**Manchester City Council**

**Report for Information**

**Report to:** Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Programme Board – 12 July 2019

**Subject:** North Manchester Inquiry Report

**Report of:** Strategic Lead for North Manchester,

Programme Development Officer - Our Manchester Funds Programme Team

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**Summary**

This paper explains the work undertaken by the North Inquiry Panel which was formed to explore the issues around strengthening the voluntary and community sector in North Manchester. The paper explains the process that was taken, lists evidence that was gathered and provides the recommendations made by the panel.

The paper provides a list of who was on the inquiry panel and next steps for a proposed North Steering Group to continue the work.

**Recommendations**

The OMVCS Programme Board are requested to:

1. Approve the report and its recommendations as a basis for a business case for future investment
2. Consider how they can support the development and implementation of the recommendations

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**Wards Affected:** Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley, Charlestown, Ancoats & Beswick, Miles Platting & Newton Heath, Moston, Clayton & Openshaw, Cheetham

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**Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

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| **Manchester Strategy Outcomes** | **Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS** |
| A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities | A strong and thriving local voluntary sector provides meaningful employment and skills development. |
| A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success | The skills that people can develop through working for a strong local voluntary sector can better equip them to take up further opportunities, not only within the VCS sector, but also the public and private sectors. |
| A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities | Local VCS organisations support people in their areas to access opportunities and unlock their individual and collective potential. |
| A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work | A strong and thriving VCS supports and enhances the city’s cultural offer and the pride and vibrancy of local communities helping make those areas destinations of choice. |
| A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth |  |

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**Contact Officers:**

Name: Anne Taylor

Position: Strategic Lead for North

Telephone: 0161 234 1100

E-mail: a.taylor2@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Seb Gooderson

Position: Programme Development Officer

Telephone: 0161 234 5475

E-mail: s.gooderson@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

North Manchester Inquiry main report

Summary of all contributors

Written submissions

Organisation mapping



**How to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester**

**Acknowledgements**

Manchester City Council would like to thank everyone who contributed to the production of the recommendations of this report, particularly the members of the North Inquiry panel and those who contributed their time, information and experiences to inform the recommendations. We are also grateful to Nigel Rose and Macc for their support throughout the process.

**North inquiry panel members**

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| **Panel member** | **Role** | **Organisation** |
| Anne Taylor (Chair) | Strategic Lead for North Manchester, Manchester City Council | MCC |
| Greig Lees (Deputy Chair) | Head of Regeneration at Northwards Housing | Northwards Housing |
| Councillor Shelley Lanchbury | Councillor and Committee member at Higher Blackley Community Centre | Higher Blackley Community Centre |
| Claire Evans | CEO | 4CT |
| Richard Marsh | CEO | Factory Youth Zone |
| Justin Watson | Director | Young Manchester |
| David Kay | Project Manager | North Manchester FM |
| Wendy Steele | Operational Manager | Collyhurst Gateway Advice Project |
| Cormac Downey | Reform & Innovation Manager | MCC |
| Sinead O'Connor | Manager | Cheetham Hill Advice |
| Ruqia Allen | Manager | North Manchester Black Health Forum |
| Mary Stephens | Senior Board member and Case Worker | African Voice in Moston |
| Dr Cordelle Mbeledogu | Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Manchester Local Care Organisation | MLCO |
| Ben Aspinall | Locality Lead, Northern Health GPPO Ltd | MLCO |
| Dr Aisha Malik | GP and Clinical Lead for Winning Hearts and Minds | GP |
| Michael Salmon | Programme Lead for the Our Manchester Funds Team, Manchester City Council | MCC |
| Claudette Elliott | Director of Integrated Commissioning, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning | MHCC |
| Sam Bradbury | Deputy Director Community Health, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning | MHCC |

**Contributors**

We are grateful to the following people who attended the panel in person to give evidence:

Lou Beckett - Moston Miners

Matthew Youngson - Age Friendly Moston

Christopher Fallone – Gateway Debt Advice

Sherita Mandongwe – Dimobi Children’s Disability Trust

Donna Miller – Associate Director of Policy & Development, BHA for Equality

Sarah Whitelegg – Macc

Andrew Seedall – Programme Leader - Family Zone Development, Greater Manchester Academies Trust

John Falder – HMG Paints

The full list of contributors can be found in the appendices.

**Inquiry Support**

Project facilitator and report co-author – Nigel Rose, Strategic Lead (Commissioning), Macc

Project support and report co-author – Seb Gooderson, Programme Development Officer, MCC;

Project support – Elle Morris, Programme Apprentice, MCC

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## Foreword

North Manchester is a part of our city with character: it’s lively and interesting but not without its challenges and one of the key ways to support North Manchester has to be through the Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith (VCSEF) organisations that know the area and its people so well. That is why Greig and I were both so keen to be involved in the work of this inquiry. The need to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector is established – but how could it be delivered in a way that truly involves and is owned by VCSEF organisations and has their buy-in and support?

