

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 28th October 2022

Subject: Implementation of Greater Manchester VCSE Accord and creation of GM VCSE Forum

Report of: Cllr Gerald Cooney, GM Portfolio Leader for Communities and Co-operatives, Andrew Lightfoot, GM Portfolio Chief Executive for Communities and Co-operatives and Warren Heppolette, Chief Officer for Strategy & Innovation, Greater Manchester Integrated Care

Purpose of the Report:

In September 2021, the GM H&SC Partnership Executive Board and the Combined Authority approved a new tripartite Accord agreement with the VCSE sector, replacing both the previous Memorandum of Understanding with the GM Health system and an Accord agreement signed in 2017 with the Combined Authority. This Accord has now also been endorsed through the Executive structures of all ten of the GM local authorities. The Accord is a five-year agreement which will act as a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the strategic plan of the Integrated Care System. It will also form a framework for collaborative working with the VCSE sector in relation to the cost-of-living crisis and delivery under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Following the launch of Greater Manchester Integrated Care in July 2022, endorsement is now being sought for the VCSE Accord from the Integrated Care Partnership Board and 10 individual locality Partnership Boards.

In March 2022, a five-year Implementation Plan for the GM VCSE Accord was published, and this report provides an update on the work that is currently taking place across Greater Manchester.

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Furthermore, it is proposed that a system-wide GM Forum is created that brings together political and officer leads from each district, together with representatives from the Integrated Care System and VCSE Leaders, with the purpose of driving forward the commitments in the VCSE Accord, including strategic partnership working to address the current cost-of-living crisis. A detailed proposal for this Forum is annexed to this report. To support the Accord, the Combined Authority and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care have equally contributed funding. The funding will ensure the development of arrangements to facilitate the delivery of a range of enabling activities, which will be jointly agreed by the parties to the Accord within the framework set within the Implementation Plan. It is proposed that these activities follow a three-year planning cycle to enable continuity and sustainability in the VCSE sector's response.

Collaborative working with the VCSE sector across Greater Manchester will be vital to support people and communities through the cost-of-living crisis, but the sustainability and resilience of front line VCSE groups and organisations has been hit hard by both the economic situation and the withdrawal of Covid emergency funding, thereby reducing their capacity to help. It will be important that the commitments under the VCSE Accord are honoured to enable effective partnerships which will help the people of Greater Manchester through the current situation.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the progress update provided
2. Endorse the proposal to create a system-wide GM VCSE Forum and provide nominations to join the Forum.

Contact Officers:

Andrew Lightfoot - Deputy Chief Executive, GMCA
Andrew.Lightfoot@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Warren Heppolette - Chief Officer for Strategy & Innovation
Greater Manchester Integrated Care, Warren.Heppolette@nhs.net

Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Results of the [Sustainability Decision Support Tool](#) are included here:

Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>The Accord enables involvement of a range of communities of identity, experience and geography, facilitating support and advocacy for particular communities.</p> <p>Key to the work of the VCSE sector under the Accord will be to enhance its ability to tackle poverty and disadvantage</p> <p>The Accord will facilitate the involvement of VCSE organisations in the service reform programme and 'services for people' in localities and neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The VCSE Accord will include work to increase co-design of services, support the GM Equalities Alliance and enable structures that allow communities to have a say in shaping decisions that affect them</p> <p>Involvement of VCSE organisations will be key to work to support community cohesion across GM, and this will be embedded in work to deliver the Accord.</p>	
Health	G	<p>Through key VCSE-led programmes like GM Moving, also through development of structures for the GM-wide Live Well service.</p> <p>The VCSE Accord will build from existing successes around VCSE-led low level mental health programmes.</p> <p>Through key VCSE-led programmes like GM Moving, also through development of structures for the GM-wide Live Well service.</p> <p>Through facilitation of key VCSE-led wellbeing programmes including development of structures for the GM-wide Live Well service.</p> <p>Improving referral pathways and connections for support, via VCSE organisations collaborating with statutory services</p> <p>The VCSE Accord will enable VCSE involvement in key healthy food programmes, and enable a support infrastructure and resilient forms of funding</p>	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	<p>The VCSE sector has an important role to play in creating environmental benefits, reducing carbon use, responding to emergencies and mitigating risks to communities.</p> <p>The VCSE sector has an important role to play in the Coronavirus recovery work</p> <p>The VCSE Accord describes the sector's role in supporting resilience of society and environment</p> <p>A strong agreement with the VCSE sector will enable involvement in key community safety programmes such as the Violence Reduction Unit.</p> <p>VCSE organisations play a significant role in enhancing and maintaining green and blue space in GM</p>	
Housing	G	<p>The VCSE Accord will build from strong experience around the Homeless Action Network, for example</p> <p>Through the VCSE-led community homes programme</p> <p>Through community ownership and management of redundant and underused buildings and public spaces</p>	
Economy	G	<p>The VCSE Accord contains a commitment around making a more inclusive and social economy</p> <p>The VCSE Accord contains a commitment around improvement of workforce capacity and capability, also seeking for the sector to have 100% employees paid the Real Living Wage</p> <p>The VCSE Accord contains a commitment around improvement of workforce capacity and capability, also seeking for the sector to have 100% employees paid the Real Living Wage</p> <p>The Accord will include work to support social enterprises and other social economy organisations to thrive</p> <p>VCSE organisations play a key role in social innovation activities</p> <p>The VCSE sector can leverage funds from charitable funders, social investors and other philanthropic givers.</p> <p>VCSE organisations play a key role in community learning programmes that wrap around statutory provision</p>	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	<p>Focus in the VCSE Accord on accessible services, facilitating the hearing of lived experience from communities and co-design of infrastructure</p> <p>VCSE organisations play a role providing low carbon transport schemes</p> <p>Focus in the VCSE Accord on accessible services, facilitating the hearing of lived experience from communities and co-design of infrastructure</p>	
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G		
Consumption and Production	G	<p>VCSE organisations make commitments to reduce waste in their activities</p> <p>VCSE organisations make commitments to increase reuse and recycling in their activities</p>	
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		<p>The UKG are interested in bids which are particularly strong on the need for UKCRF projects to demonstrate a contribution to national net zero and carbon reduction ambitions and this forms a key part of the UKG's assessment criteria. GM priorities should contribute to our carbon neutrality and environmental objectives. We would welcome projects which are innovative, inclusive and support the</p>	
Further Assessment(s):		Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
 Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	 Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	 Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	 Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment				
Overall Score				
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
New Build residential	N/A			
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A			
New Build Commercial/Industrial	N/A			
Transport				
Active travel and public transport				
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	These may result through implementation of the Accord		
Access to amenities	N/A			
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
Land Use				
Land use	N/A			
No associated carbon impacts expected.	 High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	 Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	 Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	 Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management:

