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## Report to Cabinet

# Refresh of Greater Manchester VCSE Accord

### Portfolio Holder:

Cllr. Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council

### Officer Contact:

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### Reason for Decision

At its meeting on 24th September 2021, the Combined Authority considered and approved the following paper concerning the new GM VCSE Accord. This is a tri-partite Agreement with the GM Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM VCSE Leadership Group on behalf of the VCSE sector in Greater Manchester.

In the discussion at the meeting, Leaders noted that this agreement has an implication for the relationship of all local authorities with their local voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises. As stated at section 2.7 in the report, the success of this Accord and the shared commitments that it contains will rely on their recognition, adoption and action at a locality and neighbourhood level.

The Combined Authority authorised the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the GM Portfolio Lead for Community, Co-operatives, Voluntary Sector and Inclusion and the Chief Executive of the Combined Authority to sign the Accord Agreement on their behalf. Furthermore, all the Leaders present at the Combined Authority also signed a copy of the Accord following the meeting.

### Recommendations

Cabinet members are asked to:

1. Consider the new GM VCSE Accord as presented in the attached paper, and the implications that the commitments it contains will have on work with the VCSE sector in Oldham.
2. Approve and endorse the new GM VCSE Accord, noting the work that's happening in Oldham to deliver on the commitments (see Annex 3).

## 1 **Background**

- 1.1 The work described in this paper is set within a period of extreme demand and dependence placed on both the public and VCSE sectors. It is also a time of great uncertainty. Local Authority and other public budgets are under immense pressure and that budgeting will have a direct impact on VCSE organisations in terms of grants and commissioning, but also an indirect impact – reductions and pressures in public services often displace need and put more pressure on charities and communities. Moving forwards, active involvement of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises in places and neighbourhoods will be key if Greater Manchester is able to bring society and the economy back together and address the emerging priorities of tackling inequalities, building confidence, behaviour change, and co-design of a resilient city region. Put simply, there is a need to take a practical approach where responsibility and risk are shared, and the public and VCSE sectors work together to support the same places and communities.
- 1.2 As part of the delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS), in November 2017 and on behalf of the GMCA, an Accord was signed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester with the VCSE sector, which set out new, improved standards of working with VCSE organisations. The Accord acts as a framework for the delivery of the vision set out in the Greater Manchester Strategy and as a result, the VCSE sector is engaged in the development, governance and delivery of the GMS including relevant consultation and co-design.
- 1.3 VCSE leaders in GM have come together to form the VCSE Leadership Group, which seeks to promote the role and involvement of the VCSE sector and communities in devolution and has given a broader group of VCSE leaders with which to work.
- 1.4 The GM VCSE Leadership Group also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health and Social Care Partnership, which has seen £1.2m of Health and Social Care Transformation Funding flow into the VCSE Leadership Group and the wider sector over the last 4 years.
- 1.5 As part of the delivery of the VCSE Accord, in January 2020 the GM VCSE Leadership Group published a Policy Paper for the future development of the sector, which is entitled organisations, Community groups and Social Enterprises (VCSE) in Greater Manchester – the next 10 years. The paper describes the role of VCSE anchor organisations and local VCSE infrastructure organisations which support and facilitate the operation of the wider sector, as well as that of the specialist groups and organisations which support, represent and champion particular communities of identity or experience.
- 1.6 During the COVID-19 pandemic, the response of VCSE organisations has been incredible in its strength, its depth and the speed at which it has mobilized. Furthermore, community volunteers have offered and continue to provide their support and are integrating with emergency support structures at this time. The VCSE sector has been quick to adapt at pace and with a huge degree of accuracy and efficacy to meet the needs of GM communities.

