

**Developing a Race Equality Panel for Greater Manchester
Engagement Report**

August 2020

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In July 2019, the Mayor of Greater Manchester announced plans to establish race equality and faith advisory panels, and a programme of listening exercises subsequently took place to develop the panels. Engagement sessions were held with Greater Manchester's strategic, district and community leaders in race equality. The learnings from these sessions were used to inform proposals, which were due to be submitted to the Mayor and Greater Manchester's lead for equalities when COVID-19 gripped the country and developments were put on hold.

The pandemic has had a significant and disproportionate impact upon sections of our community, and therefore a final stage of the listening exercise was undertaken to playback the findings from the earlier sessions and 'check and challenge' whether they are still salient. The key lines of enquiry were:

- The issues a panel should address
- The purpose of the panel, e.g. its mission, aims and objectives
- The role of the independent chair
- The roles and responsibilities of panel members

Methodology and overview of participants

The final stage of the listening exercise took place in July and August 2020, and sought to hear from:

- Community leaders involved in earlier engagement activities, as well as emerging groups, including young people
- Public and VCSE sector organisations, particularly those with responsibility to address the issues and support solutions
- Equality leads, and GMCA advisory panels, so activity is in sync, and doesn't duplicate, work already underway across the city-region

There were three main ways to get involved, during which nearly 300 people took part:

- By joining a meeting of an established organisation or group – over 200 people took part in 10 sessions
- By completing a survey on www.GMConsult.org – 72 responses were received
- By joining a bespoke group discussion – however, only a handful of individuals expressed interest in this; all were offered the opportunity for a one-to-one interview, but none took this up

The key issues the panel should consider

The majority of listening exercise participants felt that the six issues highlighted during the earlier engagement¹ are the consequences of systemic racism and structural inequalities, and they felt that tackling inequalities, racism and discrimination should be at the heart of what the panel focuses on.

Nevertheless, both the survey and discussion groups revealed general agreement that these six issues were still important and should be considered by the panel.

Two additional issues that frequently came up in this stage of the listening exercise were discrimination in policing and criminal justice; and BAME leadership, especially in the public sector and political systems. There was also appetite for the panel to be involved in all aspects of the Greater Manchester Strategy, as well as the post-COVID recovery plans to ensure 'build back better' means better for all.

Purpose of the panel, and proposals to achieve its mission aims and objectives

Participants felt the mission, aims and objectives should be simple and easily understood so all communities can understand what the panel is setting out to do. Participants also felt the panel needs measurable outcomes so its effectiveness and successes can be demonstrated.

It was widely agreed the panel's overall mission should be to tackle the systemic and structural discrimination that leads to inequalities. Some mentioned by nature of its existence, the panel could inspire BAME people to participate in civic life and increase confidence that tackling inequalities and discrimination is being taken seriously.

In order to achieve that mission, most participants felt that the panel should have an explicit role in scrutinising and holding the public and VCSE sectors to account. Additionally, whilst participants agreed the panel should have a role in highlighting the issues, many strongly advocated that it should be involved in co-designing and implementing the solutions – working in partnership, rather than being 'done to'.

The role of the chair

The proposal to appoint a chair was not broadly supported, and many participants would prefer the panel to select from its members, or hold a further recruitment process. A number of participants recommended there are at least two chairs. It was also queried whether the proposals for a truly independent chair were possible, but most participants did agree the chair should work for the 'collective good' rather than solely for the community they're representing.

The role of panel members

There was widespread agreement that there should be an open recruitment process, and that anyone interested should be able to apply. It was also agreed that all 10 districts should be represented, as well as a broader range of communities as possible. A number of the

¹ Educational inequalities and achievement, including STEM; Employment and labour market inequalities; Financial inclusion and poverty; Hate crime and preventing discrimination; Health and wellbeing inequality; and Housing and homelessness, including hidden homelessness

discussion groups remarked that it wouldn't be possible for all of Greater Manchester's races, ethnicities and cultures to have a seat at the table, and they felt that consequently the panel needs a strong engagement infrastructure to support members' ability to involve those from outside their own communities. Some suggested this could be facilitated by existing BAME-led organisations, if adequately resourced. There were conflicting views about whether members should be existing 'leaders' or 'new voices', but there was widespread agreement that all should have insight or first-hand experience of the issues the panel will focus on.

Next steps

Findings from the listening exercise will be used to inform the final proposals for the Race Equality Panel, which will be submitted to the Mayor and Greater Manchester's lead for equalities. Once approved, the open recruitment process will start, which will be widely promoted and communities will be urged to encourage anyone they think would make a good panel member to apply. It is anticipated recruitment will take place in September and the panel will be convened in October.

1. Introduction

Greater Manchester is proud to be one of the most diverse places in the country, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority is committed to ensuring that the benefits of devolution make a difference to the lives of people across all our communities regardless of their background or personal characteristics.

A number of advisory panels have already been established to ensure communities are at the heart of decision-making. More information about our approach to equalities and our other advisory panels are available on our website².

In July 2019, at the Greater Manchester Cohesion Summit³, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, announced plans to establish race equality and faith advisory panels, and a programme of listening exercises subsequently took place with communities to understand the types of issues the panels could address, and how they would operate.

In late 2019 and early 2020, engagement sessions were held with Greater Manchester's strategic, district and community leaders in race equality. The learnings from these sessions were used to inform proposals, which were due to be submitted to the Mayor and Greater Manchester's lead for equalities, Cllr Brenda Warrington, when COVID-19 gripped the country and developments were put on hold.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and disproportionate impact upon sections of our community, and has highlighted the deep-seated inequalities that exist, particularly in relation to health, employment, and living conditions⁴.

Therefore, a further and final stage of the listening exercise was undertaken to playback the findings from the earlier sessions and 'check and challenge' whether they are still salient, and to ensure that the impact of COVID-19 and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement are taken into consideration when finalising plans for the panel. In particular it sought views on:

- The issues a panel should address
- The purpose of the panel, e.g. its mission, aims and objectives
- The role of the independent chair
- The roles and responsibilities of panel members

This report presents the findings from the final stage of the listening exercise.

