

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Subject: Establishing Women & Girls', Faith, and Race Equality Panels

Report of: Councillor Brenda Warrington, Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing, and Pam Smith, Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To provide the GMCA with an update on the work to date towards the establishment of three equalities panels, representing the views and interests of Women & Girls, Faith communities, and BAME communities. These panels are in addition to the established Youth Combined Authority, LGBT Panel, Disabled People Panel and the GM Ageing Hub which are providing specific advice and guidance currently to the GMCA and the Mayor.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

GMCA is requested to:

1. Note and comment on the work to date, informing the further development of the panel propositions
2. Agree the approaches and principles set out to enable the immediate establishment of the Women & Girls Equality Panel, and a Race Equality Panel

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**Equalities Implications:**

*This report, and the proposed establishment of specific equalities panels have been developed to address inequalities, and ensure the voices of people from across equalities groups are represented, and responded to in the design of GMCA policy and delivery*

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

*The establishment of the proposed equalities panels will enable the views and representations of members of GM society into the design and delivery of policy and activity, including improvements in access to green spaces, sustainable transport options and promotion and viability of alternative working models, supporting increased remote working and meeting virtually to support and help maintain environmental improvements.*

**Risk Management:**

N/A

**Legal Considerations:**

*The establishment of the proposed equalities panels will support the GMCA in fulfilling, and going beyond the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.*

**Financial Consequences – Revenue:**

*Revenue funding for the establishment and operation of the equalities panels has been identified via GMCA budgets.*

**Financial Consequences – Capital:**

N/A

**Number of attachments to the report: 0**

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

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

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The coronavirus pandemic has brought equalities issues into sharp focus, highlighting inequalities which existed in our society, and exposing new inequalities. The existing equalities panels and advisory functions have been providing a regular flow of information and experience to inform community impacts arising from the coronavirus outbreak, and those effective mechanisms to ensure views are being gathered are informing and influencing the recovery and future responses.
- 1.2 Over the last year substantive work has been undertaken to understand the issues and to inform a suitable response and structure to respond to issues affecting women and girls, and faith and race communities. Given the urgent need to fully understand the inequalities experienced by these communities in light of Covid, and the development of appropriate responses, it is now timely that the work undertaken to date is brought together and the panels established as quickly as possible.
- 1.3 At the current time, it is imperative that GMCA should establish more extensive links with communities of identity and that effective mechanisms are in place enabling this to happen. The work undertaken to date to shape and inform the panel proposals has taken different approaches for each of the areas of interest and is summarized in the following sections of this report.
- 1.4 It should be noted the panels proposed to be established, and the existing equalities panels will input into the work to be undertaken by the Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission.

## **2. WOMEN & GIRLS' EQUALITY PANEL**

- 2.1 The Greater Manchester Women's Voice Task & Finish Group was established to shape and develop work and understanding of gender inequality in Greater Manchester. The Group has brought together partners, with a commitment from senior leaders across GM to collaborate, developing a shared work programme in support of achieving equality for women and girls across the city-region.
- 2.2 The Task & Finish Group has developed a shared evidence base which can be used for case making, to influence, and inform decision making. An initial action plan has been developed which aims to establish the necessary processes and practices to drive the changes required. The Group, and the current action plan, identified the need for the establishment of a Women and Girls Equality Panel as a fixed piece of GMCA infrastructure to develop a detailed action plan, focusing on priority areas for intervention in addressing gender inequality within GM policy making and delivery.
- 2.3 The role and purpose of the Panel will be 'to enable women and girls to live their best life in Greater Manchester'. Adopting an all age approach, where women and girls, regardless of address, have equality of opportunity to start well, live well and age well in Greater Manchester. The Panel will establish a clear vision for women and girls in Greater Manchester, understanding

issues and inequalities impacting on their lives and shaping and informing responses to those issues in the current context of the coronavirus pandemic.

2.4 The work undertaken to date have identified four areas of urgent need, all of which will need greater consideration due to possible exacerbation of issues arising from the pandemic:

- **Safety** - Activity under this priority will look to make advancements in informing best practice around violence against women and girls (including trafficking and anti-slavery) and will look to identify other key areas of focus around women and girls safety in Greater Manchester.
- **Employment, Business and the Economy** - Activity under this priority will involve greater understanding of disadvantage experienced by women and girls as the economy restarts and rebuilds. Areas of focus may be around female progression into senior roles, disadvantage experienced related to part-time working, specific support for female entrepreneurs, and working with education and skills systems to ensure greater access and take up of STEM subjects and other growth areas of the economy.
- **Health** - Activity under this priority will look to recommend specific focus areas of best practice to work into the Panel. Understanding both physical and mental health issues arising or exacerbated by Covid, and working with health and care colleagues to ensure appropriate support and services are in place, such as Alcohol Support, Community Support Services, Healthy Lifestyles and the importance of integrated approaches to Women's health.
- **Representation in public life** – Building on the initial research undertaken regarding the representation of female politicians in Greater Manchester, the Panel should consider women's representation in all aspects of public life and begin to understand how issues such as childcare and parental leave influence the extent to which females are prominent in public life.