This report is considered to have a low level of risk

Legal Considerations:

The VCSE Accord is a partnership agreement which will involve all parties offering to bring resources (financial and non-financial) into the arrangement. It will enable shared delivery and shared accountability, as well as shared risk for the actions taken across the VCSE Leadership Group, GMCA and Health and Social Care Partnership.

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

To support this work, a budget of £228,400 was approved by the GMCA in September 2020, and approval delegated to the GMCA Treasurer, in consultation with the Community, Co-operatives and Inclusion Portfolio Leader and Chief Executive to award grant agreements, subject to final agreement of GMCA budgets.

Financial Consequences – Capital:

N/A

Number of attachments to the report:

Annex 1 – GM VCSE Accord

Annex 2 – Draft proposal for GM VCSE Forum

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

N/A

Background papers:

Information about GM VCSE Leadership Group and VCSE Policy Paper –
<https://vcseleadershipgm.org.uk/our-work/>

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

Exemption from call in

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?

No

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The work described in this paper is set within a period of cost-of-living crisis, with extreme demand and dependence placed on both the public and VCSE sectors. It is also a time of great uncertainty. Local Authority, health and other public budgets are under immense pressure and that budgeting will have a *direct impact* on VCSE organisations in terms of grants and commissioning, but also an *indirect impact* (reductions and pressures in public services often displace need and put more pressure on charities and communities). Moving forwards, active involvement of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises in places and neighbourhoods will be key to Greater Manchester being able to respond to the cost-of-living crisis, enthuse society and drive the economy, while addressing the emerging priorities of tackling inequalities, building confidence, behaviour change, and co-design of a resilient city region. Put simply, there is a need to **take a practical approach where responsibility and risk are shared**, and the public and VCSE sectors work together to support places and communities.
- 1.2 In September 2021, the GM Health & Social Care Partnership Executive Board and the Combined Authority approved a new tripartite Accord agreement with the VCSE sector¹, replacing both the previous MOU with the Health and Social Care system and the Accord agreement with the Combined Authority. The Accord is a five-year agreement which will act as a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the strategic plan of the Integrated Care System². The full VCSE Accord can be found at **Annex 1**.
- 1.3 The Accord has now also been endorsed through the Executive structures of all ten of the GM local authorities.
- 1.4 This agreement will facilitate a unified way of working between the local authorities, GMCA, the Integrated Care System and the GM VCSE sector, represented by the GM VCSE Leadership Group and allow a single conversation with the sector in

¹ [New Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector Accord signed with Greater Manchester Leaders - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/new-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-sector-accord-signed-with-greater-manchester-leaders)

² [Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Accord - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-accord)

relation to all aspects of the GMS and its partner strategies. It would also enable a focus on sustaining their valuable work in communities and creating a more resilient VCSE sector.

1.5 The purpose of the Accord is to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens. The agreement is intended to work in a number of ways:

- Through a **shared understanding** of the contribution that VCSE organisations make towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
- Through the **building of effective partnerships and relationships** between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies (for example GM-wide, district-wide, or in neighbourhoods and communities)
- Through a **shared vision, ways of working principles and set of commitments** which underpin these partnerships and relationships
- Through a **5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint**, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to deliver beneficial outcomes in communities and localities.

1.6 During the Covid-19 pandemic, the response of VCSE organisations has been incredible in its strength, depth and the speed at which it has mobilised. Furthermore, community volunteers have offered and continue to provide their support and are integrating with emergency support structures at this time. The VCSE sector has been quick to adapt at pace and with a huge degree of accuracy and efficacy to meet the needs of GM communities.

1.7 However, this response has not been without its challenges, and VCSE leaders have identified a range of risks and issues which are inhibiting their capacity to work effectively as part of the emergency effort. On 29th July 2021 the *GM State of the VCSE Sector Report*³ was published, providing a snapshot of the role and health of the VCSE sector in GM. The report shows that:

- Greater Manchester is home to around 17,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and organisations,
- Nearly 500,000 volunteers giving a total of 1.4 million hours each week.