To explore these issues, our inquiry panel was established from a cross section of partners and stakeholders, to examine what works and what doesn’t. What processes and methodologies are replicable? What will engage local people to play a more active role within their communities? How can the skills and capacity of new and existing groups be built from within? What role can the OMVCS programme team take to help achieve the outcomes? What things can be done to redress the balance across the city and facilitate the development of a new and improved VCSEF sector in North Manchester?

We know that a truly collaborative effort is needed to build a stronger voluntary and community sector that works well for residents and helps move the debate beyond deprivation, under investment and gaps in provision, to a supported vision for something new, and perhaps different. We are proud to say that collaboration has started well as we hope you will agree when you read this report. We would also like to thank everyone who has contributed and worked so hard on the inquiry and we look forward to further working with you when we move to the delivery of these recommendations.

**Anne Taylor**

Strategic Lead for North Manchester, Manchester City Council

(Inquiry Chair)

**Greig Lees**

Head of Regeneration,

Northwards Housing

(Inquiry Deputy Chair)

## Introduction

In September 2018, the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Programme Board requested that a piece of work be carried out to make recommendations to the Board to answer the question of how to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester.

The request for this work came as a result of a gap analysis which was conducted after a relatively small number of applications were received to the OMVCS Grants programme from North Manchester, with some of these applications being unsuccessful. There was concern that this gap analysis reflected a historic lack of support, investment and coherent strategy for North Manchester that had resulted in a fragile sector and required a targeted approach to address.

Against this backdrop, an inquiry panel process was agreed as being a transparent and objective way to review the situation and make recommendations back to the OMVCS Board. The panel would take the time to consider evidence and take a long term view in recommending activity to improve the situation that would reflect the views of local VCSEF organisations and partners rather than be a top down approach done to the sector. The recommendations would form the basis for further development and a business case for investment.

The inquiry approach is similar to that taken by Parliamentary Select Committees where a group of experienced individuals consider a wide variety of evidence before making recommendations to a decision-making board who are separate from the panel. The process alone (facilitated by Macc) has been very valuable and has already helped shape the thinking and approach of panel members.

This report is the culmination of the inquiry panel process and presents the panel’s collective view on how to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester. It highlights the key issues that the panel discussed and the context for the recommendations, before listing the recommendations themselves.

Throughout this report the term ‘North Manchester’ is used to include the wards of:

* Crumpsall
* Harpurhey
* Higher Blackley
* Charlestown
* Ancoats & Beswick
* Miles Platting & Newton Heath
* Moston
* Clayton & Openshaw
* Cheetham

## Executive Summary

In response to a gap analysis produced to look at take-up of the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) Grants Programme across Manchester, an inquiry panel was formed in February 2019 to consider how to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester.

The panel was recruited from across multiple voluntary and partner organisations and met over five months to understand the issues from those affected by them, to consider evidence and to use this information to discuss and make recommendations.

The panel concluded that there are many very good voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sector (VCSEF) organisations working in North Manchester. However the sector is not as consistently well developed as it is in Central and South Manchester. It has historically been underfunded and North Manchester’s VCSEF is fragile in many areas as a result. Competition for grants, complex grant processes, a lack of information, a resistance to support in some areas and limited success in attracting and retaining talent compound this fragility.

#### 3.1 The Recommendations

The panel agreed that a long term approach was required and proposes the following recommendations grouped under five themes to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester. The recommendations have emerged from evidence presented to the panel and incorporate principles arrived at through the inquiry panel process. They are not listed in a particular order of priority as the panel’s view is that all are important in developing the North’s VCSEF sector.

These recommendations should be further developed into a business case to be presented to the OMVCS Programme Board and used as a basis for investment over a minimum period of 3-5 years.

More detail on each recommendation can be found in Section 7.

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| **Theme 1: Organisational Development** |
| This theme is about providing improved access to various forms of support that are better suited to the diversity of organisations in North Manchester, with the ultimate aim of enabling organisations and individuals to sustain the benefit they provide to the local community over the long term. This support needs to take a variety of forms and take-up should not be insisted upon as a requirement for funding. Organisational development is not just about structural processes and procedures but about supporting and investing in committed individuals to improve their skills and build on their experiences.  Recommendations in this theme are about building the capacity of larger organisations to support others, to make available a variety of training opportunities in North Manchester, to encourage basic quality standards and encourage larger and national organisations to deliver meaningful and relevant work in North Manchester. |

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| **Theme 2: People** |
| In addition to growing the skills of the VCSEF workforce in North Manchester, it is important to grow the workforce numerically by focusing effort and resource on the recruitment and retention of local people. The aim of this theme is to create a steady flow of interested, engaged people looking for and seizing local opportunities. This benefits not only the sector, but also the confidence levels and skillset of local people.  Recommendations in this theme are about enabling VCSEF organisations to run their own recruitment and retention activities, to improve the links with partner organisations in terms of sourcing volunteers, and proactively engaging young people to get involved. |