2.5 The Panel's work will be driven by ambitious targets, and a comprehensive evidence base, which will form the key lines of enquiry approach for the delivery of the work of the Panel. The Panel will lead and facilitate co-produced responses to identified instances of gender imbalance. Recommendations will be made to the GMCA, partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to drive and operationalise change.

2.6 The Panel will be accountable for the production of an annual work programme. Progress monitoring and ensuring the successful delivery of agreed actions will be the responsibility of the Panel.

### **3. WOMEN & GIRLS' PANEL MEMBERSHIP, RECRUITMENT AND RESOURCING**

3.1 The Panel's membership will need to ensure a representative mix of members, ensuring the viewpoints of women and girls from a cross-sector of society are represented. The Panel will need to ensure a suitable geographical representative from across GM, as well as ensuring it captures the views of women and girls from different socioeconomic groups, business, VCSE and public sector representation. It is envisaged that as a member of the Panel, individuals will

engage with their networks, ensuring that they represent the views of those organisations working in similar fields.

- 3.2 It is proposed that for the first year the Panel is Chaired jointly by Brenda Warrington, Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing (and Chair of the Women & Girls Task and Finish group), and Pam Smith, Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Ageing (and also a member of the T&F group). This will provide a level of consistency at the current time and enable the swift establishment of the Panel. The position of Chair will be reviewed on an annual basis. Beverly Hughes, GM Deputy Mayor will also be a core member of the Panel, ensuring appropriate representation and leadership regarding policing, crime, personal safety and abuse in the Panel's work and operation.
- 3.3 A supporting officer group will also be established, building on the existing membership of the Women's Voice Task and Finish Group. It is proposed the current group be re-evaluated to act as a steering group with a remit to actively promote women and girls equality and provide support to the Panel.
- 3.4 There will be a six week open recruitment process in which organisations and individuals will be able to apply to become a panel member. A number of organisations will also be invited to apply given their expertise and work in this area (see annex A).
- 3.5 An online application form will be available on the GMCA website and organisations and individuals will be offered the opportunity to speak to those involved in the Panel's development to gain further information on its role. A shortlist of organisations will be developed (with recommendations) and the final panel will be agreed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester.
- 3.6 A funded secretariat / convening function will be established to support the Panel and steering group, with a suggested external agency to the GMCA to lead this; ideally an appropriate VCSE organisation, with GMCA seeking expressions of interest from organisations to deliver this. The secretariat's responsibilities will include: keeping the work programme up to date, assisting with preparing reports, arranging meetings, taking minutes and liaising with the Panel Chair / steering group chair, GMCA Strategy Team, the GM4Women group and task groups and other stakeholders as appropriate. In addition, funding may be required to support the production of in-depth research reports, to run events etc.
- 3.7 The GMCA Monitoring Officer, in discussion with the joint Chairs of the Panel, will put in place contract arrangements with a lead organisation to undertake this support work. A budget of £50,000 over the first two years delivery has been identified from the Mayoral Priorities Budget. This funding has been agreed under delegated authority. The budget allocation is in line with the level of resources provided to other established GMCA equalities panels.

#### **4. FAITH AND RACE PANELS**

- 4.1 Following the Cohesion Summit in July 2019, the Mayor of Greater Manchester

requested that a series of roundtables be convened to explore the establishment of a Greater Manchester 'faith and race equality panel', and if so, what it should do, and who should be involved.

- 4.2 Two engagement sessions were convened with representatives from faith and race communities in October 2019 and February 2020. The first session included community leaders operating strategically across Greater Manchester, and attendees at the second workshop included around 100 people representing diverse faiths and BAME communities at a borough and neighbourhood level, from all 10 local authority areas.