² <https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/>

³ <https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/a-shared-future-one-year-on/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-review-of-disparities-in-risks-and-outcomes>

2. Methodology and overview of participants

The final stage of the listening exercise took place in July and August 2020, and particularly targeted the following groups:

- Community leaders involved in earlier engagement activities
- Emerging communities, and groups, including young people from diverse races, ethnicities and cultures
- Public and VCSE sector organisations, particularly those with responsibility to address the issues and support solutions
- Equality leads, and GMCA advisory panels, so activity is in sync, and doesn't duplicate, work already underway across the city-region

There were three main ways to get involved:

- By joining a meeting of an established organisation or group
- By completing a survey on www.GMConsult.org
- By joining a bespoke group discussion

The opportunities were widely promoted via those who had previously been involved in the panel's development, and they were actively encouraged to ask their friends, family, colleagues and wider networks to also take part. They were supported in doing so with a digital communication pack, which included content and images for sharing across social media.

Additionally, GMCA staff attended five established meetings to raise awareness of the listening exercise, including the Greater Manchester Advisory Panels' Coordinating Group, Manchester BME Network Leader's Forum, Rochdale's Grassroots Gathering, Salford's CVS session, and a meeting of the IOPC's Community Reference Group.

The listening exercise was also promoted via a GMCA press release which was picked up by local media outlets, as well as widely shared content across the Mayor and GMCA's social media channels.

- Over 200 people took part in 10 discussion groups, held with:
 - Black Health Agency
 - British Muslim Heritage Centre
 - Bury Faith Forum
 - Caribbean and African Health Network
 - GM BAME Leaders' Forum
 - GMCA BAME Staff Network
 - Stockport VCSE Steering Group
 - Tameside Independent Advisory Group
 - Trafford Community Cohesion Forum
 - Wigan Community Safety Partnership

- 72 survey responses were received, 35 of these were from a non-White British background (a further 14 did not answer the question)
- Only a handful of individuals expressed interest in joining a bespoke discussion group. All were offered the opportunity for a one-to-one interview, but none took this up

3. The issues the panel should address

The draft issues are based on the views received during previous engagement exercises. The listening exercise sought to check and challenge these proposals.

The feedback received previously showed there was a strong desire for the panel to challenge the mainstream agenda, increasing the visibility of, and seek solutions to, issues relating to race.

Participants told us that the main issues a panel should focus on are:

- Educational inequalities and achievement, including STEM
- Employment and labour market inequalities
- Financial inclusion and poverty
- Hate crime and preventing discrimination
- Health and wellbeing inequality
- Housing and homelessness, including hidden homelessness

The key issues the panel should consider

The vast majority of survey respondents and discussion group participants said that all six issues highlighted during the earlier engagement are the consequences of systemic racism and structural inequalities, and they felt that tackling inequalities, racism and discrimination should be at the heart of what the panel focuses on.

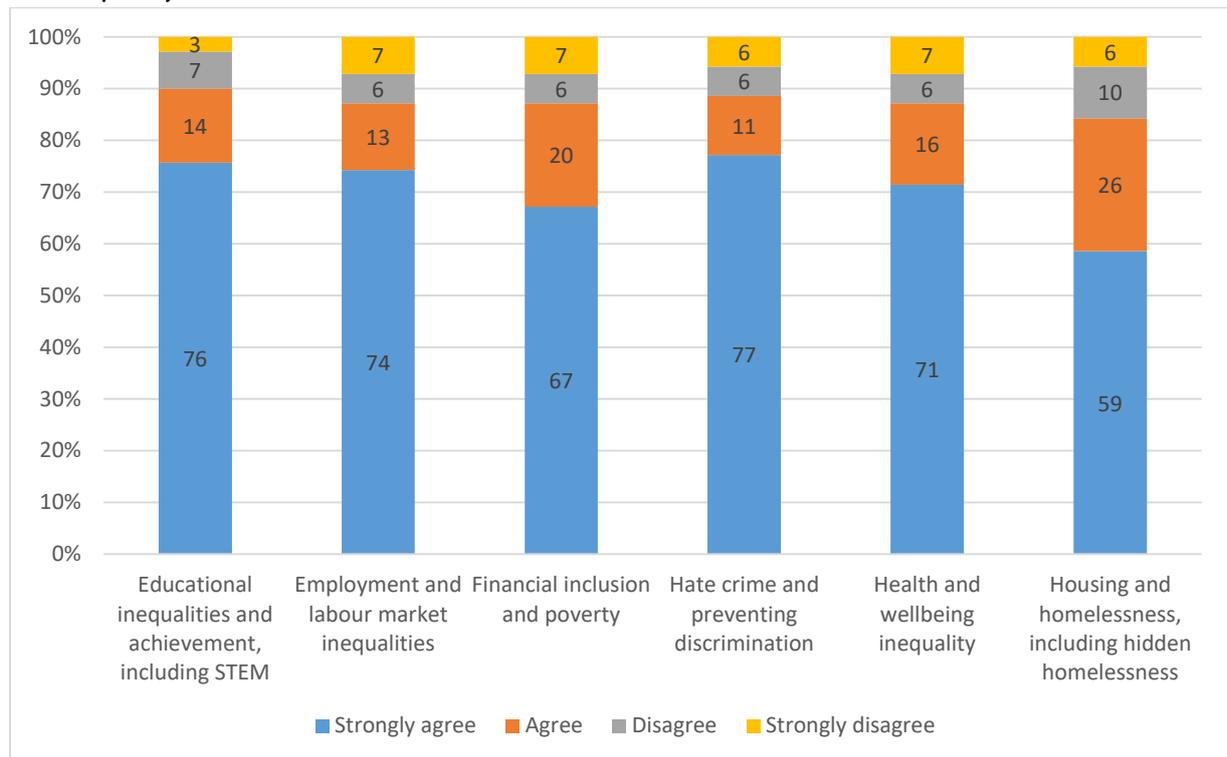
“All the above [issues] are symptoms of structural racism in our own systems - I think the panel needs to bite the bullet and tackle racism, unconscious bias, systemic bias and public perceptions and misunderstandings... going at the problem piecemeal or in silos will be ineffective - they need to be tackled in context.” (Survey respondent)

“Preventing discrimination should be the priority as that cuts across all.” (Discussion group participant)

Nevertheless, both the survey and discussion groups generally agreed that the six issues identified earlier were still important and should be considered by the panel.