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| **Theme 3: Funding** |
| There needs to be more funding and investment opportunities available to North Manchester, of a greater breadth and variety to enable a more diverse group of local VCSEF organisations to successfully apply and ensure that a greater level of investment reaches local communities.  Recommendations in this theme propose a number of funding initiatives that support groups to increase their skills in applying for further funding, provide alternative methods of applying for funding, encourage groups to collaborate on funding bids, encourage very large and national funders to focus investment in North Manchester and to encourage funding of activities that promote local pride. |

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| **Theme 4: Communications, Information and Networking** |
| This theme is about ensuring that there is a coherent, strategic approach to the distribution of information in North Manchester that helps bring together groups, organisations and partners, builds local pride, engages local people, fosters an environment of understanding and collaboration across groups and connects strategic partners.  Recommendations in this theme are about bringing together and distributing information about organisations and their activities, establishing annual celebration and networking events, making better use of existing forums and networks, sharing the outcomes of the inquiry and to strengthen VCSEF awareness in the councillor induction process. |

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| **Theme 5: Long-Term Strategic Approach** |
| To truly strengthen the VCSEF in North Manchester requires a long term approach and any set of recommendations must be built on this view. To be successful, a long term approach will require championing, as well as collaboration with partners in shaping an overall strategic approach and monitoring progress.  Recommendations focus on setting up a North VCSEF Steering Group supported by the OMVCS Programme team as well as identifying champions in other areas to support the work. |

## 4. Context

### **4.1 Our Manchester and the VCSEF**

The Our Manchester Strategy (2016) is the City’s roadmap for the next ten years and includes among its objectives a commitment to working with the VCSEF to reach residents untouched by the city’s success. Our Manchester is not just a strategy but a way of working that maximises existing strengths and assets and focuses on people, listening and collaboration. Manchester City Council recognises the contribution made by the VCSEF and has made a commitment to work more effectively with the sector with the view that we all need to adopt these principles to achieve the best results for Manchester’s residents.

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*Image: the Our Manchester Principles*

The Our Manchester VCS grants programme embodies this commitment. Widely seen as an example of good practice, the OMVCS programme was established through co-design with the VCSEF sector and founded on principles of collaboration, strengthening pride and placing trust in organisations who know their communities and are already delivering high quality activity at scale. The programme is supported by a dedicated team based in the council which in a climate of austerity is no longer as common as it once was and shows the commitment the council has made to support the VCSEF. In addition a distributed network of liaison officers serve to provide a single point of contact for funded organisations and are able to bring in their knowledge and expertise from their day to day roles to support and connect groups. The team reports to the OMVCS Programme Board which provides a platform for partnership with other funders.

Alongside the OMVCS grants programme the Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF) provides a smaller level of funding for local activity that has a simple application process and the Lord Mayor’s fund providing routes in for activity that celebrate and build pride in Manchester. The Health sector also has a crucial role to play in funding local VCSEF activity, with a key example being the current co-design of the Population Health targeted fund due to launch later in 2019.

### **4.2 North Manchester and the VCSEF**

North Manchester contains many areas of severe and persistent deprivation. Its demographics are characterised by two extremes, with a large older population and a large population of young people. There are comparatively fewer people of working age in North Manchester which is compounded by a lack of local opportunities that offer progression and skill development. Poor health outcomes are also a factor, with wider determinants of health such as quality of housing, debt, food poverty and mental wellbeing all playing a part. Despite difficult conditions, there exist many strong social networks and a sense of belonging and local pride, with many people identifying strongly with their local area and committed to it for the long term.

Operating in this environment are many very good voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sector (VCSEF) organisations. The inquiry panel heard from many passionate local people who were committed to making a positive difference in their areas. However, the OMVCS Grants programme does not fund the sector in North Manchester to the same levels as Central and South Manchester. In terms of the total OMVCS grants programme, organisations based in the North receive around 16% of the funding allocated.

An initial analysis undertaken as part of the inquiry estimates that grant funding to VCSEF organisations based in and operating in North Manchester wards by OMVCS (Manchester City Council), Development funding (MCC), Young Manchester, Children in Need and Big Lottery was approximately £4.1m in 2018/19. Out of 324 organisations and groups that were mapped as part of the inquiry, 102 received some form of grant funding from these sources. For some context, the State of the Sector in Manchester report (2017) states the total annual income of the VCSEF across Manchester in 2014/15 was £526m.

There are less VCSEF organisations working in North Manchester, and of those based in the area many are not as developed as those in Central and South Manchester, with less formalised systems and processes which can impede the ability to attract funding and recruit and retain talent. There is also less take-up in North Manchester of support to help improve these systems and processes. Over 2010-2019 Macc supported 1,161 VCSEF groups on a range of issues from funding support to governance. 140 of those organisations were from North Manchester.