³ [State of the Sector \(10gm.org.uk\)](https://10gm.org.uk)

- The groups, organisations and volunteers are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership, established communications channels and have evidenced their ability to convene and act together in the interests of Greater Manchester's communities.
- 71% of the VCSE sector are micro-organisations with an annual income under £10,000,
- 57% of organisations work across specific neighbourhoods and communities across Greater Manchester.
- Despite an increase in both the number of VCSE organisations and of volunteers since the last report in 2017, the overall turnover of the sector has decreased in real terms.

Six key recommendations were made in the State of the Sector report, and all were endorsed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester at the report's launch event and have informed the commitments made in the VCSE Accord.

- 1.8 The new Accord agreement is ground-breaking in the ability of the statutory and VCSE sectors to move forward together in the post-Covid period. Already, new forms of collaboration are being developed, including the VCSE-led Alternative Provider Federation, which will sit as part of the new GM Integrated Care System as a place-based partnership of social enterprise and charitable organisations⁴.

2. Delivering the Greater Manchester VCSE Accord

- 2.1 The success of this Accord and the shared commitments that it contains will rely on their recognition, adoption and action at a locality and neighbourhood level. This is a high-level agreement which builds from existing good practice to embed effective ways of working with the VCSE sector across all places in GM. It aims to achieve consistency without losing the uniqueness and innovation of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises.

Implementation Plan

- 2.2 In March 2022, an Implementation Plan⁵ for the new Accord was published, which sets the framework for partnership working over the next five-years. The Implementation Plan contains an iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint and will be supported by

⁴ [Home - GMAPF](#)

⁵ [Greater Manchester VCSE Accord 2021-2026 - Implementation Plan \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

annual delivery plans which contain actions, responsibilities, timescales, targets and outcomes for delivery. The Implementation Plan will not cover partnership working in each of the individual localities (which will instead be the subject of local strategies and agreements), but its delivery should be informed by the support and capacity needs identified through locality working.

- 2.3 The Implementation Plan is supported by annual Delivery Plans, which are developed jointly as part of a partnership funding agreement between the GMCA, GM Integrated Care and the GM VCSE Leadership Group, and will cover the length of this Accord agreement, but be subject to annual review and confirmation of budgets for the GMCA and GM Integrated Care System. From April 2023, it is proposed that the Accord delivery planning will move to a longer planning period, which will enable continuity across financial years and facilitate longer-term, transformational programmes of work. The delivery planning process will be informed by emerging priorities for the VCSE sector arising from work in localities and communities and will result in the placing of a three-year grant funding agreement.
- 2.4 The actions invested in at a GM footprint aim to enable and facilitate delivery in localities, neighbourhoods and communities. All commitments will be achieved in partnership. The work aims to provide dedicated support, create capacity and help the VCSE sector function as a collaborative ecosystem across the city region.
- 2.5 The Accord also includes a commitment to ensure 'fair' representation from all ten boroughs in any decision-making processes affecting the VCSE sector, and acknowledgement that this may need different approaches for different places to accommodate this to happen. The Accord will recognise the different needs and requirements of each place and its populations to be successful in its aims.

Governance

- 2.6 The governance surrounding the delivery of the work undertaken at a GM footprint using the funding provided by the GMCA and GM Integrated Care relating to the VCSE Accord is tripartite in nature, and includes:
- **GM VCSE Accord Commitments Group** - which will be responsible for overall strategic direction and outcomes, a place to discuss cross-cutting issues, share practice and develop solutions to generic problems / situations

- **Collaborative thematic working groups** - where projects and ideas are co-created and delivery is steered, most of which already exist, but may benefit from expanding membership to include Health and Social Care or GMCA officers
- **VCSE Accord Administration and Contracting subgroup (of the VCSE Leadership Group)** - which will see representatives from the three parties having co-ordination and oversight of performance and financial monitoring of the Accord grant agreements

2.7 These groups will be jointly accountable to the Integrated Care Partnership Board, the Combined Authority and the GM VCSE Leadership Group for delivery of the shared vision, principles and commitments, and the 5-year Implementation Plan for the VCSE Accord. Quarterly updates on progress will be provided to the GM Portfolio Leader and Chief Executive for Communities and Co-operatives, to the Integrated Care Partnership Board and GMCA Wider Leadership Team on a six-monthly basis, taking the form of an annual impact evaluation report demonstrating progress towards outcomes and success indicators described in the VCSE Accord Implementation Plan, the following year delivery plan presented yearly (March) and supported by an interim update in October of each year.

Progress Update to September 2021

- 2.8 Work to date against the GM VCSE Accord has included enabling activities across 9 delivery themes:
- **Population Health** – strengthening relationships between the VCSE sector and population health system, inputting to Primary Care Network, improving data and intelligence sharing, and participation in the Live Well design
 - **Commissioning and Investment** – rolling out learning from the GM VCSE Commissioning Framework and exploring the best ways to commission services from VCSE providers, for example around future work and skills provision.
 - **VCSE Workforce development** – delivery of the first GM-wider workforce development programme for the VCSE sector, to boost skills and capacity across the sector
 - **Communication** – developing a communication and engagement strategy to improve the sharing of information across the VCSE sector and with the public sector partners in the Accord