“The issues have been the same for the last 100 years.” (Discussion group participant)

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that these issues should be considered by the Race Equality Panel?



Two additional issues that frequently came up in the discussions and the survey, which were not quite so prominent in previous engagement exercises, were:

- Discrimination in policing and criminal justice
- BAME leadership in Greater Manchester, especially in the public sector and political systems

Whilst there was support for programmes, that encourage representation in politics, e.g. Operation Black Vote, there is also a feeling that BAME people shouldn't have to get actively involved in formal politics to change the system, and that leadership positions as officers within organisations who are 'running Greater Manchester' was just as important.

“Can we get a commitment for BAME leadership in Greater Manchester, especially senior leadership teams of local authorities? When the people making decisions do not have the lived experiences or understanding, the systems and decisions they make fail anyone else whom falls under ‘other’. This is the issue, representation in these roles is vital. [I] feel that communities are ‘done to’ rather than being part of decision-making – so need BAME people part of the highest level and part of the decision-making.” (Discussion group participant)

There was also appetite for the panel to be involved in all aspects of the Greater Manchester Strategy, as well as the post-COVID recovery plans to ensure 'build back better' means better for all.

Other issues that participants felt the panel should consider included:

- Community cohesion
- Digital exclusion and access to technology, including the impact of future technologies/digital strategies further exacerbating existing inequalities
- Environmental issues, including access to green spaces, and the role of air quality in terms of deprivation and the exacerbation of race inequality
- Funding for VCSE infrastructure and to support some of the more deprived communities
- Immigration, and how immigrants are discriminated against by the system
- Media, and its negative portrayal of ethnic minorities
- Mutual aid and organisations working better together
- Social mobility
- Transport
- Windrush generation, and their contribution, impact and legacy

The priority of issues

Participants held different views about which issues should be considered first; as well as how many.

Some felt that all the issues (inequalities) feed into each other, and therefore the issues shouldn't be tackled in isolation; while others felt the panel should focus on one or two issues at any given time so tangible differences could be made, as opposed to *“going at all and scratching the surface.”*

Participants in BAME-community discussion groups frequently mentioned that these issues affect communities, races, ethnicities, cultures, ages, genders etc differently, and this should be reflected in the way the panel approaches the issues, as well as the solutions to them. Asylum seekers' experiences, in particular, were often, highlighted as being very different and in need of urgent consideration by the panel.

The point around BAME communities not being homogeneous and not being treated as such, was a consistent theme throughout the listening exercise, and is discussed in more detail in Section 6 of this report.

“We need to understand race and heritage and what each of our individual communities are like, before we start to prioritise these issues, as different things might be important to different people.” (Discussion group participant)

In a similar vein, participants in the public sector-led groups felt the issues hold varying degrees of significance in different parts of the city-region, and therefore the panel may need different focuses by geography. Additionally, these participants felt the panel should link in with the localities' work to tackle equalities.

Nevertheless, of the six issues, educational inequalities and achievement, including STEM was most frequently mentioned as the most pressing, followed by employment and labour market inequalities, then health and wellbeing inequalities.

“Education. If you can drive out inequalities in an educational setting then this will help to break down issues in other areas later.” (Survey respondent)

It was also suggested that the panel could prioritise the issues once it is established.

How the panel should consider the issues

Participants discussed several ways the panel could address the issues, which are outlined in the table below and overleaf.

It was also generally felt that to tackle any of these issues, there needs to be representation from:

- People who have experience of the inequality being tackled (expert by experience)
- People senior enough within institution(s) who are able to take decisions that make a difference
- Subject matter experts who have knowledge and some solutions to these issues

<p>Educational inequalities and achievement, including STEM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the racial literacy of teachers and students, and include the Black curriculum - students need to hear and learn about the contributions of BME in history, sciences, sports, literature, art • Ensure there are positive BAME role models in school settings <p><i>Participant 1: “Can we change the way history is taught in GM?”</i> <i>Participant 2: “Absolutely, it’s very difficult to educate when the History books are so flawed or completely biased.”</i></p>
<p>Employment and labour market inequalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was widely felt that the panel should firstly consider inequalities in employment issues within Greater Manchester’s public sector organisations • Recruitment, including how and where opportunities are advertised • Retention, career development and development opportunities, especially to senior leadership levels and Boards • Pay gap • Grievances policies and procedures • Embedding equality, legislation, guidance in organisations • Increase of black-owned and black-led businesses • Provision of work experience/volunteering/mentoring placements for young people – and considering stipend to overcome financial barriers to accessing placements <p><i>“BAME people are needed in senior leadership roles to change organisational culture” (Discussion group participant)</i></p>
<p>Financial inclusion and poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including food poverty • Focus on BAME women, as they are at a much more disadvantaged position than men

<p>Hate crime and preventing discrimination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are related but separate issues, and should not be considered together <p><i>“A lot of everyday discrimination and racism – so called ‘micro-aggressions’ – do not meet threshold for ‘hate crime’ but adversely affect health, wellbeing, employment, housing etc” (Discussion group participant)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was also suggested that hate crime and preventing discrimination is always framed negatively, and focusing on community cohesion and positive messaging is always better (community cohesion was raised as an additional issue for the panel to consider)
<p>Health and wellbeing inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many participants thought this issue has increased in prominence following the COVID-19 pandemic • Many also said that mental health needs to be explicit <p><i>“It’s a postcode lottery whether people from BAME communities can access [mental health] services” (Discussion group participant)</i></p>

4. The purpose of the panel

The draft terms of reference are based on the views received during previous engagement exercises, as well as what is in place for other GMCA advisory panels. The listening exercise sought to check and challenge these proposals.

