

## **GM LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

SUBJECT: Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

DATE: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022

FROM: Ian MacArthur, Director, Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

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### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

This report provides an overview of forward plan for the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter (the Charter) for 2022/23 and also provides at Appendix 1 an overview of the Charter's engagement with Supporters and Members since the board last received a presentation on the Charter in Dec 2021.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The GN LEP Board is requested to:**

1. Note the activities and development of the Charter.

### **CONTACT OFFICERS:**

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BOLTON  
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## **Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:**

The GM Economic Vision, cites the Charter as providing a framework to support an ever-increasing number of Greater Manchester employers to provide better opportunities for our workers to grow, develop and thrive in the workplace, and drive economic prosperity. Furthermore, it will be used to drive up employment standards across all sectors, for the benefit of both the employed and their employers.

This includes a clear commitment to tackle inequalities, embrace diversity and recognise the importance of employee with actions aiming to encourage diversity in company leadership and workforce and turn Greater Manchester into a living wage city-region.

**Risk Management: N/A**

**Legal Considerations: N/A**

**Financial Consequences – Revenue: N/A**

**Financial Consequences – Capital: N/A**

**Number of attachments to the report:**

- 1. Charter Employer Engagement Activity Report – May 2022**

# 1. BACKGROUND

This report sets out an overview of the approach and delivery of the GM Good Employment Charter Unit for 2022-23. It reflects the Charter's objectives, its operating context and priorities as well as its work to deliver and develop the Good Employment Agenda more broadly.

## Objectives

The Good Employment Charter was originally conceived and developed in 2017. The then Greater Manchester Strategy Implementation Plan included the development of a GM Good Employment Charter in order to help deliver the priorities of *'good jobs with opportunities for people to progress and develop'* and *'a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester'*.

The Living with COVID plan sought to significantly expand the GM Good Employment Charter to *drive more secure work, higher pay and better employment standards*.

The draft revised Greater Manchester Strategy: *Good Lives for All*, cites the Charter as providing a framework to *support an ever-increasing number of Greater Manchester employers to provide better opportunities for our workers to grow, develop and thrive in the workplace, and drive economic prosperity*. Furthermore, it will be used *to drive up employment standards across all sectors, for the benefit of both the employed and their employers*.

On this basis the Charter remains steadfast in engaging a wide range of employers across all sectors and geographies and with partners continually championing good employment practice as the world of work evolves, particularly for those who operate in low pay and insecure work.

## Context & Priorities

The world of work and the labour market continues to undergo dynamic and significant change as the economy adjusts to the operating environment post COVID pandemic restrictions. Expectations and power in the relationship between employers and employees has and will continue to evolve and the Charter needs to remain vigilant and flexible to anticipate and respond to issues that can impact on good work practice.

Nevertheless, the key areas identified by the Charter Board as key priorities for focus and activity in 2022 remain relevant and the Charter Unit will develop and deliver a range of interventions and support to drive best practice across these areas:

- Equalities
- People Management – (inc. Leadership)
- Flexible Work
- Health and Wellbeing (esp. Mental Wellbeing)
- Employee Engagement

## **Our Approach**

From the outset the Charter has sought to combine the delivery of a robust and credible assessment process taking Supporters through to Membership, coupled with a high-profile campaigning element to engage employers on the benefits of good employment, share and encourage best practice and guidance, and to reach out to employees to understand what good employment should feel like.

This requires a balanced approach to create the sense of community, network and movement around the good employment agenda. Moving forward, as the Charter now needs to focus on areas where greatest impact can be made, this balance becomes even more important to ensure the ‘hard’ leverage that it can apply is supported by the promotion of the ‘softer’ benefits of being associated with the Charter.

The Charter will continue to work to maintain the credibility of the standards it sets and applies to ensure this creates opportunity to influence employers, partners and other policy strands to address good employment issue.

### **4.1 Delivery**

It is fundamental that the Charter Membership Process remains robust and credible. The addition of two Good Employment Advisers to the team in 2022 has built our capacity to engage and work with employers through the assessment process. The process and systems developed to assess an employer are not simple. Very few of the membership criteria are binary and a high degree of interrogation and professional judgement is required to ensure the evidence and associated impacts are fairly assessed for the wide variety of employers the Unit deals with. Whilst this requires significant resource it demonstrates that the Charter can be applied to all employers and is not just something for larger, corporate organisations.

To ensure that there is a good balance of sectors and scales of organisation that move through the Membership process, the unit will employ a triage mechanism when considering the employers to engage on their readiness for membership.

Increasingly, the GMCA and other Public Bodies are referencing the GM Good Employment Charter within procurement processes. On the whole strong dialogue between the procurement teams and the Charter Unit results in a clear understanding of the Unit's capacity and that engagement at a Supporter level is the best place to start that process.

However, on the bus franchising process, those awarded the franchising contract will need to operate to the Charter's standards. The Charter Unit is working closely with TfGM on this to understand the processes and timing to ensure that resources can be aligned and balanced against business and usual work.

Specific workstreams for both employer engagement and content delivery are set out at section 5 below and appendices.

