

Building Back Better in Greater Manchester: together with the VCSE sector and the wider social economy

**A Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group
inclusive economy discussion paper**

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Summary – practical actions and policy suggestions

Practical actions to achieve change:

1. Support the creation of inclusive and sustainable local economies.
 - The VCSE sector and wider social economy already contribute, and could further contribute, to the creation of thriving, sustainable and resilient local economies. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the public sector and business, cross-sector, to identify how best to work together to improve GM's economy.
 - We would like closer and focussed collaboration with the public sector and business to explore the opportunities to develop community-led economic development, particularly in the most deprived areas; as well as to maximise the local benefits of any inward investment coming to GM.
 - Investment in community anchors across GM could help create democratic spaces for greater local participation and control to rethink and repurpose local economies.
 - Specific resource could also be devoted to supporting social innovation across GM for a just transition through some kind of incubator or knowledge hub.
 - We would also like to consider the creation of well-being hubs across GM to promote and support healthy lifestyles.
2. Tackle low pay and insecurity.
 - We would like to discuss ways of working in collaboration across different business sectors to share good practice and unlock barriers to creating fairer business models.
 - To support good VCSE employment, we also suggest meetings with commissioners, and funding bodies (including representatives of national funders) to discuss more appropriate and enabling funding and procurement practices.
3. Create social value from infrastructure and wider local spend.
 - We would like to work with public sector and business partners to ensure that infrastructure investments fully incorporate social value principles and outcomes.
 - These impacts could be supported through a GM Supply Chain platform for VCSE organisations, co-operatives, and local businesses committed to inclusion and sustainability.
 - We would also like to discuss the possibility of GM imposing a 1% levy on all public sector contracts, to fund the economic inclusion delivered by VCSE organisations.
4. Further engagement with GM Recovery Action Planning on the Economy.
5. Representation of the VCSE sector on the GM Local Enterprise Partnership.

Policy suggestions for inclusive and sustainable economies:

1. Add 'Equality and Diversity' as a specific criterion to the GM Good Employment Charter.
2. Adopt a Socio-Economic Equalities duty across GM.
3. Adopt the principles and suggested practices of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and create a GM approach.
4. Hold a GM-wide conversation across the different localities in the region, to bring people together around a shared vision of the future economy and society.

Introduction

Despite significant progress in recent years, COVID-19 has further exposed and focussed attention on the challenges facing the Greater Manchester economy and society. It has, at the same time, provided a unique opportunity to revision and repurpose our economy towards one which more equitably distributes wealth and opportunity across GM's people and places; provides high levels of health and well-being for all; reduces poverty; and works within environmental limits. Similar discussions are being had by all economic actors across Greater Manchester, and internationally.¹

Voluntary organisations, charities, community organisations and social and community enterprises (VCSE sector), as well as the wider social economy, including co-operatives and alternative business models such as employee-owned companies, are crucial to the recovery. Not only do they contribute directly to the GM economy, they are part of creating resilient and flourishing local economies and societies across GM. They provide examples of inclusive organisational models, share wealth and income more equitably; support the most disadvantaged people to access employment; promote healthy lifestyles; increase well-being; and innovate 'just transitions' towards an ecological and zero carbon future. The GM Co-operative Commission has already argued for a more place-based, community-led approach to economic development.² This paper supports that vision, outlining the different ways that the social economy can contribute, with a particular focus here on VCSE organisations.

Realising a more inclusive and sustainable economy will require substantial changes in how businesses and organisations operate; how local economies are structured; and how the public sector works with business, the social economy, and citizens. The current crisis has further increased collaboration across sectors, showing that complex challenges, and rapid, effective change, require the insights and capabilities of diverse actors. The importance of health is recognized in the Local Industrial Strategy. GM is aiming to become a 'Marmot City Region' and is setting up an Independent Inequalities Commission. Economic policy has for too long been undertaken predominantly by 'experts', rather than engaging directly with the people affected. The latter have the skills and resources to contribute, particularly to sustainable local economies.

Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group represents a wide range of organisations and activities that are crucial to enabling GM to 'Build Back Better'. We welcome the opportunity to work with other parts of the social economy, as well as the GM Combined Authority (GMCA), GM Local Enterprise Partnership (GMLEP), Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, local authorities, trades unions, businesses and local people to develop relevant strategies, policies and activities.