Draft mission:

The Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel will advise the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the Greater Manchester Lead for Equalities, GMCA and its partners, on the development of solutions to the issues faced by the people of Greater Manchester that are linked to their race or ethnicity, in order to support them in their duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations.

Draft aims:

- The Race Equality Panel will be extremely visible in communities but also in public life, reflecting the skills, knowledge and experience of a diverse range of racial groups. Panel members will possess strong links to the communities that they represent and with grass roots organisations, as well as with the existing representative networks, but will sit on the Panel in their own right, not just to represent a particular organisation, race or ethnic group.
- 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.
- It might raise awareness of existing support within communities and campaign on their behalf, with the help of high profile people.
- The Panel will include in its scope, a requirement to support the proposed Greater Manchester Independent Inequalities Commission with insight and where possible, statistical data for consideration by the Commission.
- The Panel will be aligned to the principles of an inclusive society recognizing that all races and ethnicities have full and equal rights. Its work will be transparent and accountable to all communities across Greater Manchester.

Draft objectives:

- Support delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy by strengthening the voice of people from different racial backgrounds in shaping and influencing policy
- Advise the Mayor and Greater Manchester Lead for Equalities, as well as key public sector partners, on the development of solutions to key issues relating to race and ethnicity in Greater Manchester
- Provide challenge to Greater Manchester public sector bodies on their policy and actions
- Seek to benefit all races and ethnicities across Greater Manchester, irrespective of gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation, marriage status or age

What did this engagement reveal?

Before reporting on survey respondents' and discussion group participants' views on the draft details of the panel, it is worth highlighting comments received about the notion of the panel itself, which illustrate the lens through which other comments and responses were provided.

The energy and passion displayed at the discussion groups, as well as at the meetings to raise awareness of the listening exercise, showed there is a thirst for bold and innovative action, particularly in the wake of the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the non-White British population, and incidents of excessive use of police both here and abroad. Many of the survey respondents, discussion group participants and meeting attendees evoked a strong sense that there is no better time than now to pave the way for racial equality.

Whilst there is the will for the panel to succeed, some BAME participants who have been heavily involved for years – often decades – in fighting for their community’s voices to be heard, to be involved in the decisions taken about them, and to end inequality, discrimination and racism, are skeptical about whether the panel will make the changes they are seeking. In many of the BAME-community discussion groups, at least one participant spoke about the weariness they feel with repeatedly being asked their views on the issues they’re facing, and being consulted on strategies that are developed but not implemented – or at least do not appear to make meaningful differences.

“I’m tired. The community is tired.” (Discussion group participant)

“I feel if this panel has last year’s conversations it will not serve its purpose. The needle has moved in Race and Equality theoretically for the first time in decades. We now need new, creative and courageous ideas. The creativity and understanding to do something different by nature means we need to be different. We have the talent at the top table and the talent at the grassroots. Solidarity and trust within this limited window of opportunity will be essential. Authenticity will gain credibility and then follows trust. After that anything is possible.” (Survey respondent)

Additionally, whilst the listening exercise’s key lines of enquiry did not include whether or not a Race Equality Panel should be established at all, a small number of survey respondents, and some participants from the public sector-led discussion groups, posited that setting up a Race Equality Panel would unhelpfully separate people. Some mentioned that White British people also experience adversity in the issues mentioned, and that the public sector should ensure that all *“are treated with the same concerns for reaching potential.”*

The panel’s ‘reason for being’

Whilst there was broad support for the draft terms of reference, most participants, particular from the BAME-led groups, felt they aren’t strong enough to make a difference to race equality.

Overwhelmingly, these participants believe the purpose of the Race Equality Panel should be to address the root causes of inequalities, rather than tackling the issues (which many felt are consequences of systemic and institutional racism) in a piecemeal way.

“The barriers of Institutional Racism needs to be broken down. GMCA could lead in this culture change.” (Discussion group participant)

Many participants felt that previous attempts to tackle racial inequalities – and often they referred to national attempts – such as reviews, enquiries and even legislation, have not had sufficient impact or made a difference to people’s lives.

“Do things differently, not just in relation to the way other advisory panels work, but in relation to the way things have been done for the last 30-40 years.” (Discussion group participant)

A number of BAME participants spoke about hate crime or discrimination they have experienced, and some felt this has increased in recent years. One discussion group participant said they felt that if the GMCA and Mayor’s Office shows themselves to be explicitly tackling racism, it will give those experiencing it confidence that it is being taken seriously.

“We have gone back 50 years. We’ve got legislation and a framework [for tackling racism] but it’s not working. There’s no fear in what people say. It’s not anonymous anymore, people will sign their name... Seeing GMCA openly discuss racism will give others confidence.” (Discussion group participant)

The listening exercise revealed a huge appetite for Greater Manchester’s Race Equality Panel to take a bold and innovative approach to tackling inequalities – and to explicitly communicate to communities how it will do things differently.

“By establishing strong partnerships and being courageous I believe it might be possible to make potentially historical changes. Unfortunately, we have had a whole generation that has barely moved the needle in the fight against racism.” (Survey respondent)

Advisory vs doing

Whilst participants generally agree that the panel should have an advisory role, there were some who feel it should have an active role tackling the issues, rather than just raising them.