## 5. OUTLINE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The engagement showed a huge diversity across communities of faith and race, and a split amongst the faith and race leaders about whether there should be one or two panels. However, voting at the second workshop showed overwhelming support for having two separate panels as the issues faced by communities of faith and race were seen as being too complex for a single panel to be able to address.
- 5.2 The panels should be fully aligned with work of other existing faith or race networks and Mayoral advisory panels. Furthermore, it will be important to ensure geographic representation from faith and race communities from across the whole of Greater Manchester.
- 5.3 **Taking into account the urgency of the situation, learning from the engagement work, and building from practice of the other GM advisory panels, it is now proposed that GMCA convenes a GM Race Equality Panel with immediate effect.**
- 5.4 A second, Faith Panel, will be set up at a later date.
- 5.5 GMCA will convene the Race Equality Panel and provide the initial secretariat for its operation.
- 5.6 It is proposed that the Panel has an independent Chair appointed by GMCA, and an open recruitment process for Panel members. Expressions of Interest in membership will be invited and considered against a set of selection criteria. The aim will be that the Panel will reflect the diversity of GM, and achieve as broad a representation as possible across different races, the 10 districts, across sectors and other protected characteristics such as gender and disability.
- 5.7 The remit of the Panel should be about challenging GM public sector bodies on fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. It will be extremely visible in communities but also in public life. Panel members will possess strong links to the communities that they represent and with grass roots organizations, as well as with the existing representative networks.
- 5.8 Given the complexity of the issues in scope for the Race Equality Panel, it is suggested that it might establish sub-groups to take forward specific pieces of work, and that these sub-groups may include members from the Faith Panel, once this is established, as dictated by the subject under discussion. The Race Equality Panel will meet on a monthly basis and the Chair will meet regularly with the Chairs of the other advisory panels, in order to co-ordinate and align activity.

- 5.9 Prior to the establishment of the Race Equality Panel, GMCA will work with local authorities and community representatives to undertake an initial listening exercise with members of the BAME community in the coming weeks to help understand needs, actions that need to be taken and support proposals the panel can eventually take forwards.

## 6. RACE EQUALITY PANEL KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 Feedback from the engagement showed that there was a strong desire for the Race Equality Panel to challenge the mainstream agenda, increasing the visibility of issues relating to race. The emerging list of topics in scope for the Panel might include:
- Hate crime and preventing discrimination
  - Employment and labour market inequalities
  - Health and wellbeing inequality, including housing and community safety
  - Educational inequalities and achievement, including STEM
  - Financial inclusion and poverty
- 6.2 It is clear that the unequal impacts of Covid-19 will need to be added to this in the light of recent events.
- 6.3 The Race Equality Panel will promote positive role models (particularly in leadership positions), engage with the business community, and act as a voice for communities. It might monitor the progress of public agencies, enforcing agreements that already exist and contextualize conversations. Finally, the Panel might raise awareness of existing support within communities and campaign on their behalf, with the help of high profile people.
- 6.4 The Panel will include in its scope, a requirement to support the proposed GM Independent Inequalities Commission with insight and where possible, statistical data for consideration by the Independent Panel.

## 7. RACE EQUALITY PANEL NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 It is clear that the proposed scope of work for the Race Equality Panel will be huge, and has in fact been broadened by the crisis surrounding Covid-19. Furthermore, the pandemic means that there is an extreme urgency in convening this Panel.

As mentioned above, it is proposed that GMCA officers provide the secretariat for the Race Equality Panel, and the following actions are now undertaken:

- **Terms of Reference** - the terms of reference should be drafted by GMCA on the basis of other existing panels, noting the need for consistency and principles of operation with the other advisory panels
- **Appointment of Independent Chair** – a role description will be developed for the independent chair, with appointment being made from a short list agreed with the Mayor and Lead Member for Equalities.
- **Recruitment** - An open and transparent process for appointment of members to the Race Equality Panel is put in place, and around 15 people should be appointed to the Panel. Recruitment should seek to ensure that there is at least one representative from each of the 10 GM districts, with the other members being appointed to ensure that there is as broad a representation across race groups and networks.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 GMCA is requested to:

1. Note and comment on the work to date, informing the further development of the panel propositions
2. Agree the approaches and principles set out to enable the establishment of the Women & Girls Equality Panel, and a Race Equality Panel

## **Annex A**

### **Organisations to be invited to apply to be on the GM Women and Girls Equality Panel:**

1. Representative from each of the 10 GM local authorities
2. Bolton NHS Trust
3. Oldham Women's Inspire
4. The Pankhurst Trust
5. Women's Aid
6. Action Together (Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside)
7. Salford CVS
8. 10GM
9. Macc (Manchester local voluntary and community sector support organisation )
10. Rape Crisis
11. University of Manchester
12. GM4Women
13. The Proud Trust (young LGBTQ+people)
14. MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health)
15. GM BAME network
16. Ageing hub or representative from the age friendly network
17. Breakthrough UK
18. Wraparound (SEN)
19. IOD
20. Women in Law
21. GM Chamber
22. GM LEP
23. IPPR
24. CLES
25. Wai Yin Society
26. Flourish CIC
27. Sharp Futures
28. Kashmir Youth Project
29. Saheli Asian Women's Project, Manchester
30. Bury Asian Women's Centre
31. Mama Health and Poverty
32. Support and Action Women's Network
33. Tree of Life, Wythenshawe
34. Ebony and Ivory Community Organisation
35. Wonderfully Made Woman
36. Rep from GM Schools - head / exec head
37. Housing, education, transport