- **Ecosystem development** – work to build capacity in the social infrastructure which underpins the VCSE sector across GM, which links with strategic relationships at a district and neighbourhood level. Having this resourced infrastructure will be a key part of the success of the Accord as a whole, and enable more effective collaborative ways of working
- **GM Alternative Provider Federation** – initially a group of 20 VCSE organisations holding contracts with the health sector in GM, but now expanding membership to become a key player in the health provider system. GM is the only place in the country where VCSE health and care providers have come together and federated in this way.
- **GM Equalities Network** – a collaborative of people from a wider range of communities of identity, working closely with the ICS and GM Equalities Panels to advise, support and bring insight on key service design issues.
- **Inclusive Economy** – VCSE-led discussions about the creation of a fairer and more inclusive economy, including input to discussion around the refresh of the GM Local Industrial Strategy.
- **VCSE Involvement and Influencing** – providing VCSE representation on GM Boards and strategic partnerships across a range of topics and themes.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

2.9 It will be important that we can build on the role and capacity of the VCSE sector across Greater Manchester to help address the challenges across all Investment Priorities in the GM UKSPF Investment Plan. UKSPF offers a real opportunity to build on this emergent opportunity and particularly how this could be supported and nurtured by our VCSE sector. Greater Manchester is home to over 17,000 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations who are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership, established communications channels and have evidenced their ability to convene and act as a sector around general or specific strategic challenges. We will work with our localities and VCSE sector through the newly agreed GM VCSE Accord, investing UKSPF alongside GMCA, Greater Manchester Integrated Care and Local Authorities to strengthen the social infrastructure capacity across Greater Manchester, which will ensure the VCSE sector is able to support increasing engagement across communities to provide the vital stepping-stone to public services.

2.10 UK Shared Prosperity Fund proposal E11 will invest in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society. This work will be led by a partnership of Local Infrastructure Organisations across Greater Manchester will work with specialist partners to improve the ecosystem of support for community activity in Greater Manchester. Together they will establish a common framework of local VCSE infrastructure functions, working with each locality in Greater Manchester to identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps and development needs. Activity to improve support will be co-ordinated across GM and will create opportunities for collaboration in delivery of infrastructure support, shared practice and the piloting of new approaches.

Proposed GM VCSE Forum

2.12 In addition to the arrangements described at section 2.6 above, which are operational and relate to the activities carried out using the funding provided by GMCA and GM Integrated Care, it is proposed that a GM VCSE Forum is created to lead on the strategic aims of the VCSE Accord (bullet points one and two at section 1.5 above), namely:

- *ensuring a shared understanding of the contribution that VCSE organisations make, and*
- *building effective partnerships and relationships across Greater Manchester.*

2.13 The draft Proposal / Terms of Reference document for the Forum is contained at **Annex 2**.

2.14 The Forum will support collaborative working with the VCSE sector across Greater Manchester, enable the sharing of intelligence and spread of good practice. It will also enable strategic working between the VCSE, local authority and health systems, to proactively respond to the challenges that are faced by communities at the current time. The Forum will link with other thematic and community-led networks and facilitate action to support the citizens of Greater Manchester through the cost-of-living crisis, for example.

3. VCSE Sector role in the Cost-of-Living Crisis

3.1 The VCSE sector plays a vital role in the current cost of living crisis. Examples of activity across GM include:

- **Distributing emergency funds -**
 - **Household Support Fund** - Partnerships between Local Authorities and the local CVS have distributed 30+ grants per local authority area to groups/organisations to ensure cash is available to those at crisis point. This has been particularly effective at reach to ensure equity of access for those that often face marginalization, delivering significant success on outcomes and delivery. Most areas on second round and established mechanisms if there is more government support.
 - **Migrant Destitution Fund GM** – for people with no recourse to public funds - Grants are for up to £80 once a month and are typically spent on food, winter clothing, phone credit, travel costs (e.g. to appointments), dental treatment
 - **Other VCSE-led Funds** - include Real Change, which pays for practical items – and covers Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan and Leigh
- **Information and signposting** – VCSE organisations play a key role in communicating with people and communities – through CVS local infrastructure organisations, through those working in specific communities or places, through Citizens Advice Bureaux, Credit Unions etc.
- **Insight and intelligence about the crisis** - Poverty Truth Commissions, Lived experience commissioners' voices in system change – Oldham, Tameside, Manchester, Trafford, Salford. Established and growing social action networks in every area on poverty – root causes and symptoms.
- **Other broader support activities led by VCSE organisations include:**
 - Food banks/food pantry - increasing culturally appropriate food offers – Food Solutions Networks, coordinated activity across food provision. Winter warmth packs.
 - Community warehouse/logistical support/ bulk purchasing/home delivery services
 - Prepare warm spaces/ public living rooms (Camarados).
 - Increasing access to welfare advice and funds – Citizens Advice, and partnerships to extend reach. Multi-lingual welfare advice.
 - Digital tech and data libraries/banks
 - Energy efficiency schemes and support – Groundwork