“We need to be clear what it is we’re actually going to be doing to tackle the issues. We need a long-term strategy for dealing with the issues, with clear measurable outcomes - not short-term funding for narrowly specified projects.” (Discussion group participant)

Giving prominence to issues vs addressing issues

Additionally, participants generally agreed with objectives to strengthen the voice of people from different racial background in shaping and influencing policy, and advising on solutions to issues, but they felt the panel could go further. Many participants, particularly those from the BAME-led groups, want to move beyond talking and highlighting the issues, and progress to the next stage of practically addressing them. These participants feel the panel should be intrinsically involved in developing policies and solutions – and evaluating their impact, and that considerations of race should be an integral part of all policy development.

“The panel needs to be involved at the beginning or inception of projects, not just consulted when things are 90% planned and any possible changes are to marginal issues.” (Discussion group participant)

There was also discussion about what it means to have a meaningful voice in shaping policy. Some BAME participants gave examples of when they had described their experiences to people working in public sector organisations, they felt they weren't taken seriously, as it didn't chime with the experiences of the largely White British people they were talking to. This links with participants' calls for greater BAME representation in leadership and decision-making positions, so there is more empathy and understanding of the issues and experiences of BAME communities.

“The panel needs to be listened to properly, and leaders and managers need to suspend their disbelief, be open to learning and changing their mindset.” (Discussion group participant)

Challenge vs scrutiny

Participants and survey respondents also generally agreed with the panel's role to challenge public sector bodies (they also added VCSE bodies), but are really keen that it is able to formally scrutinise their work, and hold them to account. They want to be able to set targets for change, and for penalties to be imposed when they are missed.

Linked to concerns around the panel's ability to scrutinise and hold to account, participants sought clarity on what power and influence the panel will have.

“GMCA should give a promise, a commitment to smash barriers, and set timescales.” (Discussion group participant)

Language

In addition to strengthening what the panel is setting out to do, many participants said the language it uses to describe itself must be stronger, and use words such as 'should' rather than 'might'.

There were also concerns about the 'high-level, public sector' language used in the proposals, and there were calls for the final version to be written in plain English, so:

- the panel is accessible to all, including those unfamiliar with the public sector world
- communities understand what the panel is setting out to do, and can therefore also understand whether it is being effective
- communities feel it is also for people like them, and something they may like to be a part of

It was suggested in one discussion group that the panel creates a glossary, so there's an agreed understanding of words and terms which they would use.

Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was felt that the mission seems to suggest the 'issues' are connected with the people, rather than society and the system• Many felt the mission needs to be more ambitious and should explicitly mention holding the GMCA, the Mayor and their partners to account,
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	<p>as well as tackling institutional and systemic racism, and challenging ‘the system’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many were uncomfortable with the phrase ‘eliminate unlawful discrimination’, and felt Greater Manchester needs to be more ambitious and tackle all discrimination, as well as unconscious bias • Some participants felt the panel needs a vision, rather than a mission, and that should be something active, something tangible, which illustrates what communities want the world to look like: <p><i>“[The panel] should make people feel included; an equal part of society. I’ve lived in Manchester all my life, but I don’t feel equal.” (Discussion group participant)</i></p>
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally it was felt that the aims are too specific and prescriptive, and need to be broader and higher level. Other aims suggested include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demanding transparency of the GMCA and partners ○ Holding the GMCA, the Mayor and partners to account ○ Ensuring appropriate regulatory scrutiny ○ Challenging processes, attitudes and behaviours that amount to discrimination ○ Monitoring organisations’ performance in reducing inequalities ○ Advising the GMCA about activities to promote equity, inclusion and social justice ○ Inspiring BAME people to participate in public life • The proposal that received the most challenge was that members will sit on the panel in their own right; generally it was felt that members should represent a specific community • The draft aim of ‘enforcing agreements’ when the panel is advisory has led to queries over what, if any, powers the panel will have
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants are keen that the objectives are measurable so the panel’s effectiveness can be evaluated. Some suggested KPIs should be set for annual reductions in inequalities within the issues the panel considers • It was suggested that <i>‘the implementation of solutions’</i> is explicit, as well as advising on their development • There were objections to the phrase ‘benefit all races and ethnicities’ as it was felt this does not equate to ‘race equality’, which should be the panel’s aim. One group suggested this could be re-phrased as <i>‘Improve outcomes across public life for all races and ethnicities...’</i>

5. Proposals to achieve the mission, aims and objectives

These draft proposals are based on the views received during previous engagement exercises, as well as what is in place for other GMCA advisory panels. The listening exercise sought to check and challenge these proposals.

The Race Equality Panel will meet on a monthly basis. The work plan will be developed by the Panel under the leadership of its Chair. Meetings will address key themes identified through the engagement process and in the light of subsequent insight, and focus on achieving workable solutions to the issue in hand.

The Chair will meet regularly with the Chairs of the other Greater Manchester advisory panels, in order to coordinate and align activity.

Given the complexity of the issues in scope for the Race Equality Panel, it is suggested that it might need to establish sub-groups to take forward specific pieces of work, and that these sub-groups may include members from the Faith Advisory Panel, once this is established.

The Race Equality Panel will be asked to undertake a continuous evaluation of its work, and submit an Annual Report covering the topics discussed, actions taken and changes which occur as a result of its work.

Accountability: The Race Equality Panel will be accountable to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Lead for Equalities, and any structures that they might set up to tackle inequality.

Membership of the Race Equality Panel: There will be an open recruitment process for panel members. Expressions of Interest will be considered against a set of selection criteria. The panel's membership will aim to reflect the diversity of Greater Manchester, and achieve as broad a representation as possible across different races and ethnicities, the 10 districts, across sectors and other characteristics such as gender and disability. It is anticipated that the panel will consist of around 15 members, who possess strong links to communities, and have networks and mechanisms to harness their views and represent them. Members will serve a two-year term.

Timescales: The first meeting of the panel will be in September 2020, and it will operate for an 18-month period, to bring it in line with other advisory panels.

