

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Subject: Equalities Advisory Panels – Annual Reports

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

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the 2019-20 Annual Reports of the Disabled People’s Panel, and the LGBTQ+ Adviser and Panel for consideration. On the basis of the activities and outcomes presented, the report seeks support to extend the grant funding agreements with the organisations that facilitate these panels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. Note the Annual Reports provided by the Disabled People’s Panel, and the LGBTQ+ Adviser and Panel
2. Support funding for the GM Disabled People’s Panel of £75,000 from October 2020 until March 2022, subject to final approval of the Combined Authority budgets
3. Support funding for the LGBTQ+ Panel of £45,000 from October 2020 until March 2022, subject to final approval of the Combined Authority budgets

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Equalities Implications:

The Disabled People’s Panel and LGBTQ+ Panel and Adviser enable broad engagement with specific communities of identity and therefore support GMCA to deliver its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures –

Although this proposal will have little environmental impact, relevant clauses will be inserted into the grant funding contracts for the organisations which facilitate these panels.

Risk Management:

This proposal is regarded as being low risk.

Legal Considerations:**Financial Consequences – Revenue:****Financial Consequences – Capital:**

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: 2

- *Annual Report of the GM Disabled People’s Panel*
- *Annual Report of the GM LGBTQ+ Adviser and Panel*

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

XX

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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?		N/A
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Two panels of experts have been established to advise the Mayor, the Leader with portfolio for Equalities and GMCA on key issues relating to disability and to tackle the inequalities that the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and related communities face; ensuring that all people from these communities of identity can feel included, valued and safe.
- 1.2 Working side by side with officers at the GMCA, the panels bring a voice to these communities of identity and the opportunity for them to positively influence GM policies and strategies.
- 1.3 The panels also support the GMCA to carry out its duties under the 2010 Equalities Act, including advancing equality of opportunity for persons who share a relevant protected characteristic, and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.4 Both panels are convened by Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations which act in partnership with the Combined Authority. These organisations (the GM Coalition for Disabled People and Manchester Pride) provide strategic advice to the panels, convene meetings, support panel members, and guide their work programmes.
- 1.5 Each panel provides an Annual Report of their work in accordance with the terms of the partnership agreement with their convening organisation. This report presents the first Annual Report of each of these panels for consideration by the CA.

2. Disabled People's Panel

- 2.1 The GM Disabled People's Panel is convened by the GM Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) to champion new, improved standards of working with disabled people. The Coalition has a 30 year history of promoting the independence and inclusion of disabled people including the removal of the barriers disabled people face and challenging discrimination.
- 2.2 The Panel has embedded a positive vision of disability, adopting the Social Model of Disability which recognises that it is society that creates many of the barriers that prevent disabled people from having equal opportunities.
- 2.3 In order to provide the Panel with an active role in the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy by strengthening the voice of disabled people in shaping and challenging policy, their initial focus has been on:
 - Championing new, improved standards of working with disabled people's organisations
 - 'Reflecting the seven needs of Independent living that is underpinned by the Social Model of Disability including information; Peer Support; Housing; Equipment; Personal Assistance; Transport; and Access

- Benefitting all disabled people across Greater Manchester, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, faith, sexual identity or age.

2.4 The Disabled People's Panel comprises of representatives of Disabled People's organizations from across Greater Manchester, including; Breakthrough UK, Disability Stockport, University of Manchester Disabled University Staff Network, Embrace Wigan & Leigh, GM Autism Consortium, GMCDP, Manchester Deaf Centre, Manchester Disabled Peoples Access Group, Manchester People First, Manchester Disabled People Against Cuts, National Federation for the Blind UK, People First Tameside, Rochdale and District Disability Action Group, Salford Disability Forum.

