Government as a Community Wealth Building Adviser. He lives in Greater Manchester and was a commissioner to the GM Poverty Commission (2012-13).
- **Rachel Wolf** is the Founding Partner of Public First, a public policy consultancy. She was formerly an adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron on education and was the co-author of the Conservatives 2019 election manifesto. At Public First she has recently led two high-profile policy commissions: one looking at how the country can meet its Net Zero carbon target; the other on how to build civic universities. Her research interests are currently primarily focused on regenerating cities, both here and internationally.

- **Lord Simon Woolley** is the Director and founder of Operation Black Vote, a national and internationally renowned race equality organization. In the last 25 years Lord Woolley has helped transform our political and civic institutions, ensuring they are inclusive and representative. In 1996 there were 4 BAME MP's now there are 65 BAME MPs. In 2017 Operation Black Vote, launched the ground breaking-The Colour of Power, the most in-depth look at the racial make-up of Britain's top jobs across 28 sectors that dominate British society. He is seen as the inspiration and one of the architects for the United Kingdom's Race Disparity Unit and served as the Advisory Chair since its inception. Lord Woolley received a Knighthood in the 2019 Birthday Honours for his services to race equality and was nominated for a life peerage in the same year.

2.6 The initial work of the Commission is being informed by an evidence 'stock take' from across Greater Manchester. This involves the bringing together of existing evidence and data to inform the 'baseline' position. The Commission will call expert witnesses, hold hearings, commission specific evidence and research work. There will be extensive stakeholder engagement, utilising **both** established engagement infrastructure across GM, and also assembling new participation and co-production arrangements, as dictated by the final scope and lines of enquiry and described in section 3 below.

2.7 An analytical framework has been developed for the Commission which will consider:

- **Power inequalities** - Differing levels of agency over things that matter in people's lives have been linked to differing levels of control over one's exposure to COVID. For example: (In)security at work, (In)security of housing tenure and Lack of political voice
- **Resource inequalities** - Pre-existing socio-economic inequalities have made particular groups (e.g. women, young people and BAME people) and localities (i.e. areas of multiple deprivation) especially vulnerable to the effects of COVID. For example: Income and wealth inequalities, Indebtedness, Quality of housing, Education / skills (including resources for home schooling), Access to healthy food, digital connectivity, healthcare, The public realm: access to green space, clean air, safe streets / transport
- **Social exclusion / participation** - These inequalities are also affecting the ability of different groups to participate in society, worsening isolation and loneliness - e.g. Those with caring responsibilities, Those without digital access, Elderly and disabled people
- **Quality of life** - Unequal ability to meet basic needs, Health inequalities, including physical health (unequal risk of contracting COVID) and mental health (unequal impacts of lockdown), Access to independent living for disabled people, Rising risk of domestic abuse

2.8 There is also a feedback loop, as places and groups more at risk of COVID are also suffering more from economic fallout, compounding existing inequalities. COVID is endemic in the deprived areas of GM. The Commission will consider intersecting inequalities between pre-COVID socio-economic inequalities such as;

- income and wealth (BAME, women and young people all less likely to own assets and more likely to be in low-paid / insecure / risky frontline work),

- Quality of housing / over-crowding / multi-generational and Access to public goods (green space, digital connectivity, etc.),
- COVID-related health inequalities including the disproportionate impact of the virus on BAME people and disproportionate mental health impacts of lockdown on BAME, LGBT, older and disabled people; and,
- COVID-related socio-economic inequalities such as BAME, women and young people more likely to work in affected sectors, to be furloughed or unemployed, and to get into debt as a result of lost income and rent debt, evictions & homelessness

2.9 From the evidence considered to date, early priority areas for the Commission will include the following drivers of inequality:

- Education and skills
- Employment
- Poverty / wealth / assets
- Housing, place and lived environment

Additionally, race/class intersections will be considered as a key area for investigation.

### **3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CO-PRODUCTION**

3.1 It will be important that the Commission has a strategy for giving voice to citizens and affected communities. Commissioners have agreed a proposal for local people to be actively involved in the process, helping to shape the Commission's conclusions and recommendations. This will include both the existing GM Advisory Panels, the GM VCSE Equalities Alliance and a range of other relevant partnerships, and hearing directly from lived experience of inequality.

3.2 The Objectives of this work will be:

- To hear the priorities and experiences of people affected by different types of inequality
- To engage citizens in a dialogue across differences about how we can build a more equal Greater Manchester – developing ideas and solutions together
- To ensure the Commission embodies the principle of tackling power inequalities, and that citizens / communities feel some ownership over its recommendations.

3.3 It is not enough to talk only to those worst affected by inequalities. The Commission will also hear from those who benefit from current power structures and inequality, as they may need to be willing to listen and change. Therefore, participation and engagement will take an intersectional approach - different structural inequalities interact and compound each other in complex ways to create different life experiences.

- 3.4 The participation and co-production work will start by learning from previous initiatives, such as poverty truth commissions, research and lived experience projects from across GM, such as the Elephants' Trail or Jam and Justice. A synthesis of the findings from these programmes will be shared with commissioners.
- 3.5 The strength of the existing engagement infrastructure around equalities should be noted here, and it is proposed to involve existing advisory panels and groups such as the GM VCSE Equalities Alliance. Members of the new Women and Girls and Race Equalities panels will also have a key role to play. In order to extend the scope of discussion beyond individual communities of identity, it is also proposed to convene a new panel focusing on poverty, as well as bilateral meetings and oral evidence sessions involving the 10 districts of GM.
- 3.6 This participation work aims to build from recent listening exercises and involve key community stakeholders in designing and testing policy solutions to the inequalities that they face. It will create opportunities for (a) deeper citizen deliberation to generate and test ideas for possible solutions, (b) reaching out beyond those represented on formal equalities panels, to a more rounded and representative group of citizens, and (c) facilitate dialogue across diversity and place.
- 3.7 The participation work will operate in tandem with the Commission, to inform its work throughout, so that recommendations are co-produced with those impacted both positively and negatively by inequality.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 The Commissioners have met twice so far, focusing on building working relationships, understanding viewpoints and developing key lines of enquiry for the commission building from the evidence base currently available and the interests of the Commissioners. Various work areas are now well underway, with the below next steps agreed:

##### November 2020 – January 2021

- Further research focused on agreed Key Lines of Enquiry
- Thematic hearings / round tables – including expert witnesses
- Bilateral discussions with citizens around Key Lines of Enquiries
- Engagement with other key stakeholders – for example place based partnerships
- Bring together detailed evidence base in the form of an interim report for consideration by Commission in January 2021

##### January – March 2021

- Commission members consider interim/outline report with key headlines and suggested areas to develop recommendations or commission further work
- Circulate draft of the final report for comments virtually – summarising the evidence gathered, and articulating the conclusions and recommendations drawn by the Commission

- Commission members meet to review and agree their final report
- Report published late March 2021

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

5.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.