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- 1.7 However, this response has not been without its challenges, and VCSE leaders have identified several risks and issues which are inhibiting their capacity to work effectively as part of the emergency effort. On 29th July the GM State of the VCSE Sector Report was published, providing a snapshot of the role and health of the VCSE sector in GM. The report shows that Greater Manchester is home to around 17,000 voluntary, community and social enterprise groups and organisations, and nearly 500,000 volunteers giving a total of 1.4 million hours each week. These groups, organisations and volunteers are well-networked with strong, distributed leadership, established communications channels and have evidenced their ability to convene and act together in the interests of Greater Manchester's communities. 71% of the VCSE sector are micro-organisations with an annual income under £10,000, and 57% of organisations work across specific neighbourhoods and communities across Greater Manchester. However, despite an increase in both the number of VCSE organisations and of volunteers since the last report in 2017, the overall turnover of the sector has decreased in real terms. Six key recommendations were made in the State of the Sector report and all were endorsed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester at the report's launch event.

## 2 **GM VCSE Accord**

- 2.1 As part of the recovery from the pandemic and to facilitate both the refresh of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the development of the Integrated Care System, it would be advantageous to have a unified way of working between the local authorities, GMCA, the Integrated Care System and the GM VCSE sector, represented by the GM VCSE Leadership Group. This would allow a single conversation with the sector in relation to all aspects of the GMS and its partner strategies. It would also enable a focus on sustaining their valuable work in communities and creating a more resilient VCSE sector.

### Co-production of the new Accord

- 2.2 The development of this new Accord is the product of a series of structured conversations held in July and early August with stakeholders including GM VCSE networks, local VCSE infrastructure organisations, local VCSE leaders and a range of GMCA and GM Health and Social Care commissioners, local authority policy leads and other statutory sector stakeholders.
- 2.3 Development of the draft new Accord agreement has also been informed by reflection on the success of the original VCSE Accord undertaken by the GM VCSE Leadership Group and officers at GMCA, as well as by learning gleaned from the evaluation report of the GM VCSE Engagement Programme for the GM Health and Social Care Partnership, carried out by Cordis Bright in early 2021. Furthermore, the Accord has been developed following consideration of our learning and reflections from the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 report of the GM Independent Inequalities Commission, and the Marmot report 'Building Back Fairer in Greater Manchester'.

### Draft Accord Agreement

- 2.4 Annex 1 attached contains the draft GM VCSE Accord agreement for approval of the GMCA at this time.
- 2.5 Annex 2 contains a technical annex to the Accord agreement, which describes the context surrounding the GM VCSE Accord, and an explanation of how it will be delivered.
- 2.6 The Accord is a three-way collaboration agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and

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the GMVCSE Sector represented by the GM VCSE Leadership Group, based in a relationship of mutual trust, working together, and sharing responsibility. It will act as a framework for collaboration involving VCSE leaders and organisations in the delivery of the GMS and in the thematic strategies and delivery plans that will exist to deliver the GMS vision, including the strategic plan of the new GM Integrated Care System. It will also deliver the ambitions set out in the VCSE Policy Paper described at section 1.7 above.

2.7 The purpose of this Accord is to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and citizens. The agreement is intended to work in several ways:

- Through a shared understanding of the contribution that VCSE organisations make towards tackling inequality in society, creating a more inclusive economy and addressing the climate crisis.
- Through the building of effective partnerships and relationships between the statutory sector with VCSE organisations across different geographies (for example GM-wide, district-wide, or in neighbourhoods and communities)
- Through a shared vision, ways of working principles and set of commitments which underpin these partnerships and relationships
- Through a 5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint, which aims to maximise the ability of VCSE organisations to deliver beneficial outcomes in communities and localities.

2.8 The success of this Accord and the shared commitments that it contains will rely on their recognition, adoption and action at a locality and neighbourhood level. This is a high-level agreement which builds from existing good practice to embed effective ways of working with the VCSE sector across all places in GM. It aims to achieve consistency without losing the uniqueness and innovation of voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises. As stated above, the actions invested in at a GM footprint aim to enable and facilitate what is happening in localities, neighbourhoods and communities. All commitments will be achieved in partnership. The Accord represents a commitment to ensure 'fair' representation from all ten boroughs in any decision-making processes affecting the VCSE sector, and acknowledgement that this may need different approaches for different places to accommodate this to happen. The Accord will recognise the different needs and requirements of each place and its populations in order to be successful in its aims.