- Winter volunteering campaigns active now recruiting additional support

- 3.2 However, there are a number of pressures and risks faced in the VCSE sector which are affecting the capacity to respond. These include the fact that a significant amount of VCSE provision is delivered on short term, often COVID-linked funding. The scale of demand is too great for the current VCSE provision, with workforce capacity stretched and access to funding to meet the demand on food and advice, for example. There is a need for both small grants and sustainable funding for critical advice and support agencies. Furthermore, inflation costs are hitting the sector hard, affecting what groups can buy/provide for money they have. Pay and conditions in the VCSE sector workforce is usually benchmarked with the public sector and pay reviews for staff are squeezing budgets and not reflected in contract uplifts.
- 3.3 The VCSE sector will support people and communities through the cost-of-living crisis, but its sustainability and resilience has been hit hard, reducing capacity to help, and it is clear that many voluntary organisations are struggling to stay in business at the current time. It will be important that the commitments under the VCSE Accord are honoured to enable effective partnerships which will help the people of Greater Manchester through the current crisis.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Following the transition from the GMHSCP into the new Integrated Care System arrangements, it will be important that the GM VCSE Accord is fully endorsed and adopted by the new system arrangements both at a GM and locality level. This report will be submitted to the Integrated Care Partnership Board, followed by each of the Locality Partnership Boards for endorsement.
- 4.2 Nominations will be sought from each of the individual Local Authorities and the Locality Partnership Boards onto the GM VCSE Forum.
- 4.3 Regular progress updates on the Delivery Plan will be presented at future Wider Leadership Team and Partnership Board meetings.

GM VCSE Accord Agreement

This is a three-way collaboration agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector* represented by the GM VCSE Leadership Group, based in a relationship of mutual trust, working together, and sharing responsibility. The purpose of this Accord is to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens.

**When we talk about the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester, we mean voluntary organisations, community groups, the community work of faith groups, and those social enterprises where profits will be reinvested in their social purpose.*

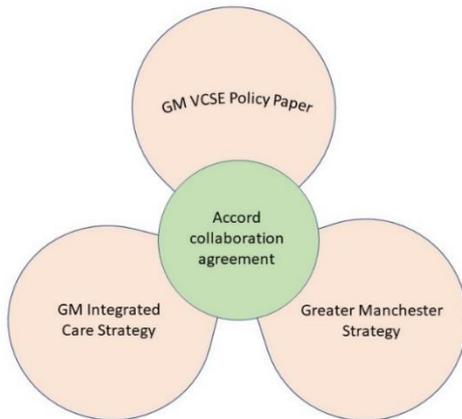
1.1 Introduction

VCSE organisations play a hugely valuable role in the economy and society of Greater Manchester. In 2021, their offer is more vital and relevant than ever, as shown through the ability to mobilise at scale during the recent pandemic. The reports of the Independent Inequalities Commission 'Good Lives for All' and the Marmot Build Back Fairer review make frequent reference to the VCSE sector's knowledge and its tested practical solutions to tackling entrenched inequalities, addressing environmental problems, and improving wellbeing. Local authorities, NHS and health systems have welcomed the role of the VCSE sector as a strategic partner in the emergency response and recovery efforts, and this Accord seeks to make the successful integration of VCSE groups, organisations and leaders the way we do business in Greater Manchester.

The attached *Annex* document contains further details of the context, governance and implementation of this Accord agreement.

1.2 Purpose and scope

The Accord will act as a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the development of the strategic plan of the new GM Integrated Care System. VCSE representatives will be involved in the development, governance and delivery of these strategies, including co-design of relevant activities, and thereby take a key role in work to build a resilient local economy, tackle inequalities and inequities, and improve the health and wellbeing of the people who live, work and study in Greater Manchester. The Accord will also deliver the ambitions set out in the [VCSE Policy Paper](#), which was published by the GM VCSE Leadership Group in 2020 and sets out a developmental ambition for the VCSE Sector, as shown in Figure 1 (below).



This agreement is intended to work in a number of ways:

- Through a shared understanding of the contribution that VCSE organisations make towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
- Through the building of effective partnerships and relationships between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies (for example GM-wide, district-wide, or in neighbourhoods and communities)
- Through a shared vision, ways of working principles and set of commitments which underpin these partnerships and relationships
- Through a 5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to deliver beneficial outcomes.

1.3 Contribution of VCSE organisations

The 2021 [State of the VCSE Sector](#) report shows that Greater Manchester is home to around 17,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and organisations, and nearly 500,000 volunteers giving a total of 1.4 million hours each week. These groups, organisations and volunteers are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership, established communications channels and have evidenced their ability to convene and act together in the interests of Greater Manchester's communities. 71% of the VCSE sector are micro-organisations with an annual income under £10,000, and 57% of organisations work across specific neighbourhoods and communities across Greater Manchester.

VCSE organisations work across every aspect of tackling inequality and inequity in Greater Manchester including skills, employment and enterprise; health and social care; housing and transport; environmental issues and carbon reduction; poverty reduction; inclusive economic growth and inclusive governance. They also work at a variety of footprints – from community and neighbourhood to GM-wide and national, as well as having their origins in business (such as charitable foundations) and the statutory sector (such as NHS charities) as well as in communities.

1.4 Tri-partite Agreement - Shared Vision and principles

From this point on, where the words 'we' or 'our' or 'us' are used, this includes the three parties to this agreement acting with a single voice.

Our shared vision is for a thriving VCSE sector in Greater Manchester that works collaboratively and productively with the GM Integrated Care System¹, the GM Combined Authority, its constituent local authority members and statutory partners².

This vision is based in our shared values, will be supported by a sustainable infrastructure and have strong leadership. We will operate on the basis of mutual trust, respect and transparency.

We will acknowledge the value to communities of place, identity and experience and understand the role of local people in leading, shaping and connecting VCSE organisations to create the ‘ecosystem’ described in the VCSE Policy Paper. We will work using the subsidiarity principle, meaning that decisions and issues are taken and addressed as close to communities as possible, coming together at a Greater Manchester level where there is a demonstrable benefit of doing so.