From the local authority’s point of view this results in fewer applications being received for grant funding, with some applications received being of insufficient quality. Now in its second year, the OMVCS Grants Programme funds 13 groups based in North Manchester out of a total of 63 which is around 20% of funded organisations on the programme.

### **4.3 Key issues**

Throughout the inquiry panel process, the panel concluded that the issues facing the VCSEF in North Manchester could be distilled into five interrelated themes:

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| **Theme 1: Organisational Development** |
| There are a number of groups in North Manchester who require support and staff capacity to develop their governance, quality of processes and policies and ability to raise funds and illustrate impact. The panel heard from contributors who had struggled to obtain funding, despite the fact that they were clearly delivering activity of benefit to the community.  Individual development has not been invested in and training is not easy to access locally with an emphasis on travelling into Manchester city centre which can be a barrier to access for some. |
| **Theme 2: People** |
| Currently volunteering and community activism is not consistent across communities and organisations. Some organisations struggle to recruit trustees and volunteers and do not necessarily have the resources to support, encourage and retain volunteers over the longer term. A short survey conducted for the report found that some residents did not feel they had enough information about what opportunities were available. Many active volunteers are not seeing future generations take up local opportunities and feel they lack support to help them generate interest. |
| **Theme 3: Funding** |
| The panel agreed that there had been a historic lack of investment in North Manchester and competition between organisations for resources meant there was a lack of support and collaboration which ironically could help bring in funding.  Even larger organisations can struggle to obtain funding and in some cases are applying for NIF money which is intended to support more informal community activity and events. |
| **Theme 4: Communications, Information and Networking** |
| The panel agreed that VCSEF organisations do not always know what is going on in the area and could support each other more effectively. Currently a lot of information is shared in a piecemeal fashion and reliance is placed on emails and online methods that are not always best suited to reach local people. In addition, many people who work outside the VCSEF sector know little about how the sector operates, limiting the potential for positive, long-lasting impact in North Manchester. |
| **Theme 5: Long term strategic approach** |
| There have been many attempts over the years to address the issues groups face and whilst these may have been successful to some degree, they have collectively failed to deliver an overall, long-lasting change. |

## 5. Inquiry Panel Process

### **5.1 Purpose**

The inquiry panel was set up to address the following question:

“How to develop a more vibrant, stronger and more thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester.”

In practice this means a voluntary and community sector that:

* Works in every part of North Manchester and with every type of community
* Is confident in its expertise and knowledge and can demonstrate the difference it makes
* Strongly represents the rights, needs and wishes of the diverse peoples of Manchester
* Has high levels of collaboration alongside widely diverse views
* Celebrates its history and achievements
* Attracts high levels of non-public sector funding
* Makes good use of the freely offered time, skills and expertise of the peoples of North Manchester

### **5.2 Membership**

A number of potential stakeholders were invited to be part of the inquiry panel and 18 members were appointed on the following criteria:

1. They strongly care about and have a long-term commitment to what happens in North Manchester
2. They are involved in work that impacts on North Manchester
3. They want to see positive and constructive change and are willing to enter into the Inquiry with a reasonably open mind and work collectively with other members
4. They understand the benefit and value of the VCS

Additionally the members of the panel had to overall:

* Have expertise in how small and medium-sized VCS organisations operate
* Have a key role in work in North Manchester with VCS organisations
* Have influence over funding decisions in North Manchester
* Have expert understanding of one or more of the diverse communities of North Manchester.

Representation was sought from the following sectors:

* VCS organisations and groups operating in North Manchester
* Housing associations
* GP federation
* MHCC
* LCO
* North Manchester General Hospital
* MCC including North Neighbourhoods Team

The panel was chaired by Anne Taylor, Strategic Lead for North Manchester (MCC) and co-chaired by Greig Lees, Head of Regeneration at Northwards Housing. The inquiry process was facilitated by Nigel Rose, Strategic Lead for Commissioning at Macc and supported by officers in the Our Manchester Funds Programme Team.

### **5.3 Format**

The panel met over 6 sessions across February – June 2019. Each session was independently facilitated by Macc and included time for input, gathering information, exploration of the issues and time for panel members to understand and share their own perspectives.

Each session identified contributors who could give evidence to move the discussion forward. These contributors were engaged in a variety of ways, including being invited to attend sessions to share their experiences inquiry panel members going out and conducting interviews and reporting back to the panel or through requesting written submissions. Further contributors have been identified over the course of the inquiry who could help inform the development of the recommendations.

A full list of contributors who have taken part in the process to date can be found in the appendices.