2.5 Panel members reflect the skills, knowledge and experience of a diverse range of impairment specific groups and act in a manner which is transparent and accountable to its member groups and disabled people across Greater Manchester. Their work is aligned to the principles of an inclusive society recognizing that disabled people have full and equal rights

2.6 The work of the Disabled People's Panel includes:

- Issue-based advice and feedback to the public sector 'system'
- Thematic work
 - Supporting development and delivery of the GM Good Employment Charter
 - GM access and the built environment standards and their delivery
 - Understanding the impacts of Welfare Reform and working with DWP to address these
 - Maximising positive outcomes for disabled people in public sector commissioning and procurement
- Ensuring intersectionality – engaging across other communities of identity to share, learn and work together
- Developing a robust accountability and governance for the Panel

2.7 **Appendix 1** contains the text of the first Annual Report which has been prepared on behalf of the Panel by GMCDP. This report has been informed by a reflective workshop involving panel members and key stakeholders, and the feedback from a 360 survey carried out by GMCDP. It outlines key achievements during the panel's first year of operation, and takes a look forward to future activities and potential impacts.

2.8 The 360 survey of partners working with the Panel has shown that the perception of the Panel is that it has had significant impact in a very short time. The Panel, its officers and the co-chairs are seen as professional and transparent, improving the Panel's status and leading to its views being sought out and valued.

2.9 The Panel's view has already been sought on a huge range of topics, with the views of Disabled People having informed work around:

- Our Pass
- Transport and the Night-Time Economy

- Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter (In addition to providing policy feedback, the Panel shared accessible print guidelines and an accessible version of the Charter has been produced)
- Greater Manchester Strategy – Refresh
- Police Precept 2020-21
- Inclusive Growth
- Victims and witnesses of crime
- Request for future input on the recommendations from the Bolton Fire inquiry
- Hate crime

2.10 The Panel has raised the profile of the work of disabled people’s organisations, especially pan-impairment groups, to a wider audience and highlighted why they are needed in every of the ten localities in Greater Manchester. The very nature of the Panel members all being disabled members is unprecedented in Great Britain. Panel member organisations actively ask for input from their disabled members. This provides disabled people with a unique opportunity to shape what happens in Greater Manchester - the Panel meetings are not a room full of non-disabled people making decisions for disabled people.

2.11 It is clear that the sound and professional support provided by the GM Coalition for Disabled People has been integral to the Panel’s success in its first year.

2.12 Despite having achieved much in its first year of operation, there is much still to do and it is extremely important that the Panel continues its work to engage and influence on behalf of disabled people, to inform policy and take action, and to maximise the impact for disabled people from the public sector equalities duty. The Panel has already started to develop an ambitious plan for 2020-21, building from the strong foundations of their first year.

3. LGBTQ+ Adviser and Panel

3.1 The Mayor appointed Carl Austin-Behan as his LGBT Adviser in August 2018 to tackle the inequalities people of the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and related communities in Greater Manchester face, and ensure they feel included, valued and safe.

3.2 Alongside the Mayor’s Adviser, an Advisory Panel has also been appointed, which is convened by Manchester Pride and brings together 16 individuals with experience in this field to advise and support the Combined Authority in tackling the inequalities faced by the community within Greater Manchester.

3.3 In its first term, the Panel has been tasked with:

- Engaging the LGBTQ+ community in delivering the priorities of the Greater Manchester Strategy.
- Ensuring that the city region has strong and diverse leadership;
- Improving LGBTQ+ awareness; and,
- Delivering the ambitions of the Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Action Plan, published by the LGBT Foundation in 2017.