1.4 Building from a strong track record of innovation and partnership

The Agreement does not start from scratch and is built on the strong foundations created over the last 5 years, since the previous GM VCSE Accord and Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Social Care Partnership were put in place.

It is clear from recent evaluation exercises that VCSE sector representatives are “at the table” in the places where important decisions are made across the NHS, Health and Social Care and GMCA partnerships. Increased VCSE involvement means that people and communities are more likely to be discussed, and prevention and community engagement more likely to be considered across service planning and commissioning.

Substantial progress has been made on the strategic front, with the publication of a Policy Position Paper by the GM VCSE Leadership Group and specific responsibilities identified for the sector in the 2020 GM ‘Living with Covid’ Plan.

Furthermore, work led by VCSE-led groups such as the GM Social Enterprise Advisory Group, GM Equality Network (GM Eq=al) and the GM Social Value Network, for example, have driven forward key policy improvements.

Products of the collaboration over the last 5 years include the GM VCSE Commissioning Framework, a powerful tool for public sector organisations to work effectively with VCSE organisations. There has been strong VCSE involvement and leadership in a number of joint programmes which explore the role of co-production in service reform and commissioning, and further information is contained in the *Annex*.

However, whilst the presence of VCSE organisations on decision making bodies represents progress, there is some way to go yet before the level of collaboration and co-production that we envisage is achieved. Furthermore, it is clear that the level of VCSE engagement and involvement differs between localities. The journey towards becoming equal partners needs a further shift in power, in resources and a greater amount of truly collaborative activity. This new Accord sets out 8 commitments, which aim to continue the transition towards greater parity in the relationship between the VCSE and statutory sectors. We recognise that the shift in the balance of power and how we will work together will also require each of us to take different responsibilities – for example

¹ The final governance of the Integrated Care System is to be finalised, but will include Integrated Care Board, Integrated Care Partnership, GM NHS Trusts, other non-NHS Providers and delivery partners

² Including Transport for Greater Manchester

in our investment, delivery, or engagement – but we will share the delivery and the accountability for our actions.

In order to maximise the VCSE contribution, the GM statutory sector will recognise, incorporate, and invest. VCSE leaders and organisations will focus on developing their workforce capacity and capability, on diversifying the income base and creating new partnerships and collaborations within their ‘ecosystem’. The Accord will build from and work with existing structures across each locality, and recognise the different needs and requirements of each place and its populations in order to be successful in its aims.

1.5 Shared commitments for 2021 – 2026

The success of this Accord and the following shared commitments will rely on their recognition, adoption and action at a locality and neighbourhood level. As stated above, the actions invested in at a GM footprint aim to enable and facilitate what is happening in localities, neighbourhoods and communities. All commitments will be achieved in partnership and equitable involvement from all 10 districts of Greater Manchester.

Commitment 1: *We will work together to achieve a permanent reduction in inequalities and inequity within Greater Manchester, addressing the social, environmental and economic determinants of health and wellbeing.*

Our aim is to ensure active VCSE participation and parity in strategic work to enhance equality, equity and wellbeing.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Effective representation of the VCSE sector on relevant groups including: the GM Integrated Care Partnership, the GM Health and Care Board, GM Commissioning Hub, Joint Commissioning Board, Population Health Board, Reform Board, Tackling Inequality Board, Vulnerable and Marginalised Women’s Board, Justice and Rehab group, Employment and Skills Advisory Board, Gender Based Violence Board, GM Accessible Transport Group and 5-year Environment Plan Forum, for example.
- Programmes set up to address key inequalities issues, such as food poverty, fuel poverty, homelessness, accessible transport, active travel, digital and environmental exclusion and abuse/hate crime, which bring together the GM VCSE sector with public and private sector partners to drive action through collaboration.
- Involvement of the VCSE sector in the development and delivery of the revised GM Strategy and GM ICS Strategic Plan.
- Further development of the capacity of the GM Equality Alliance as a coalition to connect communities to policy makers, and vice versa, and to assist with strategic equality and diversity work within the city-region

Commitment 2: *We will embed the VCSE sector as a key delivery partner of services for communities in Greater Manchester*

Our aim is to ensure that VCSE organisations are seen as integral to the delivery of services in communities, alongside statutory-run services and commissioned contracts.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Embedding of learning and recommendations from the review of GM emergency structures and ensuring the VCSE sector plays a key role in local and GM wide recovery programmes, including VCSE involvement in responses that relate to specific communities or places
- Development of the Alternative Provider Federation as a place-based partnership of social enterprise and charitable organisations operating at scale across the ICS footprint.
- Building from the VCSE leadership around mental health to embed VCSEs in governance of Local Care Organisations (through the Mental Health Leaders Group).
- Increasing understanding of each other; building knowledge and understanding of the diverse VCSE sector across the public sector, promoting understanding of GM structures in VCSE organisations and furthering the potential to drive forward strategies and action plans on a GM footprint.