The inquiry panel approach was further supported by the views of residents and councillors. A resident survey was conducted to understand their experiences of the VCS in North Manchester and the motivations and barriers to volunteering, interviewing residents in Harpurhey and Charlestown. A councillor focus group was held with an invitation to all North ward councillors to give their views on how to strengthen the VCSEF in North Manchester.

The inquiry was supplemented by desktop research and initial mapping was undertaken using existing data to understand which organisations were known about in North Manchester and to what extent they were funded by major sources. This mapping was not intended to be exhaustive but to begin to build up a foundation for further research and analysis.

Recommendations were then developed and agreed upon by the panel by reflecting on the evidence gathered, drawing out themes and discussing what should happen to address the issues related to each theme.

## 6. Guiding Principles

The panel agreed a number of principles that informed their recommendations and (in addition to the Our Manchester principles) provide the context for how the recommendations are to be implemented. These considerations are not listed in any order of priority as they are all deemed important.

**6.1 Implementation will need to be targeted, recognising the diversity of North Manchester’s neighbourhoods**

The panel recognised the huge diversity of the neighbourhoods that make up North Manchester and there was not the time or level of data required to make specific conclusions based on geography. The recommendations are deliberately broad at this stage and further work needs to happen to refine the recommendations and whether work should be targeted to particular areas. In addition, many areas classed as East Manchester fall under the scope of this inquiry and have been included under the collective term of North Manchester.

**6.2 Implementation should help support and maintain the individuality of small groups**

North Manchester contains a large number of small groups who have an equally important part to play to larger organisations in strengthening the local VCSEF. Whilst there is an increasing expectation among funders that groups should be encouraged to work in partnership with larger organisations to support their development, it’s important that these small groups retain their individual identities and the freedom to do what they do best at a local level.

**6.3 Implementation must consider the role of Faith and BAMER groups**

Faith and Black Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) groups play an influential role in the voluntary sector and this is the case across North Manchester. The panel agreed that although some groups may not consider themselves to be part of a wider VCS ‘sector’, they are key stakeholders in implementing the recommendations. For the purposes of this report the work of faith and BAMER organisations is implicit in any reference to the voluntary sector and so we refer to groups collectively as VCSEF (Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith).

**6.4 Implementation must be delivered with a long term view in mind**

The Inquiry Panel agreed that the implementation of these recommendations needs to learn from past experiences. North Manchester requires a long term, thought-through approach that is connected at a strategic and operational level to truly enhance the sector and its impact on local communities over time. The recommendations are interlinked and individual recommendations are not designed to be implemented in isolation. In the first instance the panel advises that the recommendations as a whole are developed and implemented over a minimum 3-5 year period.

## Themes and Recommendations

### **7.1 Criteria for Recommendations**

As part of their conclusions, the panel agreed criteria for good recommendations:

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| **Ambitious and achievable** | The recommendations should demonstrate the serious intention to make improvements without being averse to risk but also not being so ambitious it will never be achieved. |
| **Realistic** | The financial cost must be considered and also the capacity to deliver e.g. not just adding additional requirements to an existing contract. Recommendations should recognise that one size doesn’t fit all. |
| **Sustainable** | Recommendations should make use of and build on existing assets and be monitored to see if they are working. Focusing on changing what is within our control to change and creating a quick but impactful change and not overstretching resources. |
| **Understandable** | The recommendations should be specific and anyone should be able to understand what they mean. |
| **Measurable** | Development of these recommendations should include the establishment of baselines where applicable in order to measure the effectiveness of work and track improvement over the longer term. |

The recommendations are grouped under 5 themes. Each theme includes an explanation of what is meant by the theme, as well as the aims of what each theme is intended to achieve.

As the recommendations are developed, gaps in knowledge and understanding will be exposed. These recommendations are intentionally broad as they will need to be flexible in order to respond to gaps as they are discovered. In addition, development will need to include baseline measures to enable tracking of progress.

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| **7.2 Theme 1: Organisational Development** |

There are many different shapes and sizes of organisations in North Manchester ranging from informal activity groups to fully constituted organisations. This theme is about providing improved access to various forms of support that are better suited to the diversity of organisations and individuals in North Manchester with the ultimate aim of enabling organisations to sustain the benefit they provide to the local community over the long term.

The panel recognises that the support needs of these organisations vary widely from group to group, from formalising structures and improving processes to ensuring the correct procedures and safeguards are in place, to accessing future investment, to recruitment and retention of volunteers. This is not about forcing a particular approach, or insisting that groups expand beyond their capacity.

Organisational development is not just about abstract structures, but the individuals at the heart of these organisations whose skills and experience is a crucial factor in ensuring the strength and success of local groups. The VCSEF provides a professional career path for many and as such continuing professional development should be on offer, taken seriously and encouraged just like any other sector. In order to increase the flow of resources into communities, staff, volunteers and trustees will need to develop skills in applying for grants and organisational management.