2.9 The VCSE Leadership Group and the original Accord have been recognised as being nationally significant in terms of the progressive collaboration between VCSE organisations and their partners. However, this new Accord agreement will be ground-breaking in the ability of the statutory and VCSE sectors to move forward together in the post-Covid period. Already, new forms of collaboration are being developed, including the proposed VCSE-led Alternative Provider Federation, which it is hoped will sit as part of the new GM Integrated Care System. GM is leading the way in terms of the strength of its VCSE leadership and partnership working.

#### Implementation, governance and evaluation

2.10 The 5-year iterative programme of enabling and developmental activities driven at a GM-wide footprint will be outlined in an Implementation Plan supported by annual delivery plans which contain actions, responsibilities, timescales, targets and outcomes for delivery. This Implementation Plan will be used as the basis for a partnership funding agreement between the GMCA, Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM VCSE Leadership Group, which will cover the length of this Accord agreement, but be subject to annual review and confirmation of budgets for the GMCA and GM Integrated Care System.

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2.11 The VCSE Accord will be endorsed through individual ‘governance’ structures but will be owned jointly by the GM Combined Authority, the GM Health and Social Care Partnership (with approvals through the GM Partnership Executive Board and Health and Care Board) and the GM VCSE Leadership Group. Representatives from the three parties will meet every 3 months as a VCSE Accord Management Group to review progress made towards the shared objectives and targets set out in the Implementation Plan, to monitor the budget and spend, and to make any necessary adjustments to delivery. The VCSE Accord Management Group will be jointly and equally accountable for the delivery and risk associated with the work in this agreement and will also be responsible for evaluation of the effectiveness of the Accord.

2.12 Annex 3 outlines how Oldham is currently meeting the commitments set out in the Accord, as well as highlighting complimentary work areas.

### 3.0 **Recommendations**

3.1 Consider the new GM VCSE Accord as presented in the attached paper, and the implications that the commitments it contains will have on work with the VCSE sector in your district.

3.2 Approve the new GM VCSE Accord and confirm endorsement on behalf of your district.

### 4 **Consultation**

4.1 N/A

### 5 **Financial Implications**

5.1 To support this work, a budget of £228,400 was approved by the GMCA in September 2020 from the Cultural and Social Impact Fund, with approval delegated to the GMCA Treasurer, in consultation with the Community, Co-operatives and Inclusion Portfolio Leader and Chief Executive to award grant agreements, subject to final agreement of GMCA budgets for 2021/22 onwards. The GM Health and Social Care Partnership has also agreed to provide £180,000 in the current financial year towards delivery of the new VCSE Accord.

### 6 **Legal Services Comments**

6.1 The VCSE Accord is a partnership agreement which will involve all parties offering to bring resources (financial and non-financial) into the arrangement. It will enable shared delivery and shared accountability, as well as shared risk for the actions taken across the VCSE Leadership Group, GMCA and Health and Social Care Partnership.

### 7 **Co-operative Agenda**

7.1 The VCSE Accord is an agreement that has been coproduced and supports and continues to strengthen our already successful partnership with the VCSFE sector. (Sarah Whittle)

### 8 **Human Resources Comments**

8.1 N/A

### 9 **Risk Assessments**

9.1 N/A

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10	<b>IT Implications</b>
10.1	N/A
11	<b>Property Implications</b>
11.1	N/A
12	<b>Procurement Implications</b>
12.1	N/A
13	<b>Environmental and Health &amp; Safety Implications</b>
13.1	N/A
14	<b>Equality, community cohesion and crime implications</b>
14.1	N/A
15	<b>Equality Impact Assessment Completed?</b>
15.1	N/A
16	<b>Key Decision</b>
16.1	No
17	<b>Key Decision Reference</b>
17.1	N/A
18	<b>Background Papers</b>
18.1	N/A
19	<b>Appendices</b>
19.1	Annex 1 – GM VCSE Accord Draft
19.2	Annex 2 – GM VCSE Accord Annex
19.3	Annex 3 – Oldham’s Commitment to the GM VCSE Accord 2021