This discussion paper briefly summarises the different ways in which VCSE sector, and the wider social economy, are core (not marginal) to creating an inclusive and sustainable GM economy. It also suggests practical initiatives, collaborations, and ideas for supportive GM policy.

¹ See, for example: <http://gmlep.com/news/gmlep-build-back-better-webinar> (June 2020). Businesses discussed the need to reduce inequality, increase environmental action, and have greater positive impact on society. The Mayor, Andy Burnham, also noted that existing businesses could learn from social enterprises and co-operatives, as well as seeing these business models as likely to become more attractive in future, particularly for young people.

²<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/2598/gm-co-operative-commission-report.pdf>

The role of VCSE organisations and the wider social economy in 'Building Back Better'

The diverse social economy within Greater Manchester has a significant direct economic footprint. This impact on jobs, as well as economic activity across virtually all economic sectors, suggests the need for appropriate representation on GM business and employer bodies, and within strategic economic decision-making.

However, it is also important to recognise that any economy is far wider than just a sum of financial transactions and formal employment. Economic activity (which produces goods and services through work) may also be unpaid—such as caring, volunteering, or swapping goods. And it is not all about individual consumption and ownership. Sharing or collective ownership of assets (for example, of goods, land or housing) is also important and, may become a greater part of a future sustainable economy, helping to limit resource use, and reducing the need for individual wealth and high incomes.

In addition, social economy organisations of all kinds do not focus primarily on profit, but rather on achieving a mix of social, environmental and economic value. They tend to have organisational models that create a fair sharing of economic wealth created, and incorporate values such as participation, reciprocity and collaboration, alongside competition.³ These traits are in fact those which businesses and international organisations (from the OECD to business leaders' forums) both before, and increasingly after, COVID-19 began, are seeing as important going forward. There has been, for example, increased discussion of 'stakeholder corporations', or of the rise in ESG (environmental, social and governance) criteria, and impact investing within mainstream finance. The economist, Nobel-prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, has also argued that more resilient economies are ones with a diversity of economic models such as not-for-profits, charities, co-operatives, etc.⁴

1. The direct formal economic value of the VCSE sector

It is useful to first recognise the current direct economic contribution of the VCSE sector to the Greater Manchester economy on standard measures such as turnover and employment. The latest statistics will be available in autumn 2020. However, using the last survey of GM in 2017, the VCSE 'sector', as defined and measured in that study, accounted for about £1.3bn turnover a year⁵, a significant proportion of which is drawn from outside GM. There were 15,890 organisations, with 26,800 fte (full-time equivalent) staff—roughly comparable to half those employed in Advanced Manufacturing in GM.⁶ If the one in ten employees for Advanced Manufacturing estimated by GCMA is correct, this means around 1 in 20 employees are in the VCSE sector.

However, the economic footprint of the entire social economy, including housing associations, co-operatives and alternative business models, such as employee-owned companies, is likely to be much higher.⁷ There is clearly a need to more comprehensively investigate the scope and scale of the social economy in GM, as was done, for example, in Liverpool City Region in

³ For a longer discussion of the social economy and the different ways in which it contributes to an inclusive and sustainable economy, see Vickers I, Westall A, Spear R, Brennan G & Syrett S (2017) *Cities, Social Economy and Inclusive Growth*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/cities-social-economy-and-inclusive-growth>

⁴ Stiglitz, J (2009) 'Moving beyond market fundamentalism to a more balanced economy'. *Ann Public Coop Econ*, Vol. 80, No.3, pp. 345–360. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8292.2009.00389.x>

⁵ <https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/publications/greater-manchester-state-vcse-sector-2017>

⁶ https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1580/key_facts_2017final.pdf

⁷ The report of the [GM Co-operative Commission](#) estimates around 300 co-operatives in GM. Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) believes that the social enterprise contribution to GVA could be nearly three times higher than usually estimated. https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/The_Hidden_Revolution_-_FINAL-1.pdf

2017. That study found a sector representing a much higher percentage of the economy, about one in ten employees.⁸

2. Valuing and recognising volunteering and mutual support as part of the economy

An often unrecognised, additional value created by VCSE organisations comes from the 461,800 people who volunteer 1.1 million hours per week. The economic value is estimated (using GMCA approved methodology) to be £973 million per year.⁹

This estimate exemplifies the point made above that an economy is not just the sum of the output produced by paid employment. A fair amount of economic activity (in other words, work that produces or distributes useful goods and services to meet need) takes place, for example, through volunteering, informal care (of children, older people and disabled people), or forms of mutual aid between people. During COVID-19, the power of mutual aid (such as through sharing or swapping useful items, or providing advice and support) has increased. This kind of activity has, however, always been a part of economies (particularly local). It is how communities thrive and people support each other. As a result, we need to recognise much more clearly, and to resource, the economic development role that the VCSE sector has in supporting these civic contributions.