There is not the capacity or resources to provide universal or centralised support to every single individual and organisation and so there is a role for organisations to support each other. For example, larger, more well-established organisations are well placed to support newer and smaller groups, however the support offered should be resourced and needs to be appropriate to the needs of smaller groups and not a blanket requirement for small groups to access funding.

#### 7.2.1 Theme 1 Aims

1. A higher proportion of VCSEF organisations in North Manchester to have a sufficient level of governance and quality assurance
2. To support new or emerging groups to grow
3. To increase the skills and knowledge of the existing VCSEF workforce (including professional staff, volunteers and trustees)

**7.2.2 Theme 1 Recommendations**

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| * 1. **Build the capacity of larger organisations within North Manchester to support the development of smaller organisations.** |
| There are a number of organisations in North Manchester with good governance in place, the ability to raise funds and lots of established connections. In many cases they are already working with smaller organisations, however more need to be encouraged and supported to build their capacity to work with smaller organisations, with the recognition that supporting smaller organisations requires investment of resources. |
| * 1. **Encourage and support the development of training that is based in North Manchester** |
| There is a diverse training offer already available in Manchester, however very little is delivered in the North of the City. Often people are required to travel into the city centre and this can be a barrier to access. Training opportunities are not always communicated widely or adequately to reach those who would benefit from it. Training needs to be delivered from venues in North Manchester to make content more accessible to North VCSEF organisations. This applies to existing and new training offers e.g. safeguarding training delivered by MCC. |
| * 1. **To create or identify guidance that details basic quality requirements and sources of support and distribute it** |
| Many smaller groups are not aware of the requirements of basic quality assurance and governance and are not aware of where they can go to find support. This resource will be part of a broader promotion to assist groups in understanding their responsibilities and how to put robust policies and procedures in place and where they can go for help to do this. Work will need to be done to identify whether an existing resource is suitable and groups will need to be motivated to access this. Historically there has been some resistance from some groups to receive capacity building support. |
| * 1. **To carry out a training and support needs analysis for groups in North Manchester and provide additional training and support where there are identified gaps** |
| The needs analysis will need to be detailed and highly specific and involve direct contact with groups. This will require a substantial commitment of time to allow for people to participate effectively. The experience of the panel suggests that these needs are likely to include leadership skills, project and programme management, financial management and demonstrating impact. |
| * 1. **To develop and carry out a number of intensive and long-term training programmes based in North Manchester** |
| A small number of individuals should be taken through a longer term training process where they learn a broader set of skills. Provided free of charge and aimed at achieving a faster pace and quality of improvement in the abilities of those individuals. Content would include good governance and quality assurance. This would require a significant level of investment and would be delivered by the infrastructure organisation. Attendance could correlate to accessing small grants to enable local community activity. |
| * 1. **Identify and work with a small number of very large or National organisations to increase their work in North Manchester.** |
| Large and national organisations that operate in Manchester should be approached and encouraged to engage in North Manchester networks and work in North Manchester, involving local people as part of their engagement and delivering meaningful, relevant activities.  In addition, large and national organisations are operating in Manchester, and may operate on a citywide basis or in specific communities. The panel felt that use of the word ‘citywide’ in applying for funding for activity should be challenged and that a deliberate focus in North should be quantifiable rather than a generic commitment to the area. |

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| **7.3 Theme 2: People** |

In addition to growing the skills of the VCSEF workforce in North Manchester, it is important to grow the workforce numerically by focusing effort and resource on the recruitment and retention of local people. The aim of this theme is to create a steady flow of interested, engaged people looking for and seizing local opportunities.

Engagement needs to be driven by the VCSEF organisations themselves to ensure it is relevant and targeted, with support provided to help them to do this and to provide options to those that have been recruited to continue.

There are also opportunities that should be capitalised on, significantly links with employers (including through the North Manchester Business Network) and the engagement of young people who the panel agreed should be a focus for recruitment and retention.

#### 7.3.1 Theme 2 Aims

1. Increase number of volunteers
2. Increase number of trustees
3. Increase number of community activists
4. Grow the sector’s workforce

#### 7.3.2 Theme 2 Recommendations

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| * 1. **Support specific VCSEF organisations to run campaigns to recruit and retain volunteers** |
| Not a blanket approach, this is about supporting particular VCSEF organisations who come forward for help to recruit and retain volunteers over a period of time. A training programme with a micro grant attached to be used for a campaign could provide a way to do this, covering both the organisational development required to support volunteers and the recruitment / communications aspect. |
| * 1. **Increase and improve the quality of employer led volunteering to benefit North VCSEF organisations** |
| The North Manchester Business Network is already starting to host these conversations and engage with local VCSEF organisations. This recommendation would build on this work to increase the connections between employers and the VCSEF sector. Support would need to be provided to help VCSEF groups define what they need and how to make the best use of employee opportunities. |
| * 1. **Develop and deploy a programme across North to develop young people as activists and leaders** |
| Young Manchester currently supports work led in North Manchester by a number of local providers to embed youth social action, community activism and social change across youth and play provision in North Manchester. There is an ambition to build on this and the development of the recommendations should look at how this can be further supported and built upon. |

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| **7.4 Theme 3: Funding** |

Groups in North Manchester should be supported to improve their skills and knowledge in applying for funding so that they are able to provide the information required and demonstrate their impact.