Commitment 3: *We will build a financially resilient VCSE sector that is resourced to address our biggest challenges of ending poverty and inequality in Greater Manchester.*

Our aim is to work together to maximise new funding sources, ways of contracting and grant-giving arrangements.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Develop and put into place an investment approach based on long-term, core funding to support strategic VCSE capacity and infrastructure in delivering the visions of the GMS and GM Integrated Care System. This should explore principles and guidelines, as well as models for investment brokerage, asset transfer and spatial planning for the VCSE sector
- Fully implement the principles of the GM Commissioning Framework in all parts of the GM system
- We will grow VCSE infrastructure capacity in each of the 10 districts of Greater Manchester and at a Greater Manchester level. This will enable VCSE organisations to act as funding anchors, playing a strategic role of grant-giving to VCSE organisations channelling public money and raising investment for communities
- Put in place 'core funding' pilot projects to understand how this will enable improved outcomes, more effective VCSE services and enhanced sustainability for the sector

Commitment 4: *We will grow the role of the VCSE sector as an integral part of a resilient and inclusive economy where social enterprises, co-operatives, community businesses, charities and microsocial business thrive.*

Our aim is to increase the market share of social economy organisations in Greater Manchester.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Create a Community Wealth Hub to support and grow co-operatives, mutuals, social and community enterprises, staffed by people from the co-operative and community sector who understand the market.
- Put in place support for the further development of the Alternative Provider Federation as an alliance of non-extractive organisations (of all sectors) to address new market opportunities beyond health and care and into other neighbourhood services.

- Set up a Community Investment Platform to tap into local savings, unlock community investment and build-up assets to share wealth with everyone in Greater Manchester.

Commitment 5: *We will build on our existing strengths to build the best VCSE ecosystem in England*

Our aim is to enable VCSE organisations to become ‘anchors’ for their place or their community, creating resources, support and connections for them to thrive.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Formally adopting the principles of the GM VCSE Policy Paper and embed its recommendations within the refreshed GM Strategy and GM ICS Strategic Plan
- Agreement of and investment in the development of a clear arrangement of Greater Manchester, locality and neighbourhood ‘infrastructure’ of community anchor organisations, including ‘fair’ representation from all ten boroughs in any decision-making processes.
- Agreement of minimum standards of involvement for leaders from VCSE organisations in partnerships and delivery governance across each of the 10 local authority areas
- Further develop the role of the VCSE Leadership Group at the heart of a collaborative representative ‘social architecture’ for the VCSE sector at a GM level, recognising the complexity and diverse nature of the sector

Commitment 6: *We will put into place meaningful mechanisms to make co-design of local services the norm, including expanding channels for service design to be informed by ‘lived experience’.*

Our aim is to create arrangements to enable local people, groups and organisations to be involved in the design of the services which are provided for them.

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- We will work together to further implement the principles of GM Model Reform White Paper, including neighbourhood pilots in 10 pathfinder deprived communities.
- Support VCSE infrastructure organisations in localities to engage with LCOs, PCNs and local NHS/health governance within the ICS structure
- Helping to create the Greater Manchester ‘Live Well – Beyond Social Prescribing Plan’ in partnership with existing social prescribing providers and communities.
- Continue and build on leadership from and lived experience facilitated by the VCSE sector around specific programmes of work (including mental health, homelessness, food poverty, carers and digital inclusion for example) to act as catalysts and connectors for communities in GM

Commitment 7: *We will fulfil the potential for building productive relationships between the VCSE, public and private sectors to address inequity and build back fairer*

Our aim is to work closely with local businesses as well as the public sector to increase their focus on social value and addressing inequalities

Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

- Work together with all Greater Manchester Local Authorities and public sector organisations to put in place Employer Supported Volunteering, secondments, work shadowing and other arrangements in conjunction with their local VCSE infrastructure, to enable the sharing of expertise and knowledge between sectors
- Developing collective responsibilities for achieving outcomes against equality objectives, which include an increased role for neighbourhood level political leadership alongside local communities, VCSE organisations, local businesses and public bodies
- Facilitate increased collaboration between population health and inclusive economy colleagues to highlight the intersectionality of population health and economy, and how the VCSE can contribute, lead and innovate
- Fully utilise the GM ICS structures to facilitate collaboration between partners in a place across health, care services, public health, and voluntary sector to overcome competing objectives and improve outcomes

Commitment 8: *We will put in place a comprehensive workforce programme to support organisational and workforce development for VCSE employers based on and facilitating a more integrated public facing workforce*

Our aim is to improve capacity, capability and employment standards across the paid and voluntary VCSE workforce in Greater Manchester

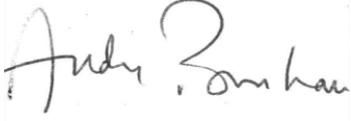
Examples of routes through which this commitment will be supported at a GM footprint include:

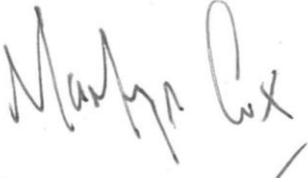
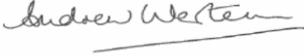
- Develop and deliver GM VCSE Race Equality Action Plan
- Develop the skills of VCSE Leaders. increase opportunities for peer support and learning for system leaders in the VCSE sector and create more opportunities for multi-agency connection and increasing awareness of good practice in VCSE leadership
- Achieve our ambition for 100% of VCSE organisations in Greater Manchester to pay the real Living Wage
- Increase VCSE organisations' involvement as Supporters, Members and Advocates for the sector in the GM Good Employment Charter
- Enhanced leadership support for those at the forefront of networks of VCSE organisations who represent particular communities of identity and marginalised groups
- Link the VCSE workforce programme with GM workforce development programme, ensuring that the VCSE workforce is able to benefit from access to Higher Educational Establishments funding and placements.