3. Inclusive employers

We know that GM VCSE organisations, like others around the UK, tend to employ relatively more people from groups who are otherwise under-represented, such as those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage, women and disabled people, or have other work-limiting conditions, or physical impairments or mental health issues. There also tends to be more diversity in leadership, particularly by women.¹⁰ Their ethical recruitment practices can also serve as exemplars for all sectors and are further reasons to support the increased growth of the VCSE sector to achieve a more inclusive economy.

4. Enabling people to access employment and start businesses

Voluntary organisations, charities, community groups, social and community enterprises, and other social economy organisations, can support and enable people to access employment, as well as addressing many other interlinked aspects of their lives from housing to health. Support may include skills development, mentoring, volunteering opportunities or job matching. This kind of activity is particularly critical to maintain at the current time, not only for those who have lost, or are at risk of losing, jobs, but also to support transitions to new ways of working and future skills. These roles suggest a greater focus on supporting such organisations to invest in apprenticeships, and employment schemes.

For example: [Talent Match](#); [SMaRT Garage Salford](#); [Back on Track](#); [Upturn Enterprise](#); [Breakthrough UK](#)

5. Understanding, underpinning and creating vibrant local economies and societies

Across GM, there are many local areas which have struggled to provide jobs and livelihoods or create desirable places to live, as well as retain the wealth created there for the benefit of local people. We already know that COVID-19 has exacerbated individual inequalities, but there are indications that this is also happening spatially. VCSE organisations and the social economy are crucial parts both of the recovery of local economies, and of enabling their future development. There is increasing evidence of the benefits of taking a more 'bottom-up' approach to local economic development, which increases the control and engagement of

⁸ https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/publicpolicyamppractice/the_scale_scope_and_value_of_the_Liverpool_City_Region_social_economy.pdf

⁹ For details, see https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1580/key_facts_2017final.pdf

¹⁰ Local knowledge is confirmed by national studies such as: *UK Civil Society Almanac 2020*; and the *State of Social Enterprise Survey, 2020*: <https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/state-of-social-enterprise-reports/>

local people in economic decision-making, as well as their ability to own and create community assets and businesses.¹¹

Examples include:

Providing intelligence and insight on poverty in Greater Manchester, including how to address the underlying causes of poverty and ensure local interventions focus on poverty reduction and prevention, not just crisis responses. Providing opportunities for people to develop skills and participate in creating their own solutions, such as through poverty truth commissions and policy development.

[Greater Manchester Poverty Action](#)

Providing safety nets for people struggling with low pay or benefits, or suffering from mental distress or isolation; as well as opportunities for people to develop skills and participate in creating their own solutions, such as through food banks, financial advice, mutual aid and support groups.

[Oldham Credit Union](#); [Mustard Tree](#); [Infinity Initiatives](#); [Wai Yin Society](#)

Supporting the creation of local and inclusive economic activity and employment through different kinds of local charitable and community enterprises, or self-employment.

[Radcliffe Market](#); [Emmaus Bolton](#)

Innovating new forms of economic activity and assets such as sharing goods; local food growing; or forms of community energy, community-owned housing and land; which reduce or eliminate costs, share wealth or can provide new sources of income.

[Stockport Hydro](#); [Oldham Community Power](#)

Creating spaces for local people to think about and contribute to the future development of their area, being part of place-based economic democracy and decision-making.

[Elephants Trail project](#); [Little Hulton Big Local](#); [Inspiring Communities Together](#)

Providing affordable housing and workspaces, as well as public space through, for example, community land trusts, or co-operative housing. These examples can help rethink high streets, enable people to work locally, and realise the potential of community ownership and control.

[Windsor Albion Co-operative](#); [Rochdale Boroughwide Housing](#)

Improving people's health and well-being through access to activities and preventive approaches which create flourishing lives and places.