## **4.2 Development**

The world of work is constantly evolving. The impacts of the COVID pandemic restrictions created one of the most significant upheavals in working conditions in recent memory and also laid bare some of the pre-existing underlying workplace inequalities. The Good Employment Charter has been developed in a way to be able to be flexible and react to such changes. However, over the past year the Charter Board has considered how best to reshape our membership criteria to ensure the 'good employers' are effectively dealing with the issues of the day and continue to provide working conditions that are resilient to external pressures impacting on the labour market.

The Board's work on sick pay, living hours and ethnicity pay gap reporting in 2022 highlights our ability to recognise and respond to emerging issues.

Building on this approach it is proposed that a standing review sub-group of the board be established to review Charter Membership criteria to reflect evolving best practice and contemporary issues in employment.

The Charter is also keen to work with specific sectors and has engaged with The Nighttime Economy adviser Sacha Lord, and his team to begin a co-production development process to ensure the Charter directly addresses some of the specific issues found in the hospitality sector (e.g. Tipping, safety, mental wellbeing). The Charter unit is also engaged

with the Early Years Education sector to explore how some of the most stubborn structural issues to good work in that sector can be addressed.

The Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter has been in the vanguard of such initiatives and has been effectively resourced to deliver a viable charter model. Over 2022 it has attracted interest across the country from the North of Tyne to the West of England, but especially with our neighbours in Liverpool CR and West Yorkshire. These interactions and the support the GM Charter has provided has been given in an effort to ensure these initiatives are built effectively with broad stakeholder engagement, but that ultimately, they set broadly similar standards for employers.

The GM Charter has recently brought together a range of officers across the country charged with developing or delivering this type of initiative to share experiences and develop strong synergies between each area. As part of the GM Charter's positioning and opportunity development we will continue to act to support and bring together other initiatives across the country.

## **5. Workstreams**

### **5.1 Employer Engagement – Supporter to Member**

To help Supporters reach Membership standards two programmes have been developed and will be delivered in 2022-23:

### **5.2 Advocates**

Utilising the notion of committed individual good employment 'advocates' this programme will provide committed supporters clear guidance and direction to raise employment standards and support their progression to membership accreditation.

The Good Employment Advisors have identified c.50 'advocates' who are willing to commit up to 12 hours of their time per annum to support another employer on a particular aspect of good employment or share their experiences within the same sector.

An overview form will be completed by the good employment advisor giving an picture of current practice and outlining where advice and guidance is required to meet the charter's membership criteria. Introductions to an advocate advisor are made based on sector, location, specific support required etc, and a statement of understanding is signed by both parties.

Through this process an action plan is developed and shared with the unit and progress monitored.

The programme will provide strong peer-to peer learning on an individual basis and will be evaluated on the basis of how many employers progress to full Membership.

### **5.3 Sharing and Learning Cohort**

This cohort programme has been created to bring employers together to learn from each other and create a 'safe space' where they can talk through their practices and challenges *en route* to achieving membership standards.

The cohort consists of 4 monthly 2 hour 'workshops' for up to 20 participants, followed by a catch-up session 3 months later. An employer is required to commit to attend at least 3-4 of the 5 sessions to make the most of it and it would be with the same people for the duration of the cohort. The concept is that through group work and discussion to talk through ideas and challenges it will assist in developing best practice and help them to build their support network at the same time.

ACAS have been extremely supportive of this approach and will provide expert input to each facilitated session along with other key partners when appropriate.

### **5.4 Delivering Content & Marketing**

A full and updated marketing plan for the Charter is available on request.

The Unit will utilise all our channels to deliver content throughout the year:

- Blogs
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Coffee-chats
- Toolkits
- In-person events
- Socials
- Podcasts

The topics of content will follow our key priorities set out at 3.0 above with a range of workstreams already in development across:

- Disability in the Workplace with Breakthrough UK supported by ACAS and CIPD,
- Flexible and Hybrid work with Timewise,
- Racism and Allyship with the Race Equality Panel, GMHSCP and MMU
- Leadership for Good Employment, and
- Ageing in the Workplace with GMCA and the Centre for Ageing Better
- Real Living Wage Week 2023

- The 'Rose Squire' Annual Good Employment Lecture – the inaugural Lecture to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> June delivered by Prof Sir Cary Cooper, UoM at the People's History Museum.

Series 3 of the Good Employment 'Chatter' podcast launched in early June and continues to prove extremely popular (with well over 1,000 downloads). Series 3 exclusively deals with EDI issues following the protected characteristics with the final episode specifically on inclusion. Series 4 is currently in planning and will focus on 'Leadership for Good Employment'

Following the level of interest in our inaugural GM Good Employment Awards we will plan to repeat the Awards in 2023. Based on feedback and evaluation of the forthcoming 2022 event the unit will review the context, format and timing of the event.

Finally, it is also proposed that the Good Employment Charter co-ordinates a Good Employment Week (target dates 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 23). This week would showcase a multi-channel approach to spreading the Good Employment movement across Greater Manchester. Guided by a sub theme, each day could focus on one of the 7 characteristics of the Good Employment Charter. It will be a public facing campaign which aims to raise awareness of what good employment is and the Good Employment movement across Greater Manchester, specifically to employees.

## **Appendix 1 – Employer Engagement Report May 2022**



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