On the part of funders and supporting organisations, funding needs to be well communicated to groups in North Manchester, with appropriate expectations dependent on the level of funding awarded and clear processes for application and monitoring.

Overall, there needs to be more funding and investment opportunities available to North Manchester, of a greater breadth and variety to enable a more diverse group of local VCSEF organisations to successfully apply and ensure that a greater level of investment reaches local communities.

#### 7.4.1 Theme 3 Aims

1. To increase overall level and quality of available investment / grants
2. Increase the ability of VCSEF groups to successfully apply for grants
3. Increase ability of VCSEF groups to develop diverse income streams
4. Increase the diversity and appropriateness of funding available from funders

#### 7.4.2 Theme 3 Recommendations

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| * 1. **Pilot a ‘highly assistive’ grants programme.** |
| For groups that wish to grow, develop and increase their impact in the longer term, this fund would offer small grants alongside a package of targeted support that would enable smaller groups to learn how to develop good applications and work with the more complex processes associated with larger grant programmes. Successful completion of the programme would equip them to independently submit future bids for funding on a broader scale. |
| * 1. **Encourage partnership and fostering of small organisations by larger organisations** |
| Larger organisations can benefit smaller ones in many ways through partnerships where they provide support to the smaller organisation, for example by sharing expertise on a particular area that is relevant to the development of the smaller organisation. This requires an investment of staff time which needs to be resourced and must be informed by the needs of the smaller group (see recommendation 1.4).  One example of where this approach is being taken is the Population Health Targeted Fund where a lead agency on the bid partners with another organisation. |
| * 1. **Explore alternative approaches for accessing low level funding for very new or starter groups** |
| For groups working at a micro level, there should be proportionally easier ways to apply. Starter funding for groups in North Manchester should accept alternative ways for groups to apply rather than extensive form filling, such as community soups, videos, interviews and others. |
| * 1. **Work with trust funds and larger grant funds to encourage them to focus investment in North Manchester** |
| Competition for funding is strong and currently North Manchester groups are competing with each other, other Manchester groups and at a national scale. Work is already taking place as part of the OMVCS Programme Board to bring together different funders including MCC, Big Lottery and Young Manchester. More work should take place to continue to bring on board other funders to consider how they can make money available to North Manchester groups. Place based approaches to funding could be explored whereby organisations from all sectors work together to identify new and more creative ways of funding relevant activities and services in a defined geographical area. |
| * 1. **Fund activities that promote pride in localities** |
| An important part of community life is to celebrate what is going on in the local area. These activities are also a good way to bring money into the local VCSEF. The Lord Mayor’s fund is a good source of money to fund these activities, however it is understood that take-up from North Manchester groups has historically been low. |

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| **7.5 Theme 4: Communications, Information and Networking** |

This theme is about ensuring that there is a coherent, strategic approach to the distribution of information in North Manchester that helps bring together groups, organisations and partners, builds local pride and fosters an environment of understanding and collaboration across groups.

It is also important that groups know about the support that exists for them to enable them to make informed choices about what support they draw in and are equipped to react to new opportunities.

Groups also need to be able to let residents know what they are doing in a way that is consistent and connected so that residents can know what is going on in their local areas.

Groups need to own the approach to distributing information however there is an important role for existing strategic forums and operational teams to support this, as well as help ensure the recommendations are developed in an impactful way.

#### 7.5.1 Theme 4 Aims

1. To ensure VCSEF groups are well networked, can support each other and are working in partnership
2. To ensure that there are ways that VCSEF organisations can let others know about what they are doing
3. Ensure VCSEF groups know about support that is available
4. Ensure that people find about the North Inquiry
5. Increase the knowledge of the VCSEF sector in the public and private sector in North Manchester.