[PossAbilities](#); [Bolton Wanderers Community Trust](#); [HMR Circle](#); [Youth Elements](#)

Providing social cohesion and community support through community hubs, groups, and community assets to enable people to thrive and create relationships which underpin their ability to access jobs and create solutions to their own needs.

[Action Together](#); [Manchester Settlement](#); [KYP](#)

6. Being examples of inclusive and sustainable business models

Showcasing business models that support increased participation by all workers and stakeholders, and equitably reward all stakeholders (including innovating ways of accessing external finance on appropriate terms), thus contributing to reduced pay/wealth inequalities.

¹¹ See, for example, <https://localtrust.org.uk/insights/research/building-community-wealth-in-neighbourhoods/> and <https://localtrust.org.uk/insights/essays/building-wealth-an-essay-by-hazel-sheffield/>

Examples include:

Innovating and illustrating the viability of forms of economic activity which create different combinations of social, economic, and environmental value.

[Red Co-operative](#); [SharpFutures](#); [Reason Digital](#)

Supporting the values of reciprocity, solidarity and sharing, which build on the mutual aid seen throughout the crisis. These attributes will be necessary to realise a just transition, as well as new business models, such as those implied by the circular economy.

[Co-operative Network Infrastructure](#); [Open Kitchen MCR](#)

Partnerships and practical actions to achieve change

We have summarised below some areas of focus and practical action which we would like to discuss with partners. Three principles underlie our ideas. These are:

- *creating resilient local economies;*
- *addressing inequalities;*
- *innovating for a Green New Deal.*

Our suggestions build on short-term opportunities for collaboration during the recovery phase, as well as ideas to further underpin our vision of an inclusive and sustainable economy for Greater Manchester in all localities across the region.

1. Support the creation of inclusive and sustainable local economies

We would like to engage with the public sector and business, to work out how best to support thriving and resilient local economies across GM. We can build on our insights and infrastructure, as well as examples from the UK and internationally. Part of Recovery Planning could also include a new panel on Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Local Economies.

This crisis offers the opportunity for the VCSE sector to work with all sectors, bringing together the skills and resources needed to create inclusive and sustainable local economies. However, the GM Economy Recovery Action Plan is currently focused primarily on ‘high-value-added’ sectors, and inward investment by large companies. International evidence increasingly shows that this selective approach is inadequate to create resilient local economies that provide opportunities, share wealth or respond effectively to climate, health and environmental challenges. Primarily ‘top-down’ approaches can unintentionally exacerbate existing inequalities between localities and individuals, unless benefits are carefully designed and action is taken to mitigate.

The early successes and challenges of VCSE-led programmes such as Local Access can inform the kinds of collaboration and ideas which start to create sustainable change at local level.¹² This initiative from Access (the Foundation for Social Investment) and Big Society Capital supports partnerships of local authorities, social enterprises and trading charities, housing providers and infrastructure organisations, in Bolton, Oldham, Stockport and Wigan, with support from GMCVO, to grow the local social economy to tackle local issues, and help ‘level up’ economic activity and opportunities.

Investment in community anchors across GM could help create democratic spaces to enable greater local participation and control to rethink and repurpose local economic development.

The VCSE Leadership Group has previously highlighted the important role of community anchors (multi-purpose, independent, community-led organisations and places) as well as related community leadership and mobilisation across GM. These organisations and people can enable real understanding and dialogue at local level on the economy, as well as provide the catalyst to realise practical activities and intervention at scale through networking and engagement with other players.¹³ Devolving control over local economic futures down to

¹²<https://www.gmcvo.org.uk/news/new-investment-gm-help-grow-social-economy-and-tackle-inequality>

¹³ Voluntary organisations, Community groups and Social Enterprises (VCSE) in Greater Manchester – the next 10 years (January 2020). <https://vcseleadershipgm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GM-VCSE-Position-Paper-Final.pdf>

communities could also include access to related funding streams such as the Future High Street Fund, or the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Specific resource could be devoted to supporting social innovation across GM for a just transition through some kind of incubator or knowledge hub.

VCSE organisations and the wider social economy internationally have been at the forefront of providing solutions to creating inclusive and sustainable local economies.¹⁴ Any such initiative could be led by and developed with the VCSE, sharing the capacity and resources of different stakeholders. It could support and complement the work of the suggested Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Local Economies Panel.

