

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

Subject: GMCA Culture Investment 2023-2026

Report of: Councillor Neil Emmott, Portfolio Lead for Culture and Alison McKenzie-Folan, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Culture

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### Purpose of Report

To seek GMCA approval on levels of investment to the GM Culture Investment approach 2023-26, including organisations to be funded under the new Spirit and Sustain strands of investment

Further details are included as a more detailed report, considered in the confidential part of the agenda due to the information relating to the potential investments by GMCA subject to GMCA approval

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Approve a three-year budget of £4,425,000 p/a from April 2023 (subject to annual review) to support the new GMCA Cultural Investment Approach. Annual budget to be made up of £3.3m District Contributions and £1.25m Retained Business Rates.
2. Approve the proposal that, between April 2023 and March 2026 this budget will be spent in the following ways:
  - £3,965,000 p/a to support delivery and project management of the five strands of the new GM Culture Investment approach (recommended Spirit and Sustain organisations and recommended levels of investment detailed within the Part B item of this report)
    - Inspire (£100,000 p/a)
    - Spirit (See Part B)
    - Sustain (See Part B)
    - Collaborate (£120,000 p/a)
    - Strategic (£150,000 p/a)
    - Project Management (£70,000 p/a)
  - £460,000 p/a to support the ongoing social impact commitment
3. Note that the list of organisations proposed to be funded by the GMCA Culture Fund are detailed in a separate report to be considered in Part B of this agenda, to be made public within one month of this meeting.
4. Approve the outlined approach to GM Town of Culture 2023, with a view to revising the application process in 2024.

## Contact Officers

Name of key contact Officer and email address to be included

Alison Gordon, GMCA ([Alison.gordon@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.gordon@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk))

Marie-Claire Daly, GMCA ([Marie-Claire.Daly@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Marie-Claire.Daly@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk))

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

Insert text

### Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion	G	
Health	G	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	
Housing	G	
Economy	G	
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment		
Consumption and Production	G	

Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target

There is a specific strand of investment (Collaborate) under this proposal that will support consortia of cultural organisations to develop and deliver innovative approaches that support GMS aims around a Greener GM.

<b>Fur</b>	<b>G</b> Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	<b>A</b> Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>R</b> Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	<b>RR</b> Negative impacts overall.
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### Carbon Assessment

<b>Overall Score</b>					
<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Justification/Mitigation</b>			
New Build residential	N/A				
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A				
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A				
<b>Transport</b>					
Active travel and public transport	N/A				
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A				
Access to amenities	N/A				
Vehicle procurement	N/A				
<b>Land Use</b>					
La	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.

# 1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2023, following extensive consultation and research, GMCA agreed to a new GMCA culture investment approach – 2023-2026. The approach outlined in this proposal requests a three-year indicative financial commitment, subject to annual review.
- 1.2 The new approach has been devised to better support delivery of the new Greater Manchester Strategy, as well as recognising the changing and challenging landscape for cultural organisations and freelancers.



**INSPIRE** A small grants programme to support individual practitioners, freelancers and grass roots and community organisations, building on the success of GMCA's cultural 'covid commissions' project. This will ensure that talent is supported and developed across the city region. Awards will be between £500 and £2,000 p/a. GMCA will procure a partner to deliver this programme. Grants will be given across several thematic areas to ensure the total grant programme supports delivery of strategic aims.



**SPIRIT** These grants will support locally-loved and important organisations with an award of between £20,000 and £200,000 p/a. Organisations in receipt of Spirit Grants will not need to deliver across all of Greater Manchester, but will be of strategic importance to the cultural ecosystem of the city region



**SUSTAIN** This strand will provide support for organisations who require £200,000 or more per year to deliver GM-wide activity and support for artists and grass-roots organisations in every district of Greater Manchester. Sustain organisations will be expected to have both local and international impact and will be required to support the cultural ecology across Greater Manchester, providing space, expertise and employment for artists and smaller cultural organisations across the city region.



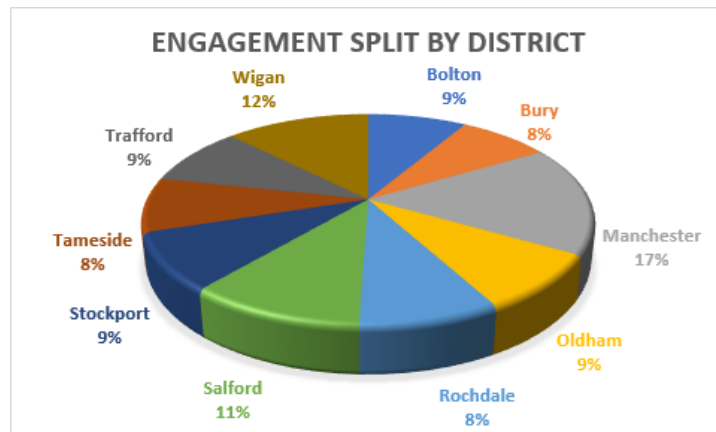
**COLLABORATE** - Collaborate provides organisations in Greater Manchester with an opportunity to form consortia to deliver the strategic aims of GMS. Consortia will be asked to apply to deliver one of the three core aims of GMS; Greener, Fairer, More Prosperous. This programme will stimulate innovation in the delivery GMS priorities by cultural organisations. Consortia will be expected to match-fund activity to bring the greatest possible value to GM investment.



**STRATEGIC** - GM Strategic funds will continue to fund activity that supports delivery of the GM Culture strategy, including Town of Culture, Creative Improvement Districts, StreamGM and the Greater Manchester Music Commission.

- 1.3 The approach also recognises the increasing role culture plays in the health and wellbeing of our people and vibrancy and attractiveness of our places, as well as its contribution to the economy of Greater Manchester
- 1.4 Prior to opening the Spirit and Sustain strands of investment, officers undertook analysis of cultural engagements by GMCA-funded organisations between April 2022 and October 2022. This was the first post-pandemic analysis undertaken by the team. During this period GMCA Culture Fund engagement by district was appropriately split across all 10 districts, especially when considering population

split and concentration of cultural infrastructure in the city of Manchester, and the likelihood of residents travelling into Manchester to engage with culture.



Engagement with GMCA-funded cultural organisations April-Oct 2022

The GMCA Culture Fund portfolio 2020-2023 was the first to include investment in all 10 GM districts. The split of engagement demonstrated here represents a much fairer split of benefit to previous years where engagement in Manchester was around 24%. It is encouraging to see the broadening and increase of investment result in a more equitable split of benefit.

- 1.5 In November 2022, Arts Council England announced the successful applicants to its NPO programme 2023-2026. Greater Manchester organisations were

awarded £90.5m over the three-year period, recognising the strength of cultural provision in GM. This represents an increase in investment of £3.4m p/a

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. In November 2023 – GMCA opened applications to the Spirit (£20,000-£200,000) and Sustain (£200,000 or more) programmes.
- 2.2. GMCA received 124 applications to the Spirit programme and six applications to the Sustain strand. Following eligibility checks, undertaken by GMCA staff not in the Culture team, 10 applications were deemed ineligible, largely due to not proposing cultural activity.
- 2.3. 120 applications (114 Spirit, six Sustain) were taken forward for full appraisal by GMCA’s Research and Skills teams, with scoring based on criteria published in applicant guidance. Applications were scored on Current Work, Delivery of priorities, Proposed Work, Geography of Delivery, Impact, Management, Governance and Finance. Scores were then added up to produce a ranked list which was then balanced according to published balancing criteria – Diversity, Geography, Artform and Scale – to ensure that the final proposed portfolio was properly representative of the cultural landscape of Greater Manchester
- 2.4. In developing the proposed portfolio list officers ensured that recommended applications all demonstrated a sufficient level of quality, supported the current cultural ecosystem and, where new organisations were welcomed into the portfolio, that they scored highly, passing a quality threshold and provided a specific offer, not currently delivered by the GM Culture Portfolio.
- 2.5. More than half of applications received were from City of Manchester-based organisations, reflecting the concentration of cultural infrastructure in the city. The balancing process recognises this concentration while ensuring that the proposed portfolio supports investment, as well as delivery, in all 10 GM districts, continuing the demonstrable success of this approach by previous GMCA Culture Fund portfolios.

## **3. Investment**

- 3.3 Part B of this report proposes a final balanced portfolio of high-scoring applications to the Spirit and Sustain strands of investment, that supports the

current ecology while recommending investment in seven 'new' high-scoring organisations, not currently funded by GMCA.

3.4 In developing a balanced portfolio within a responsible budget ask, the following approach was used;

- Where organisations are of strategic benefit to Greater Manchester, but their applications didn't sufficiently demonstrate value for the amount requested, it is proposed that GMCA make reduced offers. Agreed delivery will reflect the amount awarded.
- Where currently funded organisations have requested less investment or did not apply to join this portfolio it is proposed that the value of the reduction should be directed to supporting 'new' high-scoring, strategically important organisations.
- Based on scores and delivery of activity not currently delivered by the GM Culture Portfolio it is recommended that seven new high-scoring, strategically important organisations are brought into the portfolio. Where there were exceptional circumstances relating to an organisation at time of application, and officers have been working with key stakeholders throughout the appraisal period to determine the best course of action, it is proposed that investment be ringfenced until a mutually acceptable solution is found.
- It is proposed that 22 currently-funded organisations in the Spirit pillar, who made a compelling case for an increase, will receive an annual increase of up to 10%, recognising that many currently-funded organisations have not received an increase in investment in more than five years.
- Where high-scoring currently-funded organisations either did not request an increase in investment, or did not make a compelling case for an increase it is proposed they be supported at existing levels, with negotiated delivery to reflect amount awarded as required.
- The three Sustain organisations requesting more than £200,000 p/a are able to access high-value schemes like Orchestra, Theatre and Museums Tax Relief so it is proposed that all Sustain organisations are offered standstill funding with agreed delivery reflecting the amount awarded as required.

3.5 The 'new' organisations recommended for funding reflect the changing needs of Greater Manchester, providing investment for more organisations who support

GM residents' physical and mental wellbeing, as well as improving the diversity of the GMCA Culture portfolio and supporting new, strategically important organisations in music, theatre and visual arts.

## 4. SPIRIT & SUSTAIN RECCOMENDATIONS

- 4.1. Current annual investment into the GMCA culture budget is £3.3m from district contributions and £1.1m from Retained Business Rates. This includes an ongoing commitment of £460,000 into social impact organisations and the GM VCSE Accord.
- 4.2. The balance is invested in the GM Culture Portfolio, strategic investment and programme management. The amount 'saved' by the recommended portfolio that sees current organisations leaving the portfolio with a reduced ask or with a reduction to reflect required delivery is £398,936 p/a.
- 4.3. The cost of increasing awards to 22 currently-funded organisations who made a compelling case for an increase, each of which will receive of no more than 10% increase per year, is £139,014 p/a.
- 4.4. The cost of bringing seven new strategically important organisations into the GM Culture Portfolio is £235,143 p/a.
- 4.5. The amount ringfenced under 'exceptional circumstances' is £50,000 p/a.
- 4.6. This means that while the number of organisations supported by GM Culture would increase by seven and 22 organisations would receive an annual increase of up to 10% under this proposal, the increased ask once portfolio changes are applied, is £25,211 p/a. It is recommended that this additional investment is funded through Retained Business Rates.

## 5. DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

- 5.1 The new investment approach approved by GMCA includes a further three pillars, Inspire, Collaborate and Strategic. The following amounts are recommended to deliver the ambitions of the total approach, with a focus on supporting delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy.
- 5.2 **INSPIRE £100,000 p/a**  
Inspire will support organisations and individuals with small one-off grants using



a simple application process, recognising the barriers to accessing funding experienced by grass-roots organisations, diverse communities and freelancers. The inequality of access to funding came into sharp focus during the Pandemic and was a clear recommendation during consultation. The fund will be administered on behalf of GMCA following an open tender process.

**5.3 COLLABORATE £120,000 p/a**

Consortia of cultural organisations and non-artistic partners will be able to access up to £40,000 per project to develop and deliver programmes across three themes, aligned with the Greater Manchester Strategy; Greener, Fairer, More Prosperous. These programmes will encourage cross-sector collaboration and bring partners and investment into Greater Manchester, with a clear focus on match funding and innovation.

**5.4 STRATEGIC £150,000 p/a**

Strategic funds will be used to deliver strategic projects, including GM Town of Culture, Creative Improvement Districts, initiatives developed by the Greater Manchester Music Commission and StreamGM as well as providing match-funding for one-off events like WOMEX

**5.5 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT £70,000 p/a**

Programme management costs remain at the same level as they have for the past five years, funding the GMCA Culture team to deliver all activity in this investment proposal.

## **6. PROPOSED BUDGET**

- 6.1. Requested budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26 is broadly in line with current annual investment of £3.3m from GM Districts and £1.1m of Retained Business Rates. This includes the ongoing commitment to social impact organisations of £460,000 p/a. The approach outlined in this proposal represents a three-year indicative financial commitment, subject to annual review.
- 6.2. The proposed budget for the new investment approach set out in the report, to include the expanded portfolio (listed in Part B) and support for development funds, as outlined above, would represent an annual investment of £4,425,000 – £3.3m district contributions as previously and £1.125m GMCA Retained Business Rates - a small increase of £25,000 p/a

## **7. TOWN OF CULTURE**

- 7.1. The Greater Manchester Town of Culture programme was launched in 2019. Bury became GM's first Town of Culture in 2020, with a £50,000 award made from GM Culture Strategic Funds.
- 7.2. While Bury worked tirelessly throughout 2021 on online programmes, including United We Stream, which saw more millions of people around the world tune into content filmed at Bury Met, it became clear that Bury deserved a bigger celebration once public gatherings were allowed again.
- 7.3. In late 2020 GMCA agreed to roll-over GM's inaugural Town of Culture to 2021, giving Bury the opportunity to make the most of the title, including securing Arts Council England funding for the programme.
- 7.4. In December 2021, following a competitive process, Stalybridge was awarded GM Town of Culture 2022 and has run an exciting programme throughout the year, with a focus on community and nature.
- 7.5. Both Bury and Tameside were able to lever in significant additional investment, from partners including Arts Council England, to supplement the £50,000 awarded by GMCA
- 7.6. If a three-year indicative GM Culture budget is agreed we will open the competition for the GM Town of Culture 2023 in Feb and will announce the winner in March.

7.7. For this year, it is expected that the competition process will remain largely unchanged from previous years, with a light-touch application process completed by interested local authorities before a sub-group of the GM Culture and Heritage Steering Group selects the successful town.

7.8. The approach will be revised as part of a GM Culture governance review and as part of GM Culture Strategy development, taking place throughout 2023.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1. Recommendations can be found at the front of this report.