- 3.4 The membership of the Panel was decided on the basis of creating a diverse group of individuals who represent the full spectrum of the LGBTQ+ community and bring a wealth of experience and skills to their roles. As well as the LGBT Adviser, the panel involves business leaders, public sector inclusion and equalities leads, and representatives from charities and campaigning organisations.
- 3.5 The first annual report of the Adviser and Panel is attached at **Appendix 2**. It sets out a summary of their work to-date and a number of asks and recommendations for the GMCA.
- 3.6 The LGBT Adviser has been extremely active in engagement and promotion all 10 local authority areas. He has supported Rochdale to hold its first ever Pride event ‘Rochdale in Rainbows’, and took an active role in supporting the first UK gender identity service being developed by the GM Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS England. The Adviser has also raised awareness of LGBT issues across a range of other communities and situation – taking part in mental health programmes, work through the GM Ageing Hub and supporting schools, for example.
- 3.7 The LGBTQ+ Advisory Panel was set up in 2018 to support the work of the LGBT Adviser. It is convened by Manchester Pride, and has agreed three main areas of focus:
- Education; with a focus on training teachers to understand LGBTQ+ issues and how to manage any controversy – an information pack is proposed which can be used across the public sector
 - Older LGBTQ+ people; to look at issues around housing, health and social care and arts and cultural programming
 - Outward facing objective which brings the spotlight to Manchester as a diverse and inclusive city
- 3.8 It is important that this work continues to facilitate the implementation of the Greater Manchester LGBTQ+ Action Plan, including having a role in tackling hate crime, promoting good practice in schools and services, and exploring the most acute issues which face this community.

4. Covid-19

- 4.1 Both Panels have continued to meet during the coronavirus crisis. The Disabled People’s Panel has met weekly using Zoom since the crisis began, gathering insight from disabled people and feeding this into GMCA, the Health and Social Care Partnership and TfGM.
- 4.2 In April 2020, the Disabled People’s Panel launched the GM Big Disability Survey, which gathered the views of nearly 1,000 disabled people and their families and carers from across GM. This survey provided evidence of the huge and unequal impact of the coronavirus epidemic on disabled people in Greater Manchester.
- 4.3 The findings of the survey confirmed the Panel’s assertion that **disabled people are being disproportionately affected by the pandemic**. The survey confirmed that disabled people:
- are experiencing social isolation,

- have reduced social care support,
- are reporting issues relating to access to food, medicine and information,
- are experiencing a severe impact on their mental health.

4.4 The final version of the survey report will be published soon by the GM Coalition for Disabled People, and will be accompanied by a number of recommendations for change. It will be important to be able to work with the Disabled People's Panel in order to improve existing practice and put in place measures to ensure this does not happen again as we move through to the next stages of this pandemic. The positive point to take from this report is that changes can be made. By implementing real, tangible changes we can improve the lives of disabled people as we move forward through this crisis.

4.5 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact upon the LGBTQ+ community in Greater Manchester, with a number of key annual events cancelled, including Manchester Pride. Throughout this difficult time, both the adviser and panel have continued their engagement work within the community and have fed insight and intelligence into GM public services to support the response to the crisis.

5. Future operation of the Panels

5.1 Given that this work represents a key GM priority, a budget of £100,000 was set aside between April 2020 and March 2022 for the GMCDP to facilitate the Disabled People's Panel, with the funding coming from deposit interest, subject to the final approval of Combined Authority budgets. During the lockdown period, a decision was taken by the GMCA Chief Financial Officer, using his delegated powers, to extend the existing contract with the GM Coalition for Disabled People until the end of September 2020 at a cost of £25,000. Endorsement is now sought to extend funding for the Panel until March 2022, at an additional cost of £75,000.

5.2 To-date, the LGBTQ+ Panel has been funded by Mayor through his Police & Crime Commissioner functions and this arrangement is scheduled to come to an end in March 2020. It is proposed that funding is provided in the total of £60,000 between April 2020 and March 2022 for the facilitation of the LGBTQ+ Panel, subject to the final approval of Combined Authority budgets. As with the Disabled People's Panel, a decision was taken by the Chief Financial Officer to extend the existing contract with Manchester Pride until the end of September 2020. Endorsement is now sought to extend funding for the Panel until March 2022, at an additional cost of £45,000.

5.3 The LGBTQ+ and Disabled People's Panels successfully represent two communities of identity, and sit alongside other arrangements across other communities, enabling them to influence policy and strategy in Greater Manchester in relation to the issues that most affect them. It is proposed to put in place formal arrangements to align and support the work plans of these advisory panels and engagement groups, to ensure effective co-ordination between these groups and with district-based arrangements, identify and address gaps in engagement, ensure consistent standards and enable joint working.