We would also like to consider the creation of well-being hubs across GM to promote and support healthy lifestyles across GM.

These centres could build on the success of person-centred well-being initiatives delivered by the VCSE sector, such as ‘social prescribing’, tackle health inequalities, and help reduce the rise in mental health issues due to the pandemic.¹⁵ This is part of a shift towards funding ‘preventive’ policies which enable people to fully engage in work and society and therefore also save public sector money.

2. Tackle low pay and insecurity

We would like to discuss ways of working in collaboration across different business sectors to share good practice and unlock barriers to creating fairer business models.

This crisis has highlighted even more the challenges for those in low pay (many of them ‘key workers’) or insecure forms of work. The focus so far has rightly been predominantly to increase the payment of the real Living Wage¹⁶ to the lowest paid. But in addition, there is a need to discuss and reduce the excessively high wages in certain areas, as well as unfair disparities in wage levels across different parts of the economy. Given the challenges of both pay and viability facing childcare across GM, and its importance to the entire economy, one urgent example could be to work cross-sector to innovate viable business models, make best use of physical assets, and potentially share resources, staff and functions between organisations.¹⁷

We would like to meet with commissioners, and funding bodies (and representatives of national funders) to discuss more appropriate funding and procurement practices to support good VCSE employment.¹⁸

Whilst VCSE organisations show many good employment practices, they can struggle to provide adequate pay, training, security or career progression. This is particularly true for those dependent on external funding and government contracts.

¹⁴ See, for example, Vickers I, Westall A, Spear R, Brennan G & Syrett S (2017) *Cities, Social Economy and Inclusive Growth*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/cities-social-economy-and-inclusive-growth>

¹⁵ For example, Wellbeing Matters in Salford - <https://www.salfordtogether.com/2018/12/wellbeing-matters/>
¹⁶ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage>

¹⁷ Glasgow East, for example, is trialling a system change approach for viable childcare. <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/change-childcare-and-nurture-glasgow-east/>

¹⁸ See, for example, the section on VCSE in Westall, A (2019) Promoting good work in *Greater Manchester: Taking sectoral differences into account in the development of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter*, Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit, University of Manchester. <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=46492>

3. Create social value from infrastructure and wider local spend

We would like to work with partners to ensure that infrastructure investments fully incorporate social value through, for example, approaches like the GM VCSE Commissioning Framework, and GM Good Employment Charter, with a specific focus on ensuring reduced spatial and individual inequalities, and having the highest environmental performance.

In June 2020, the UK Government committed to bring forward infrastructure spending (through Project Speed). Whilst this proposal does not adequately ensure a green and inclusive jobs-rich recovery, it does, together with other GM infrastructure plans, provide an opportunity to maximise positive impact on inclusion and sustainability through a comprehensive social value approach. The VCSE sector would welcome the opportunity to work with the GMLEP and GMCA in infrastructure decision-making to provide insight on impacts on particular localities, and ways to benefit different demographics; as well as to be recognised as potential delivery partners.

We would also like to discuss the development of a GM Supply Chain platform for VCSE organisations, co-operatives, and local businesses committed to inclusion and sustainability.

To enable greater benefit from inward investment or infrastructure spending, and to enable everyone in GM to support social economy organisations, there is a need to make it easier to buy from them.

We would also like to discuss the possibility of GM imposing a 1% levy on all public sector contracts, to fund the economic inclusion delivered by VCSE organisations.

The Social Value Framework and Policy is already used as a valuable commissioning tool in Greater Manchester, but taking it one step further would ensure social value was delivered by every contract issued.

4. Further engagement with GM Recovery Action Planning on the Economy

Investment Taskforce – As part of this group, GMCVO, GMCA and Access - the Foundation for Social Investment are already working together to develop an Emergency Relief Fund for VCSE organisations in GM (£50-£500k) who are currently unable to access finance. There are discussions to create a fund where the money is repayable but with no repayment or interest required in the first two years. Similar partnerships and activity are also going on at local levels.

If GM wants to see greater numbers of larger voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives, and community-owned land and housing, or alternative business models, there is a need to review available and appropriate finance, particularly forms of equity (including patient repayable risk capital). This focus could help position GM as an international finance innovator, helping to repurpose finance to better support need and appropriately distribute wealth.