Secretariat: The secretariat will be provided by GMCA, and will include the following tasks:

- Co-ordination of the work programme
- Meetings organisation and support
- Support to the Chair
- Drawing together evidence
- Drafting papers and presentations for the panel

What did this engagement reveal?

Frequency of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some felt that meeting monthly was too limiting, and that the panel could meet more frequently virtually• They also noted that when attendance at sub-groups are factored in, along with work outside the meetings (e.g. preparing for meetings,
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	<p>meeting communities/attending events), this could equate to a significant amount of time. It was suggested that panel members should be paid for their time, to show that it is valued</p>
Coordination with other GMCA advisory groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was wide-spread agreement that it is crucial the panel considers the intersectionality of race and other characteristics, and there is a need to have strong links between the GMCA’s other advisory panels
Sub-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was wide-spread agreement that sub-groups or working groups will be essential to considering the issues – but further sub-groups of the same issue may also be needed, as communities, ages, genders etc are impacted differently by the issues
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Accountability’ was mentioned in almost every discussion group. Both the role of the panel in holding others to account: <p><i>“The panel needs to be able to hold organisations to account, recommendations need to be taken seriously, and consequences if not.” (Discussion group participant)</i></p> <p><i>“Its main activity should be receiving reports from, and challenging, executive staff from GMCA who are responsible for the various issues, and ensuring that GMCA receives both support when it is doing things right and robust criticism when it is not.” (Survey respondent)</i></p> • And by being accountable back to the communities it represents. It was frequently mentioned that the panel needs SMART objectives, and that communities should be able to assess the panel’s achievements in line with its action plan and the tangible differences on the ground • Participants also wanted clarity on the governance structures for the panel, and that the GMCA should be responsible for it • Additionally, it was felt that the GMCA should be accountable to the panel, rather than the panel accountable to the GMCA
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst there was strong agreement that the panel should represent all 10 Greater Manchester’s districts, participants were unsure how all the city-region’s races, ethnicities and cultures could be represented in a body of around 15 members • There was widespread agreement that panel members should have strong links to communities so they can represent them, and it was also felt that members will need to be able to absorb and work with other perspectives, to agree a ‘collective good’ rather than only working in the interest of the community they represent • It was also felt that as it will be impossible for all communities to have a seat on the panel, it should be able to take evidence on issues

	they are considering, and to hold consultations with the public (see <i>'Engagement'</i> and <i>'Access to experts and insight'</i> sub-sections below for more information)
Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people felt that a VCSE organisation should provide the secretariat for the panel, in line with other GMCA advisory groups. • It was strongly felt that the secretariat should be BAME-led and some queried whether this was another example of discrimination against BAME communities, and that they may be perceived to not be able to organise themselves adequately • If it is confirmed that the GMCA provides the secretariat support, it was proposed that the officers are trained (possibly from panel members themselves) in unconscious bias, anti-racism, etc <p><i>"I fear that the 'technocratic' nature of their support may allow them cover not to engage with the real heart of the issues the panel will need to address." (Survey respondent)</i></p>

Features under-pinning the panel

In addition to the feedback on the draft proposals, participants felt the following elements should be taken into consideration when establishing the panel.

Recognition that 'BAME' communities are diverse between and within themselves

In keeping with debates currently taking place across the country, there was a feeling that few people, if any, identify with the term 'BAME', and using it to group all people from non-White British backgrounds together can often unhelpfully mask differences between and within races, ethnicities and cultures.

Participants urged the GMCA and the panel to be conscious of the differences between communities in terms of how they experience inequalities and discrimination, as some fare much worse than others. It was also often mentioned that women face inequality and discrimination differently to men.

Work collaboratively with others tackling race equality

Participants are keen that there is a clear and shared understanding of how Greater Manchester's Race Equality Panel fits in with existing organisations, networks and panels. This is in terms of how it will work in a distinct way, how they will work collaboratively, as well as the way they relate to each other. Some have suggested that a mapping exercise takes place to ascertain the roles and remits of existing models which are working to tackle race equality.

Two-way engagement mechanisms

Another feature that was mentioned in almost every discussion group, was ensuring that the panel is accessible to individuals, and that members are able to represent wider communities, including those communities who don't have a direct representative.

It was frequently mentioned that the panel should be established with a view to ensuring that members will be supported with the resources and infrastructure needed to help them facilitate engagement with residents, grassroots organisations and district organisations.