#### 7.5.2 Theme 4 Recommendations

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| * 1. **Bring together and distribute information about VCSEF Organisations and their activities** |
| Information needs to be brought together consistently, with oversight, and in a way which involves VCSEF groups themselves in the collation and communication of this information. Information also needs to be shared in a variety of formats to ensure it is made as widely available as possible. |
| * 1. **Hold annual North Manchester networking and celebration events** |
| Bringing people together who work in North Manchester to share information, celebrate success and network face to face provides a way to build and enhance partnerships, make the impact of the local VCSEF more tangible to local people and build pride in local communities (see recommendation 3.5). |
| * 1. **Use existing forums and networks effectively to support the recommendations of the north inquiry** |
| A number of forums exist that could support the recommendations and development of work from the North Manchester Inquiry. This includes, but is not limited to: the OMVCS Programme Board, North Place Group, North Manchester Business Network and the Winning Hearts and Minds programme which employs community fieldworkers whose role is to develop networks and relationships with the local VCSEF to support and develop community-led health initiatives.  Forums should be mapped and reviewed, with a view for inquiry panel members and partners to play active roles in sharing information, influencing and bringing about positive change in North Manchester to the benefit of the local VCSEF and communities. |
| * 1. **Brief colleagues on the recommendations of the North inquiry** |
| In the first instance to include MHCC and MLCO colleagues, MCC North Neighbourhoods Service (including Neighbourhoods teams, Parks, Libraries), What’s On North events, North councillors, Winning Hearts and Minds community development fieldworkers. |
| * 1. **Use members of the Inquiry Panel as influencers across the networks that they are part of** |
| The Inquiry Panel is made up of individuals who represent lots of different interests across North Manchester who all share a passion for the area and the role of the VCSEF in its future. Panel members are well placed to distribute information and influence forums to consider North Manchester’s VCSEF sector over the longer term, building on the momentum from this inquiry. |
| * 1. **Include training about the VCSEF sector in the induction for Councillors** |
| Councillors have an extremely important role to play in supporting and championing the work of the VCSEF in North Manchester. However there is a mixture of understanding and knowledge of the VCSEF. Building in training to the Councillor’s induction could help achieve more consistency in knowledge and improve Councillor involvement across wards. |

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| **7.6 Theme 5: Long-Term Strategic Approach** |

To truly strengthen the VCSEF in North Manchester requires a long term approach and any set of recommendations must be built on this view. To be successful, a long term approach will require championing, as well as collaboration with partners in shaping an overall strategic approach and monitoring progress.

#### 7.6.1 Theme 5 Aims

1. To ensure a long-term co-ordinated strategy for development of VCSEF in North Manchester
2. To enable private sector to contribute to the overall strategy
3. To enable wider public sector to contribute to the strategy

#### 7.6.2 Theme 5 Recommendations

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| * 1. **Set up a North VCSEF Steering Group, supported by the OMVCS programme team.** |
| Membership should be drawn widely from across key organisations and forums in North Manchester however will be initially based on the Inquiry Panel group. Should report into the OMVCS Programme Board, must reflect the diversity of North Manchester and remain small enough to be effective.  The group must connect with and be informed by existing governance structures (such as the North Place Group and Our Manchester Investment Board), should own the recommendations of this report and have oversight of the development of a business case for investment. |
| * 1. **Identify champions for the development of North Manchester’s VCSEF at senior levels within key organisations.** |
| To help strengthen the VCSEF it is important to find senior officers, colleagues and politicians who can champion the cause of North Manchester across the region and at a national level. In the panel’s experience political and officer posts were seen as having more potential than celebrity endorsements. |

## Next Steps

1. Supported by the OMVCS Programme Team, the North Inquiry panel will establish the membership of the North Steering Group (recommendation 5.1). Membership of this group will include but is not limited to members of the inquiry panel.
2. The North Steering Group will:

* Oversee the delivering of a consultation to the wider VCSEF, partners and public in North Manchester on the recommendations
* Progress the development of the recommendations to understand where activity should be targeted and the development of baseline measures in order to track progress
* Develop the resource requirement and delivery plan
* Oversee the development of a business case to the OMVCS Programme Board for investment in order to implement the recommendations.



## Appendices

### **9.1 Full List of contributors**

The following people were invited either to attend in person or provide a written submission for consideration by the panel:

Lou Beckett - Moston Miners

Matthew Youngson - Age Friendly Moston

Liviu Dinu – Roma Support Worker, BHA for Equality

Christopher Fallone – Gateway Debt Advice

Mary Armstrong – Irk Valley TRG

Sherita Mandongwe – Dimobi Children’s Disability Trust

Marina Teat – Mirfield Road Community Garden

Donna Miller – Associate Director of Policy & Development, BHA for Equality

Carol Bartram – North Manchester Business Network

Sarah Whitelegg – Macc

Tracy Langton – Northwards Housing

Martin Roberts – Assistant Principal, Manchester Communications Academy (MCA)

Andrew Seedall – Programme Leader - Family Zone Development, Greater Manchester Academies Trust

John Falder – HMG Paints

Scott Flitcroft – MCR Active

Tom Woodcock - Strategic Lead for Community Asset Development at Greater Manchester Mental Health

Vicky McCall – Alzheimer’s Society (Moston)

North Place Group meeting of 2nd April 2019

Councillor Focus Group meeting of 21st May 2019

### **9.2 Summary of all Contributors**

See separate document.

### **9.3 Written Submissions**

See separate document.

### **9.4 Organisation mapping**

See separate spreadsheet.