Economy cell and GM Good Employment Charter – VCSE organisations can contribute their expertise on more flexible forms of employment, pay structures, employee and stakeholder participation, and diversity.

Communications Taskforce – The social economy should be included in the Recovery Planning Review's 'Total Universe' of businesses, and as key partners to bring about a Safe GM. We can help create narratives to 'Build Back Better' drawing on the insights and needs of local people, particularly, given the urgent need, of young people and people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage.

We can also strategically contribute to the **Employment and Skills Advisory Panel**; **Small and Medium Enterprises and Supply Chains**; **Green Behaviours’ Taskforce**; and the **Digital Panel** (to ensure digital inclusion).

However, we will also need to think creatively about how to resource an extended role of the VCSE within economic development.

5. Representation of the VCSE sector on the GM Local Enterprise Partnership

The examples above show the economic contributions of VCSE and the wider social economy across GM, both now and in the future. We would therefore welcome further engagement in ongoing discussions as to how best include these impacts as part of the Greater Manchester LEP. This is already happening, for example, in [Liverpool City Region LEP](#) (a ‘third sector’ champion) and in the [Heart of the South West LEP](#). There is also a recommendation in the [UK Government’s LEP Review 2018](#) to improve the diversity of Local Enterprise Partnership chairs and board members, including through “representation from ... the voluntary and community sector bodies.”¹⁹

¹⁹[Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships](#), July 2018.

Further policy suggestions for inclusive and sustainable economies

We would like to support, propose and discuss the following policy suggestions with GMCA, to both signal and reinforce GM's vision and commitment to 'Build Back Better'. As they are mutually supportive, each of these elements should be considered together (particularly 2, 3 and 4).

1. Add 'Equality and Diversity' as a specific criterion to the GM Good Employment Charter

Equality and diversity was originally proposed by many as a separate characteristic during the development of the GM Good Employment Charter. It is now recognised as a core thread running through all the criteria. However, this universalism can hide its importance and therefore reduce its impact. The suggestion to specifically include this issue was raised and favourably discussed at, for example, at a June webinar organised by the Growth Company on good employment and people of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage.²⁰

2. Adopt a Socio-Economic Equalities duty across GM

When the Equalities Act was introduced in 2010, the UK Government did not enact Section 1—a socio-economic duty requiring that public bodies take measures to: “reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage”.²¹ We support the ongoing discussions with GM to adopt this duty unilaterally, further empowering the Equalities Lead for GM.

3. Adopt the principles and suggested practices of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015²², and create a GM approach

Including improvements suggested by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill, currently passing through both Houses of the UK Parliament.²³

One of the challenges for government at national and local levels has been short-termism. In order to ensure policy that supports a resilient recovery, addresses inequalities in the short and long-term, speeds up responses to environmental challenges, and anticipates future developments and shocks, there is a need to create a framework to support long-term policy making. There could be a GM Commissioner or some kind of panel to focus attention and capabilities.

4. Hold a GM-wide conversation across the different localities in the region, to bring people together around a shared vision of the future economy and society

During the development of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, a public conversation was held across Wales to explore the future people wanted, which resulted in seven well-being goals. We suggest that the VCSE sector could be a core actor in enabling a similar process to happen in GM.

1. Ensure that economic policy is subject to a full impact assessment (incorporating environmental, economic, and social criteria –including inequalities and poverty levels)

²⁰ The issue was first raised by one of the speakers, Sharon Amesu, Chair, Institute of Directors (IoD) Manchester. <https://www.gmgoodemploymentcharter.co.uk/news-blogs/posts/2020/june/equality-issues-the-bame-community-and-pay-disparities-supporters-network-webinar>

²¹ Equality Act 2010, Part 1 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/1>

²² Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>

²³ Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill <https://todayfortomorrow.org.uk/what-is-the-future-generations-bill/>

2. **Collect increased levels of segregated data about the nature of local economic, social and environmental conditions** (with Office for National Statistics, local authorities, local infrastructure organisations).

GM has tended to focus on the collection of disaggregated skills data, but not on skill 'demand'. More widely, there is a need for better data to understand local economies and people's well-being. A Local Data Observatory, could **develop alternative ways of measuring progress and well-being**, similar to that in for example New Zealand, for the region and local communities.²⁴

²⁴<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamesellsmoor/2019/07/11/new-zealand-ditches-gdp-for-happiness-and-wellbeing/>
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