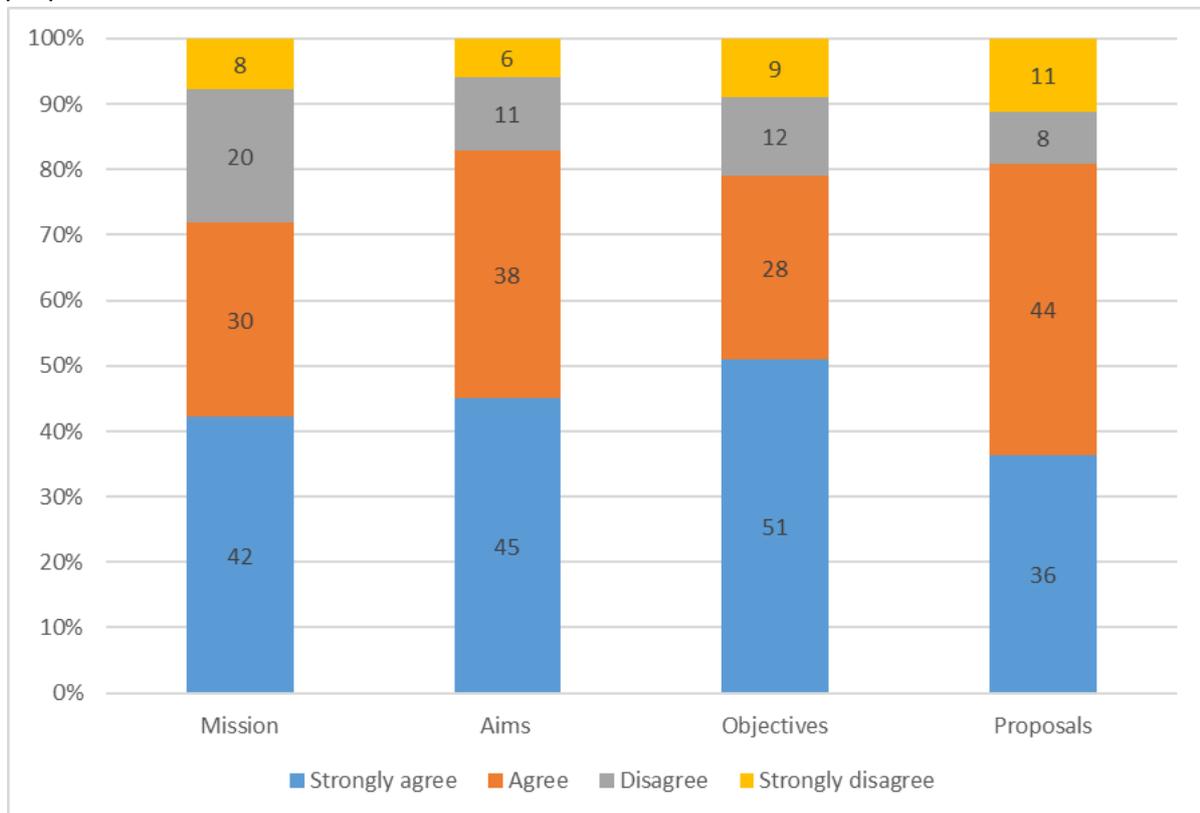
One solution suggested was to adequately resource existing BAME networks to facilitate engagement between panel members and residents.

Access to experts and insight

Many called for the panel to be equipped with robust data to help inform them how to prioritise and tackle the issues. They should also be able to ask for reports and evidence from those in charge of public sector and VCSE organisations.

In one discussion group it was suggested that the panel develops a professional network of BAME experts from across Greater Manchester and the UK who can assist with leading an improvement programme based on the identified issues.

Figure 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft mission, aims, objectives and proposals?



6. The role of the Chair

These draft proposals are based on the views received during previous engagement exercises, as well as what is in place for other GMCA advisory panels. The listening exercise sought to check and challenge these proposals.

It is proposed that the Race Equality Panel has an independent Chair appointed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester Lead for Equalities.

The Chair will be someone who is a respected leader on issues relating to race. They should be independent from any one particular community, network or body, but possess a broad understanding of the operation of these community networks. The Chair will ensure that:

- Meetings of the Panel are conducted in a fair, equitable and transparent business-like fashion
- Agreed conclusions, recommendations and action points are clear
- A shared culture and language, common purpose and trust are endorsed through a collaborative leadership style

What did this engagement reveal?

Generally there was support for the Chair's proposals, with 79% of survey respondents agreeing with them. However, it was felt that it will be difficult for the Chair to be completely independent. Instead they felt the Chair should have an understanding of Greater Manchester, its history of race relations, and knowledge of its communities, yet be impartial by not favouring one over another. They felt it's important the Chair is able to facilitate members to work collaboratively, for the 'collective good' rather than solely for the community they're representing.

Some also wanted to ensure that the Chair's impartiality is regularly reviewed, in case they were being unduly influenced. They want the panel to be democratic and all members have an equal say, rather than the Chair making final decisions.

'Respected leader' was often interpreted to mean 'celebrity' and generally people would prefer the Chair be competent and knowledgeable, rather than well-known.

Many felt that the Chair should be selected from within the panel by members themselves. A palatable alternative would be for a recruitment process in the same way there will be for members. Appointing the Chair was not generally supported.

It was also widely felt that there should be more than one chair, as a single chair may cause in-fighting. The model of co-chairs was seen to work well.

Suggested additional roles of the Chair:

- To be committed to embedding race equality so that it becomes normal practice, in recognition and understanding of, and benefit to all communities

- To be responsible for ensuring that actions are carried out, and 'are specific, measurable and reported back within a recorded timescale' should be added to 'action points are clear'

Suggested characteristics of the Chair include:

- Political impartiality (as required for members)
- Someone who can inspire confidence downwards and upwards
- Someone effective in leading meetings and the direction of the group

7. The role of panel members

These draft proposals are based on the views received during previous engagement exercises, as well as what is in place for other GMCA advisory panels. The listening exercise sought to check and challenge these proposals.

Panel members will sit in their own right as respected members of communities. They will agree to adhere to the following:

Principles

As a member of the Race Equality Panel you have the responsibility to uphold the following principles:

- The Race Equality Panel seeks to represent no party political view
- The discussions of the Race Equality Panel are to be solely issue based
- The Race Equality Panel will ensure that residents from different race backgrounds across Greater Manchester are given a voice on the issues that affect them
- The Race Equality Panel will ensure that every person who participates in its work has their rights respected and protected
- The Race Equality Panel endorses a collaborative and co-operative model and works to ensure its achievement

Responsibilities

During your term of office it is your responsibility to:

- Engage with a wide range of people in the community, actively seek out the voices of people who are not currently heard, and represent all views at Panel meetings
- Champion the work of the Panel to encourage wider participation and buy-in to its work
- Take forward any actions that they have agreed to develop, and report back any progress to the Panel in the timescales agreed

Conduct

As a representative of the Race Equality Panel we ask you to comply with these expectations of conduct:

- Your choices and decisions should be informed by the people in the community that you represent. This is in addition to your own research. They should be based on merit and be objective.
- At all times you should act and communicate in a way that does not damage the reputation of the Race Equality Panel, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Greater Manchester's Mayor's Office.
- In your role as a member of the Race Equality Panel you should not represent any political party.
- You should only serve the public interest and should never use your role as a member of the Race Equality Panel to inappropriately give an advantage or disadvantage to any person, firm, business or other organisation.
- You should not place yourselves in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions to avoid the appearance of such behaviour.
- You should be accountable to the public for your actions and the manner in which they carry out your role as a member of the Race Equality Panel. You should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny or disciplinary procedures appropriate to your role.