The content of this Agreement has been developed following a series of structured conversations with key stakeholders in the Accord through the spring and summer of 2021, including VCSE organisations from across the whole of Greater Manchester, as well as representatives from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the GM Health and Social Care System, NHS and local authorities. The final version of the Accord has been shared for sign off by the GM VCSE Leadership Group, the Combined Authority and Health and Social Care Partnership governance structures. It will be supported by a five-year implementation plan for work driven at a GM footprint and funding agreement for implementation of that plan, as well as a review of the operation and membership on the GM VCSE Leadership Group.

Greater Manchester VCSE Accord - Signatories

24th September 2021

 Andy Burnham Mayor of Greater Manchester	 Councillor Arooj Shah GM Portfolio Lead for Community, Co-operatives, Voluntary Sector and Inclusion	 Eamonn Boylan Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 Sir Richard Leese Chair, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership	 Sarah Price Interim Chief Officer, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership	 Warren Escadale Chair, Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group
 Parvin Emampour GM Equalities Network (GM Equal)	 Charles Kwaku Odoi GM VCSE Leadership Group	 Paul Martin GM VCSE Leadership Group
 Dawn Yates-Obe GM VCSE Leadership Group	 Jo Walby GM VCSE Leadership Group	 Liz Windsor Welsh GM VCSE Leadership Group

 Cllr Martyn Cox Leader, Bolton Council	 Cllr Eamonn O'Brien Leader, Bury Council	 Councillor Arooj Shah Leader, Oldham Council
 Sir Richard Leese Leader, Manchester City Council	 Cllr Neil Emmott Leader, Rochdale Council	 Paul Dennett City Mayor of Salford
 Cllr Elise Wilson Leader, Stockport Council	 Cllr Brenda Warrington Leader, Tameside Council	 Cllr Andrew Western Leader, Trafford Council
 Cllr David Molyneux Leader, Wigan Council		

ANNEX 2 - GREATER MANCHESTER VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY, FAITH AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACCORD FORUM

PROPOSAL – SEPTEMBER 2022

Purpose:

We will bring together key stakeholders in the [GM VCSE Accord](#) from each of the 10 districts of Greater Manchester together to drive forward the shared vision of a thriving VCSE sector in Greater Manchester that works collaboratively and productively with the GM Integrated Care System, the GM Combined Authority, its constituent local authority members and statutory partners.

The Forum will have focus on offering mutual support to take action across the 10 localities of Greater Manchester; allowing the showcasing of work across the localities, developing a clear and shared description of what good looks like in terms of public / VCSE collaboration, and driving forward collective action around priority commitments in the GM VCSE Accord. It will focus on shared solutions to shared challenges faced across the VCSE and public sectors at the current time.

The GM VCSE Accord aims to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens. The agreement is intended to work in a number of ways:

1. Through a **shared understanding** of the contribution that VCSE organisations make towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
2. Through the **building of effective partnerships and relationships** between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies (for example GM-wide, district-wide, or in neighbourhoods and communities)
3. Through a **shared vision, ways of working principles and set of commitments** which underpin these partnerships and relationships
4. Through a **5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint**, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to deliver beneficial outcomes in communities and localities

This Forum will be accountable for the **first two of these aims**, with other governance being in place to manage the vision, principles, commitments and programme of enabling and developmental activities.

Objectives:

The GM VCFSE Accord Forum will focus initially of the following Commitments from the GM VCSE Accord:

- **Commitment 2:** We will embed the VCSE sector as a *key delivery partner of services for communities* in Greater Manchester – articulating the role of voluntary organisations, community groups, faith organisations and social enterprises in the local 'system' of services and support for the people of GM.
- **Commitment 3:** We will build a *financially resilient VCSE sector* that is resourced to address our biggest challenges of ending poverty and inequality in Greater

Manchester – driving out opportunities to shift resources, ring-fence budgets and draw in additional funding.

- **Commitment 5:** We will build on our existing strengths to *build the best VCSE ecosystem* in England, - including creating and enabling effective ‘social infrastructure’ in places.

How we will do this:

The Forum will be made up of a range of stakeholders, including:

- GM Portfolio Leader and Chief Executive Lead for Co-operatives and Communities
- GM Portfolio Leader and Chief Executive for Health
- The Councillor / Executive Member with the most relevant portfolio from each of the 10 GM local authorities
- A senior officer with responsibility for collaboration with the VCSE sector from each of the 10 GM local authorities
- A representative nominated by each local ICS Place-based Board.
- A senior officer representing the VCSE infrastructure bodies / organisations from each of the 10 districts
- 5 other GM VCSE / Faith leaders – including the Chair of the GM VCSE Leadership Group, the Chair of GM Equalities Network, two representatives from large charity / social enterprise providers and a representative of the Faith sector.

Officers from other GM-wide public sector bodies (for example Transport for Greater Manchester or Greater Manchester Police) will also be invited to attend relevant meetings.

The Chair will be the Portfolio Leader for Co-operatives and Communities.

The Forum will meet initially for a 12-month period and be convened by GMCA. It will meet on a quarterly basis, starting in July 2022.

At the first meeting, VCSE Leaders will be encouraged to present information about what they see the role of voluntary and faith organisations, community groups and social enterprises in supporting, wrapping round and adding value to the public service ‘system’, including some practical propositions for how this might be achieved.

The following meetings will explore in turn how this role might be resourced, and then how GM might create the ‘social infrastructure’ to maximise the contribution made by communities.