

## Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25 October 2024

Subject: Greater Manchester Equality Panels Annual Report

Report of: Councilor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Communities

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### Purpose of Report

This report summarises the activity and impact of the Greater Manchester Equality Panels through their individual Annual Reports 2023-24.

### Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People's Panel, Youth Combined Authority, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Panel Advisory Panel, Older Peoples Equality Panel and LGBTQ+ Equality Panel
2. Endorse commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity.

Contact Officers

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# Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

## Recommendation - Key points for decision-makers

1. Note the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People’s Panel, Youth Combined Authority, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Race Equality Panel, Faith and Belief Panel Advisory Panel, Older Peoples Equality Panel and LGBTQ+ Equality Panel
2. Endorse commitment of all Portfolios to proactively engage with Equality Panels (individually or collectively) on issues that impact communities-of-identity.

## Impacts Questionnaire

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	<p>There are seven Equality Panels, focused on improving outcomes and reducing discrimination faced by people from communities-of-identity (protected characteristics); Faith, Race, Women and Girls, Older People, Young People, Disabled People, LGBTQ+ People experiencing inequality often face multiple issues, including social and economic disadvantage. The Panels focus on those communities often most disadvantaged and discriminated in society</p> <p>The Panels provide insight into the access, experience and outcomes of diverse communities. This should help public services develop more effective policies and deliver more efficient services.</p> <p>Membership of the Panels are residents with lived-experience, or representatives of voluntary organisations that support residents. Engaging the Panels in decisions and services that affect them at the earliest stage leads to better outcomes and value for money</p> <p>The Panels bring together diverse community voices, strengthening understanding and collaborating to celebrate Greater Manchester’s culture of social inclusion</p>	
Health	G	The Panels cover a range of topics across Health and Wellbeing, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example influencing social care, mental health and womens health.	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	The Panels enable public services to communicate and enage with diverse communities. Reducing inequality in these communities builds resilience. Tackling discrimination will enable public services to become more representative of their communities, building trust and confidence.	
Housing	G	The Panels contribute to the Homelessness Action Network, Places for Everyone consultation, racial inequalities in social housing, Good Landlord Charter and the Mayors commitment to Housing First	
Economy	G	The Panels cover a range of topics across Economy and Employment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Panels are informing the Good Employment Charter and Workforce Equality Strategies	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	There is a specific focus in the new Digital Taskforce on Older People and Disabled People. The Older Peoples Panel and Disabled Peoples Panel are directly supporting this activity, providing professional expertise and connectivity into their communities. This will ensure solutions meet the needs of target groups	
Carbon, Nature and Environment			
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target		The Equality Panels cover a range of topics across Environment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Youth Combined Authority contribution to the Green Summit.	
Further Assessment(s):		Equalities Impact Assessment and Carbon Assessment	
<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.

Carbon Assessment		
Overall Score		
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation
New Build residential	N/A	
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A	
New build non-residential (including public) buildings	N/A	
Transport		
Active travel and public transport		The Equality Panels have championed approaches to ensure public transport is accessible and safer to all residents, for example challenging closures to ticket offices
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A	
Access to amenities		The Equality Panels have championed approaches to ensure transport is accessible and safer to all residents, for example supporting womens safety on trams
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 paper describes work to manage risk relating to services for people with a protected characteristic.

## Legal Considerations

As set out in section 149 Equality Act 2010, a public authority (which includes the GMCA within its definition) must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This legislation is more commonly known as the Public Sector Equality Duty and is informed, amongst other things, in GM, by the work of the Equality Panels.

## **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The £385,875 annual investment enables the GMCA and partners to engage people experiencing inequality through the Equality Panels, facilitated by commissioned culturally appropriate organisations. Effective Equality Panels support public service resources to be invested in ways that are more targeted to those most at risk, reducing costs and achieving better outcomes. There is no additional financial ask relating to this paper.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

**Number of attachments to the report:** Seven

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

N/A

## **Background Papers**

N/A

## **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

## **Bee Network Committee**

N/A

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

N/A

# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Greater Manchester Equality Panels have been established to advise, proactively support and constructively challenge political leaders and policymakers to tackle the discrimination and disadvantage that cause injustice and inequality in society, and champion Greater Manchester as an inclusive city-region.