- You should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of race, age, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- You should uphold the law and, on all occasions act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you. Should any member be arrested, charged or convicted of any offence they must inform the relevant Officers supporting the Race Equality Panel who will review the circumstances and take the appropriate actions.

Expectations

The following are expected of members during their term of office:

- Make every effort to attend meetings; substitutes will not be allowed
- Be prepared for the meetings, and have read papers circulated in advance
- Commit a minimum of twelve half days to the work of the Panel over a period of 18 months

Support

Panel members can expect to receive the following support from the GMCA:

- Reasonable travel and other out of pocket expenses incurred through the work of the Panel will be reimbursed
- Regular notice and information about meetings and events
- Opportunities to attend other relevant city-region and national events, meetings and activities
- Secretariat support

Like the role of the Chair, the proposals for the role of panel members were generally received positively, with 82% of survey respondents agreeing with them.

There was widespread agreement that anyone should be able to apply to be on the panel. However, there were conflicting views about whether members should be existing 'leaders' or whether new voices are needed. Some people felt those selected shouldn't be those who are already represented on panels and networks.

"Diversify membership - you may end up making the same mistakes of the past by limiting to people already working in race with GMCA and localities. You need fresh perspectives, people who will speak truth to power." (Survey respondent)

"Panel members should be fresh, not the 'usual suspects'... It needs people to disrupt conventional thinking." (Discussion group participant)

Additionally, many people also cautioned the GMCA's selection panel to consider the power balance between communities. Several groups discussed that power is unevenly distributed, and there's a danger that communities that are better connected and resourced will push forward their own communities needs and agendas.

The proposal that received the most challenge was the conduct requirement to 'act and communicate in a way that does not damage the reputation of the Race Equality Panel, the GMCA and Mayor's Office'. Some felt this may restrict members' ability to challenge, scrutinise and hold them to account. Some articulated this as placing a "gagging order" on members, whereas it is crucial they are able to speak freely and not be restricted.

Participants were also keen to comment on the type of person who should be in the panel, and the following were widely agreed:

- Members should have some insight or first-hand experiences of the issues the panel is seeking to address, so they are empathetic and passionate
- The panel should include people with experience of other marginalised groups to ensure the intersectionality of issues is considered
- Academics (both established and emerging) with expertise in race and ethnicity
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Young people

“It is time to hear the voices of the younger generation, time to develop them to ensure that future decision makers will be a true reflection of the diversity of Greater Manchester.” (Discussion group participant)

8. Conclusion and next steps

The listening exercise showed that whilst there is broad support for the draft proposals, responses to the survey's free text questions and feedback from the discussion groups found there were a number of ways the proposals could be amended, and many of the participants suggested alternatives.

Principally, many feel the purpose of Greater Manchester's Race Equality Panel should be clear and simply expressed, and it should put tackling systemic, structural and institutional racism front and centre of its mission, aims and objectives.

There was broad agreement with the issues identified during earlier engagement sessions, but discrimination in policing and the criminal justice system, as well as actively working to increase BAME representation in leadership positions were also strongly championed. However, as there were differing views on which and how many issues should be tackled first by the panel, it was suggested it would be worth finalising this with panel members, once established.

Most participants felt the panel should have a key role in scrutinising and holding the public and VCSE sectors to account, and this should be explicit in the aims; stronger than the draft objective to 'provide challenge'. Additionally, many felt the panel's aims should go beyond 'advising on the development of solutions to the issues', and it should be involved in co-designing and implementing the solutions as well. This could come to fruition through sub-groups, which were a popular proposal, and it was suggested they should be comprised of people with experience of the inequality and senior people within the institution(s) under examination, as well as subject matter experts who could also advise on solutions. However, it was raised on a number of occasions that communities of identity and geography are impacted in different ways, therefore it was suggested that further sub-groups of the same issue may also be required.

Some suggested the panel meets more frequently than monthly, and that virtual meetings may make this more practically possible. They also noted that panel members should be paid for their time.

Concerns were also voiced around the GMCA providing the secretariat for the group, with many of the BAME-led groups suggesting it should be a BAME-led VCSE organisation.

The proposal to appoint a chair was not broadly supported, and many participants would prefer the panel to select from its members, or hold a further recruitment process. Additionally, some also posited a preference for more than one chair. As there is appetite to establish the panel as soon as possible, it may be worth members finalising the approach to the chair once it is established.

Whilst there was broad agreement that the panel should be comprised of representatives from across the city-region, as well as people with experience of the inequalities being tackled, there were conflicting views about whether members should be existing 'leaders' or

‘new voices’. Therefore, it could be worth the selection panel ensuring there is a representation from both.

Finally, chapter four revealed there was skepticism from some BAME participants that the panel would make a difference to racial inequalities, as well as concerns from some White British participants that the panel would further separate people. Therefore, it will be important for the Race Equality Panel, once established, to swiftly articulate what it is aiming to achieve, and adopt measureable outcomes to be able to show that it is making a difference both in order to re-gain (and in many cases, establish) the trust of the communities it seeks to represent, and to help alleviate concerns about its usefulness.

Next steps

The findings from the listening exercise will be used to inform the final proposals for the Race Equality Panel, which will be submitted to the Mayor and Greater Manchester’s lead for equalities. Once approved, the open recruitment process will start. Like the listening exercise, the opportunity to apply to be on the panel will be extensively promoted and communities will be urged to share it through their own networks and channels, and encourage anyone they think would make a good panel member to apply. It is anticipated recruitment will take place in September and the panel will be convened in October.

Contact us

For further information about the development of the Race Equality Panel, including registering to receive an application pack, please email engagement@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk