

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 29th September 2023

Subject: Greater Manchester Equality Panels Annual Report

Report of: Councillor Arooj Shah, Portfolio Lead for Equalities and Communities, and Sara Todd, Portfolio Lead Chief Executive for Equalities and Communities

Purpose of Report

This report summarises the activity and impact of the Greater Manchester Equality Panels through their individual Annual Reports 2022-23.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

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

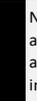
Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impacts Questionnaire			
Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation	
Equality and Inclusion	G	There are seven Equality Panels, focused on improving outcomes and reducing discrimination faced by people from communities-of-identity (protected characteristics); Faith, Race, Women and Girls, Older People, Young People, Disabled People, LGBTQ+ People experiencing inequality often face multiple issues, including social and economic disadvantage. The Panels focus on those most at risk in society Access, experience and outcomes from public services are not equal, and making this equitable is a priority for the Panels Membership of the Panels are residents with lived-experience, or representatives of voluntary organisations that support residents. Engaging the Panels in decisions and services that affect them at the earliest stage leads to better outcomes and value for money The Panels bring together diverse community voices, strengthening understanding and collaborating to celebrate Greater Manchester's culture of social inclusion	
Health	G	The Equality Panels provide insight into the access, experience and outcomes of diverse communities. This should help public services develop more effective policies and deliver more efficient services. The Panels cover a range of topics across Health and Wellbeing, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents.	
Resilience and Adaptation	G	The Equality Panels enable public services to communicate and engage with diverse communities. Reducing inequality in these communities builds resilience. Tackling discrimination will enable public services to become more representative of their communities, building trust and confidence. Hate Crime is a cross-panel priority	
Housing	G	The Equality Panels have contributed to the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy, providing valuable insight to policy makers on the lived-experience of people from diverse communities, including those fleeing domestic abuse from ethnic minority communities, people with no recourse to public funds and those requiring supported housing due to health or disability	
Economy	G	The Equality Panels provide insight into the access, experience and outcomes of diverse communities. This should help public services develop more effective policies and deliver more efficient services. The Panels cover a range of topics across Economy and Employment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Panels are informing the Good Employment Charter and Workforce Equality Strategies	
Mobility and Connectivity	G	There is a specific focus in the new Digital Taskforce on Older People and Disabled People. The Older Peoples Panel and Disabled Peoples Panel are directly supporting this activity, providing professional expertise and connectivity into their communities. This will ensure solutions meet the needs of target group	
Carbon, Nature and Environment	G	The Equality Panels provide insight into the access, experience and outcomes of diverse communities. This should help public services develop more effective policies and deliver more efficient services. The Panels cover a range of topics across Environment, enabling communication, codesign and collaboration between public services, voluntary sector and residents. For example, the Youth Combined Authority contribution to the Green Summit.	
Consumption and Production			
Contribution to achieving the GM Carbon Neutral 2038 target			
Further Assessment(s):	Equalities Impact Assessment		
 Positive impacts overall, whether long or short term.	 Mix of positive and negative impacts. Trade-offs to consider.	 Mostly negative, with at least one positive aspect. Trade-offs to consider.	 Negative impacts overall.

Carbon Assessment				
Overall Score	<input type="text"/>			
Buildings	Result	Justification/Mitigation		
New Build residential	N/A			
Residential building(s) renovation/maintenance	N/A			
New Build Commercial/Industrial	N/A			
Transport				
Active travel and public transport	N/A			
Roads, Parking and Vehicle Access	N/A			
Access to amenities	N/A			
Vehicle procurement	N/A			
Land Use				
Land use	N/A			
No associated carbon impacts expected.	 High standard in terms of practice and awareness on carbon.	 Mostly best practice with a good level of awareness on carbon.	 Partially meets best practice/ awareness, significant room to improve.	 Not best practice and/ or insufficient awareness of carbon impacts.

Risk Management

This paper describes work to manage risk relating to services for people with a protected characteristic.

Legal Considerations

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

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

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

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The £367,500 annual investment enables the GMCA and partners to engage people experiencing inequality through the Equality Panels, facilitated by commissioned culturally appropriate organisations. Effective Equality Panels support public service resources to be invested in ways that are more targeted to those most at risk, reducing costs and achieving better outcomes. There is no additional financial ask relating to this paper.

Financial Consequences – Capital

N/A

Number of attachments to the report: Seven

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

N/A

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No

GM Transport Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.6 The Chairs of the Equality Panels meet regularly with the Portfolio Leads to explore opportunities for collaboration on intersectional issues and share common challenges to delivering impact. In addition, the Chairs are members of the Tackling Inequalities Board, ensuring a strategic connection between the Panels and political and organisational leaders. These structures and connectivity enable the panels to have

greater clarity of purpose; influencing the strategic agenda, mandate to work with public services (and challenge where necessary) and empowered to deliver more impactful activity.

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

2. Equality Panels and the Greater Manchester Strategy

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

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

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

3. Activity and impact

3.1 Disabled People's Panel (Appendix 1)

- The Disabled Peoples Panel is a pan-impairment Panel, made up of Disabled People's Organisations from the ten districts, and facilitated by the Greater Manchester Coalition

of Disabled People. The Panel and members operate from the perspective of the Social Model of Disability.

- The panel's Greater Manchester Big Disability Survey was the largest of its kind in the United Kingdom. Presented to GMCA in October 2022, the survey findings achieved national media coverage and strategic influence, including Parliament, Government departments and United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It has prompted a wide range of stakeholder challenge, for example with Ofgen and energy suppliers on the impact of energy costs, force-fitting and credit to Pre-Payment Meter switching on disabled consumers.
- In addition to the survey, in partnership with the Integrated Care Partnership the panel produced the Greater Manchester Mental Wellbeing and Disability Report, which has led to a programme of Inclusion Grants to support Deaf and Disabled People. In addition, the panel has been assisting the Greater Manchester Mental Health Partnership to improve the accessibility of its online resources.

3.2 Faith and Belief Advisory Panel (Appendix 2)

- The panel acts as a 'network of networks', bringing together representatives from across Greater Manchester's Faith, Belief and Interfaith networks, facilitated by Pulse Regeneration. The aims of the panel are to optimise the Faith and Belief contribution to the Greater Manchester Strategy and ensure that the role of Faith and Belief in society is recognised and valued.
- Members of the panel are actively involved in a range of Greater Manchester Action Networks, including homelessness, digital inclusion, net zero, real living wage and food security. The panel also collaborates with the Greater Manchester Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE's) and Greater Manchester Resilience Forum.
- Earlier this year, Greater Manchester Leaders endorsed a statement by the panel on the positive contribution of the Faith and Belief Sector. Thriving local Interfaith Networks are crucial and, following research into models of good practice, locality conversations will take place with Leaders to explore how infrastructure can be developed and resourced where there are gaps.

3.3 LGBTQ+ Equality Panel (Appendix 3)

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

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

- The panel has three primary work areas:
 - o Places & Spaces: all parts of Greater Manchester are accessible, safe and welcoming for all LGBTQ+ people and communities.
 - o Counting us in: all publicly funded services in Greater Manchester consistently and appropriately record sexual orientation and trans status, and use this insight and other data to improve services for LGBTQ+ people.
 - o Inclusion as standard: all new and existing public policy in Greater Manchester is LGBTQ+ inclusive, and, where appropriate, there are specific policies in place to protect LGBTQ+ people.
- In addition, the panel are achieving strategic influence. This year GMCA committed to the panel's Pledge to End Conversion Therapy, and, importantly, adopted a trans-inclusive and consent loop-hole-free definition of conversion therapy. Panel members met Victor Madrigal-Borloz, United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as part of his visit to the UK, and the Panel Chair represented GMCA at Montpellier Pride Festival, building relationships with representatives from Kyiv, Paris, Barcelona, Heidelberg, Istanbul, and Sherbrooke.

3.4 Older Peoples Equality Panel (Appendix 4)

- The Older Peoples Panel identifies and consider the diverse issues of concern to older people within Greater Manchester, engaging in strategies so that older people can influence policies that support the creation of age-friendly neighbourhoods, and providing the opportunity for older people to promote and share a positive perspective on ageing in Greater Manchester. The panel works in partnership with the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub and is facilitated by Macc.
- The panel has prioritised three issues within the Age Friendly Strategy.
 - o Impact of the cost of living crisis - contributing to the Cost of Living Response Group, highlighting issues related to Pension Top Up and Warm Spaces
 - o Care settings – engaging with the Greater Manchester Adult Social Care Transformation Team and advising a range of workstream groups
 - o Digitalisation – tackling digital exclusion in over 75s is a Mayoral priority, and the panel are represented at the Digital Inclusion Action Network. The panel recruited a test team for new software to make phone and tablet simpler to use.

- Running throughout the panel is the theme of “Valuable not Vulnerable”. Older people play a key role in society and are a diverse group, in both age and experiences.

3.5 Race Equality Panel (Appendix 5)

- The Race Equality Panel work to promote racial equality, tackle racial discrimination and foster positive relationships between ethnically diverse communities, and embed the Public Sector Equality Duty in policies, processes, procedures, practices and people development. Over the last year, the panel has focused its efforts on Policing and Criminal justice, Education, Employment, training and leadership, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Housing and Homelessness. The panel is facilitated by the Caribbean and African Health Network
- Examples of the positive impact of the panel include
 - o The panel’s Race Equality Charter for Schools has been well-received by schools across the city-region, who have signed up to the Charter and are implementing change for the benefit of their pupils and teachers. The Charter has been adopted by the Greater Manchester Learning Partnership, creating a strong partnership between the panel and education professionals.
 - o Building on the success of last year’s employment event, the panel recently delivered a second employment event, bringing together a cross-sector group of workforce leads to hear from inspiring speakers and explore best practice, to overcome the long-standing challenges of racism and discrimination in the workplace.
- Throughout the year the panel have collaborated on the development of a new Greater Manchester Race Equality Strategy, being facilitated by the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (University of Manchester). As the panel looks to refresh its membership in 2023, the Strategy will act as the legacy of the inaugural panel members, setting the future ambition for Greater Manchester to achieve racial equity.

3.6 Women and Girls Equality Panel (Appendix 6)

- The Women and Girls Equality Panel aims to address the inequalities facing women and girls in GM. Whilst the panel members attend in an individual capacity, many are also employed by organisations aiming to tackle issues experienced by women and girls. The Panel is facilitated by the Pankhurst Trust. Over the last year, the panel has continued creating strong working connections that are enabling it to influence positive

change for women and girls. The Panel has retained its two working groups on Education, Skills and Employment and Violence Against Women and Girls.

- The Education, Skills and Employment (ESE) working group has continued to build on its work on childcare, skills pathways, good employment standards, women's self-employment, and co-operatives, as well as care and commissioning. In addition, it considered several new topics such as reskilling, self-employment, entrepreneurship, tech and gaming, and flexible working.
- The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) group has explored important topics such as the Victims Bill, preventing and policing hate crime, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) VAWG Delivery Plan, police response to public protection and domestic abuse, the Police Perpetrator Act, and police behaviour & abuse of position of trust. An important focus for has been to strengthen its relationships with GMP and the Gender Based Violence Board.

3.7 Youth Combined Authority (Appendix 7)

- The Youth Combined Authority (YCA) brings together young people from the district Youth Parliaments and youth organisations that support a diverse range of young people, ensuring the membership is rich in lived experience and inclusivity. Stronger links have been built over the last year to ensure the YCA has a defined role advising, supporting and challenging the new Children and Young Peoples Strategy, facilitated by Youth Focus North West.
- The YCA has four priority areas: Health and Wellbeing, Covid Recovery, Equity Equality and Inclusion, and the Environment, exploring topics with policymakers at each meeting. More focused work with the young people has been on
 - o policing and the Race Action Plan with the YCA developing a 'know your rights' resource pack
 - o engaging stakeholders at the University of Manchester Green Gathering and the Greater Manchester Green Summit
 - o over 500 young people completed a YCA survey on public transport and active travel, with the findings influencing future collaboration with Transport for Greater Manchester
 - o shaping the youth outreach project of the Civic Leadership Programme and supporting the selection of the supplier, Youth Leads UK

- All of the YCA members are supported throughout their personal development journey with the YCA. In total, young people have given over 700 hours of voluntary time to the YCA, reporting growth in confidence, feeling safe to give their opinions in this space, as well as feeling that their opinions will be taken seriously and taken forward by external partners who have attended sessions.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

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