1.2 They do this by working together with the GMCA and partners to:

- Provide insight into Greater Manchester's diverse communities, enabling political leaders and public bodies to listen and engage in a more targeted and effective way
- Communicate key messages to our communities as trusted sources
- Codesign policies, programmes and strategies to ensure they work effectively for communities
- Support an asset-based approach, highlighting new opportunities (and challenges) for positive collaboration that build on the resources and strengths within our communities

1.3 The panels are independent advisory bodies, informing and influencing political and policy leads through dialogue and ensuring credibility with communities. They are not part of the statutory legal governance framework and do not have any decision-making authority. However, their position within the Equalities and Communities Portfolio ensures they retain a high profile, can influence positive change, and overcome any barriers they face.

1.4 There are seven panels – Race Equality Panel, Disabled People's Panel, Faith and Belief Advisory Panel, LGBTQ+ Equality Panel, Women and Girls Equality Panel, Youth Combined Authority and Older People's Equality Panel. Further information on the Panels can be found at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/equalities/>

1.5 Membership reflects diversity, across different demographics, districts, sectors and other interests. Recruitment is transparent, the Chairs selected by panel members and membership is publicised.

1.6 The Chairs of the Equality Panels meet regularly with the Portfolio Leads to explore opportunities for collaboration on intersectional issues and share common challenges to delivering impact. In addition, the Chairs are members of the Tackling Inequalities

Board, ensuring a strategic connection between the Panels and political and organisational leaders. These structures and connectivity enable the panels to have greater clarity of purpose; influencing the strategic agenda, mandate to work with public services (and challenge where necessary) and empowered to deliver impactful activity.

1.7 Each panel is facilitated by a culturally appropriate voluntary sector organisation, commissioned by GMCA using the same specification to ensure consistency of approach. This strengthens the support to panel members, creating strong foundations that enable greater flexibility within the panel to focus on the issues that are most important to their communities. Panel facilitators work in partnership with GMCA officers to ensure the panel can engage policymakers effectively, acting as a bridge between public services and the wider community. They meet regularly, sharing resources and practice, to deliver greater impact and value-for-money.

## **2. Equality Panels and the Greater Manchester Strategy**

2.1 In Greater Manchester, the pandemic exacerbated longstanding inequalities, as well as highlighting new ones. From access to good jobs, to transport, health and housing, the impact has been unequal and unfair, affecting different people, places and communities across Greater Manchester in very different ways.

2.2 A strong message from the Independent Inequalities Commission was that a deep understanding of the issues, and the solutions to those, can only come from working in and with those communities, being informed and guided by their voices and experiences. The Greater Manchester Strategy has a clear commitment to ensure policies and services support all diverse communities appropriately, and actively target resource at the people and places facing the greatest obstacles in life

2.3 Panel members give their time voluntarily and can often be sharing traumatic experiences of discrimination and disadvantage. It is crucial their time is used effectively and for maximum impact. The responsibility is on policymakers to engage early and genuinely with the Equality Panels and take proactive action to address the inequalities they have heard.

### 3. Activity and impact

3.1 The panels continue to strengthen their position and impact in the system, proactively supporting and constructively challenging leaders and officers to take action to address the stark inequalities too many people and communities face in this city-region. Over the last year, panel chairs have presented alongside the Portfolio Lead at four GMCA meetings:

- October 2023 – Elizabeth Cameron, (former) Race Equality Panel Chair, on the Race Equity Framework
- November 2023 – Melvin Bradley, Disabled Peoples Panel Co-Chair, on the Big Disability Survey
- February 2024 – Nakib Narat, Older Peoples Panel Chair, on the Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy
- March 2024 – Rabbi Warren Elf, (former) Faith and Belief Advisory Panel Co-Chair, on the Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant

3.2 Their participation has always been warmly received by GMCA, giving them recognition for their voluntary time and commitment, and the importance of the issues being addressed. In addition, panel chairs have issued statements alongside the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and spoken at a range of strategy launches and other public events.

3.3 The panels work together on common issues, bilaterally and all together, for example on the Greater than Violence Strategy, Hate Crime Plan and most recently on Good Employment Week, ensuring intersectionality retains a strong focus. Below summarises the panels individual annual reports attached as appendices.

#### 3.4 Disabled People's Panel (Appendix 1)

- The Disabled Peoples Panel is a pan-impairment panel, made up of 17 Disabled People's Organisations from the ten districts, and facilitated by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. The panel and members operate from the perspective of the Social Model of Disability.
- Throughout the year, the panel have engaged with policymakers across a wide range of areas, highlighting the stark challenges for disabled people as reported in the panels two Big Disability Surveys. In addition, the panel contributes to Greater Manchester groups including digital inclusion, hate crime and cost-of-living. The panel also lobby

nationally for change, providing insight and challenge to Government Departments and the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

- Following a meeting with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the panel were pleased to see commitments in his Manifesto on two of the biggest challenges for disabled people, social care and benefits. The panel look forward to supporting these, ensuring the voice of disabled people is at the heart of the Social Care Commission and shaping proposals for devolution of benefits.

### 3.5 Faith and Belief Advisory Panel (Appendix 2)

- The panel acts as a 'network of networks', bringing together representatives from 40 single and mixed Faith, Belief and Interfaith networks, facilitated by Pulse Regeneration. The aims of the panel are to optimise the Faith and Belief contribution to the Greater Manchester Strategy and ensure that the role of Faith and Belief in society is recognised and valued.
- Building on last year's panel statement on the positive contribution of the Faith and Belief Sector to public services and society, in March 2024 GMCA endorsed the Greater Manchester Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant, a set of principles and commitments that will guide engagement, collaboration and delivery between the sector and GMCA. Thriving local Interfaith Networks are crucial and locality conversations have commenced to explore how the Covenant can bolster local relationships and infrastructure.
- The Panel have collaborated with the LGBTQ+ Equality Panel to develop a Faith and Belief Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, demonstrating the positive impact panels can have in enabling constructive dialogue on challenging themes.
- In addition, members of the panel continue to be actively involved in a range of Action Networks, including homelessness, digital inclusion, net zero, real living wage and food security. The panel will host an event during Good Employment Week and are engaged in Live Well and GM Networks Connect, as well as continuing to strengthen the recognition of Faith in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Accord.

### 3.6 LGBTQ+ Equality Panel (Appendix 3)

- The LGBTQ+ Advisory Panel aims to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people across the city region by championing inclusion and ensuring that the needs of our diverse



communities are fully considered across Greater Manchester. The panel is facilitated by the LGBT Foundation.

- The panel has three primary work areas:
  - o End LGBTQ+ hate crime in GM, by assisting with the accurate collection of hate crime data across GM, through a new Hate Crime Survey in partnership with the GM Hate Crime Working Group.
  - o Make spaces safer for LGBTQ+ people in GM, through the formation of an LGBTQ+ inclusion accreditation scheme for GM services, which was included by the Mayor of Greater Manchester in his recent Manifesto.
  - o End LGBTQ+ conversion therapy in GM, by increasing the number of signatories of the Greater Manchester Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, improving awareness of the pledge and supporting its implementation. This has included collaborating with the Faith and Belief Advisory Panel on endorsing the pledge.
- Aligned with the panel is an LGBTQ+ Sector Engagement Group, which brings together public, private and voluntary sector professionals working with communities. The panel has also been attending Pride events across the city-region, promoting and engaging people in the work of the panel, in preparation for recruitment of new members later this year.

### 3.7 Older Peoples Equality Panel (Appendix 4)

- The Older Peoples Panel supports political leaders and public bodies to be more informed about how their decision-making impacts older people, enabling more effective policy and services, as well as aiming to build positive relationships with communities and neighbourhood groups in each borough to identify strengths, listen to older people and share key messages. The panel works in partnership with the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub and is facilitated by Macc.
- The panel has prioritised three issues within the Age Friendly Strategy.
  - o Financial hardship for older people – highlighting the extreme pressure on advice services which is common across all boroughs, impacts for older people in the workplace and how the housing crisis is impacting older people.
  - o Care settings – engaging with the Greater Manchester Adult Social Care Transformation Team and involved in two governance groups: Enhanced Health at Home/ Proactive Care and Carers Programme Delivery.

- Digitalisation – the panel recruited a test team to conduct an age friendly audit of Council websites. The subsequent report made a series of recommendations, with collaboration between Councils and the panel continuing.
- Running throughout the panel is the theme of “Valuable not Vulnerable”. Older people play a key role in society and are a diverse group, in both age and experiences, which was highlighted in their ‘Living it up in later life’ event. The panel provides the opportunity for older people to promote and share a positive perspective on ageing in Greater Manchester.

### 3.8 Race Equality Panel (Appendix 5)

- The Race Equality Panel work to promote racial equality, tackle racial discrimination and foster positive relationships between ethnically diverse communities, and embed the Public Sector Equality Duty in policies, processes, procedures, practices and people development. Over the last year, the panel has focused its efforts on Policing, Employment and Housing In addition, after three years the panel has renewed its membership, and a new facilitating organisation, Black Beetle Health, have been appointed.
- Examples of the positive impact of the panel include
  - Working closely with key stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and officers within GMP and GMCA, addressing community concerns including building trust through community engagement, recruitment and retention of diverse officers, and the cultural competency training and skills within the force. The Deputy Mayor is committed to working collaboratively with the panel, supporting her in holding GMP to account for achieving racial equity in policing.
  - Engaging senior leaders across the public and private sectors, including GMCA and Good Employment Charter, to strengthen approaches to workforce equity and inclusion. Building on the success of the panel’s annual employment events, raising awareness and sharing good practice across organisations and sectors, the Panel will be delivering a session during this year’s Good Employment Week
  - Throughout the year the panel have continued to play a key role in shaping the new Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework, now being implemented by GMCA, Councils and other public services. The panel has also proactively supported the Civic Leadership Programme.

- Looking forward the panel will continue the hard work and progress of the previous membership, striving forward on building confidence in policing, improving employment access, experience and outcomes, and tackling racial inequalities in housing. In addition, there will be a greater focus on health and wellbeing, in collaboration with Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board.

### 3.9 Women and Girls Equality Panel (Appendix 6)

- The Women and Girls Equality Panel aims to address the inequalities facing women and girls in GM. This year has been a period of significant growth and development for the panel, welcoming 18 new members and appointing new co-chairs. In addition, the Panel has made concerted efforts to be more reflective of the views of young women and through their partnership with RECLAIM welcomed their first under-18 panel member.
- The Panel is facilitated by the Pankhurst Trust and utilises its partnership with GM4Women 2028 to enable strong engagement with women and girls across the city-region, as well as data from the annual Pankhurst-Fawcett Scorecard, which highlights that over the first five years there has hardly been any sustained positive change for Women and Girls across the ten indicators. This reinforces the need for gender mainstreaming in policymaking, an approach embedded throughout the panel's work.
- This year the panel have continued to focus on ending violence against Women and Girls, providing insight into the #IsThisOkay? Campaign and the Baird Enquiry on experiences of arrest and custody. In addition, the panel submitted recommendations to the Integrated Care Board on barriers to women's health, contributed to the development of the Local Transport Plan around safety on public transport. Looking forward the panel will continue to contribute to Greater Manchester's Gender Based Violence Strategy Delivery Plan and deliver a session during Good Employment Week.

### 3.10 Youth Combined Authority (Appendix 7)

- The Youth Combined Authority (YCA) brings together young people from 26 youth organisations across Greater Manchester, including locality Youth Parliaments and groups that support diverse young people, ensuring the membership is rich in lived experience and inclusivity. The YCA has a strategic role advising, supporting and challenging the Children and Young Peoples Board, as well as a range of other Portfolio areas, and is facilitated by Youth Focus North West.

- The YCA has four priority areas: Education, Employment and Skills, Equity, Equality and Inclusion, Transport and Active Travel, and the Environment, exploring topics with policymakers at meetings and in Task and Finish Groups. Positive impact includes
  - o Presenting the views of young people at the Big Active Conversation in June 2023
  - o Contributing to the development of the Greater than Violence Strategy, with the YCA Chair speaking strategy's launch in December 2023
  - o Working in partnership with GMCA to help shape the new Greater Manchester Baccalaureate, producing a report of their recommendations
  - o Delivering a workshop on food waste and hidden hunger at the Green Summit in October 2023
  - o Testing the new toolkit developed by the Youth Steering Group of the Civic Leadership Programme
- In total, young people have given over 600 hours of voluntary time to the YCA, reporting increased levels of confidence, leadership skills, communication and teamwork because of their engagement within the YCA. The YCA membership changed in April 2024, with the new group keen to continue work on the MBacc, Bee Network and the other priority areas set out in their 2024-2026 Vision document.

## **4. Recommendations**

4.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.