

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
Subject: Turbo Charging Gender Equality in Greater Manchester  
Report of: Cllr Brenda Warrington, Portfolio Lead for Age-Friendly and Equalities  
and Pam Smith, Lead Chief Executive for Age-Friendly and Equalities

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**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To provide Leaders with an update of the plans to accelerate gender equality in Greater Manchester and seek agreement of the areas of activity identified to take this work forward.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Leaders are asked to:

- agree the proposed areas of activity - to be further developed into a delivery plan - to turbo charge gender equality in Greater Manchester;
- support the principle of identifying resource to drive forward this agenda, working in partnership across Greater Manchester and national agencies as appropriate;
- agree to further updates of the work programme being brought back to future meetings of the GMCA.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 There has been much recent debate on the issue of gender equality and this has reinvigorated discussion of how we might achieve greater gender parity across Greater Manchester.
- 1.2 Greater Manchester has long flown the flag for women's rights, however whilst progress has been made, issues such as the gender pay gap remain.
- 1.3 Work undertaken by partners including Northern Power Women, Devo Manc, The Fawcett Society, as well as GMCA's own work in in this area, have further highlighted the inequalities that exist in the city-region.
- 1.4 There is now a recognised need to bring together this existing activity and better coordinate our efforts to help shape a future work programme that will set gender equality firmly on the agenda in Greater Manchester.

## **2. GENDER PARITY IN GREATER MANCHESTER – THE CURRENT PICTURE**

- 2.1 Evidence compiled by the GMCA research team highlights the scale of gender inequality in Greater Manchester. For example:
  - Female employment rates are lower in Greater Manchester than the UK average (68.3% and 70.3% respectively), and both are lower than male employment rates (77.1% and 79.4%). The gender pay gap is lower in Greater Manchester than the national average, which is reflective of lower overall wage levels, but still stands at 8.2%.
  - There are nearly twice as many low-paid part-time jobs held by women, than low-paid full-time jobs, and the prevalence of women in this type of work contributes significantly towards the overall gender pay gap. Some forms of atypical work (e.g. zero hour's contracts) are more prevalent amongst women.
  - Greater Manchester sees twice as many new referrals for female genital mutilation (FGM) each year than the national average, with an estimated 9,250 women living with FGM in Greater Manchester. Research by Plan International UK found Salford and Manchester to be in the top ten worst Local Authorities to be a girl in 2016.
  - Three quarters of all domestic violence victims in Greater Manchester are women, and over 80% of domestic homicide victims are women. Over 80% of sexual offences are committed against women in Greater Manchester.

- Adult female reoffending rates are significantly lower in Greater Manchester than the national average (15.9% compared to 22.9%).
  - On a national / international note, currently there are the highest number of women in history sitting in the House of Commons, but still only 32% of UK MPs are women, and worldwide just 24% of people elected into international Parliaments are women.
- 2.2 The remainder of this paper sets out a proposed response to progressing gender equality in Greater Manchester.

### **3. DEVELOPING A RESPONSE TO GENDER INEQUALITY IN GREATER MANCHESTER**

- 3.1 A commitment has been made from senior leaders across Greater Manchester to collaborate and develop a joint work programme to address some of the issues identified in support of achieving gender parity across the city-region.
- 3.2 Formed from a series of meetings, conversations and existing work programmes, a long list of possible actions, campaigns and ideas were brought together and discussed at the first meeting of the Greater Manchester Women's Voice Group. This group will seek to engage all those interested parties to form a task and finish group, with the view of delivering an agreed work programme, with the potential for a longer-term group to be formed as appropriate.

### **4. GM WOMEN'S VOICE GROUP**

- 4.1 Cllr Brenda Warrington, Leader, Tameside MBC and Combined Authority Equalities Portfolio Holder chaired the first meeting of the group on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, attended by representatives from across Greater Manchester, including some Local Authority Chief Executives, GMCA Officers, Combined Authority Members, Local Authority Officers, Manchester University, Chamber of Commerce, Diva Manc, the Big Lottery and the Fawcett Society.
- 4.2 There were a number of points arising from the first meeting. Key points made included:
- This work should be evidence led. It was recognised that a vast amount of evidence exists in relation to gender equality and this needed to be brought together in one place. A strong evidence base will help direct action that will move this agenda forward and will enable us to better track progress across a range of indicators.
  - Linked to this, there is a need to map programmes in GM that are aimed at promoting / opening up careers in traditionally male dominated sectors to women e.g. the Primary engineers programme and Digital Her. This would help challenge career stereotyping.
  - Engagement with employers in GM would be crucial to achieving gender parity in GM. Employers needed to embed equal pay, flexible working

etc. The implementation of the Good Employment Charter will support this agenda and the GM Chamber of Commerce will help to engage large employers. As part of this, there was a need to identify which organisations were already doing this well and promote them as exemplars.

- The public sector has a key role to play in promoting gender equality and needs to be an exemplar in this area. As part of this, GMCA should consider how it can truly embed the Public Sector Equality Duty and be a trailblazer in this area by going over and above the basic legal requirement for equality impact assessments.
- Gender equality needs to be embedded in GM policies and strategies, including GMS. Linked to this, GM strategies should recognise the potential that female talent can make to closing the growth and productivity gap
- There is a broader job to do in terms of raising awareness of gender equality issues

4.3 It was agreed that the group would act as a steering group for the development of an action plan. This will identify quick wins, which can and will be, implemented immediately and identify those longer term, more strategic actions. The areas identified for development into the action plan are set out in the table below and begin to shape a future work programme.

4.4 The group discussed how this work programme might be further developed and delivered and the resource available to do this. It was acknowledged that there was limited capacity currently available at a GM level to deliver this work. As such, it was proposed resourcing opportunities be investigated, looking at existing capacity within GM, with the possibility of seeking additional resource if needed, to establish a coordinating function to oversee and drive this work, along with the wider equalities agenda, with regular updates on progress to be brought back to the GMCA.

4.5 The Women’s Voice Group will meet again in May to consider actions to date and further development of the action plan and next steps to drive forward this agenda and embed within the mainstream delivery and policy development in Greater Manchester.

## 5. PROPOSED ACTION AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 The following priority themes and suggested actions have been identified and will form the basis of a work programme - linking in wherever possible to existing workstreams - which will be overseen by the GM Women’s Voice task and Finish group.

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| <b>Public sector and strategy development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review equalities policy and practice in GM organisations - ensure legal requirements are met, delivering Equality Impact Assessments which</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>support better policy development and decision making, and best practice sharing across GM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GM Local Authorities be requested to undertake self-assessment using the LGA's toolkit around under-represented groups, and identify best practice examples</li> <li>• Consider how to better utilise public sector influence and convening role to build gender equality considerations into wider decision making</li> <li>• GMCA to explore a date by which to close the gender pay gap</li> <li>• Support the development and delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>Evidence base</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile all evidence / research on gender equality from across GM, and make available – work is underway to develop accessible disaggregated data, along with work with University of Manchester to access and utilise academic data</li> <li>• Have an agreed baseline across GM and work across each locality to develop an action plan to address gender equality, including targets. Plans should include specific priorities around women and girls mental health and tackling discrimination</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Best practice and awareness raising</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collation and dissemination of best practice examples from across public, private and voluntary sector – on both service delivery and policy development</li> <li>• Through the GM Good Employment Charter, work with GM employers, identifying exemplars and consideration of awards criteria, involving Chamber and other partners as appropriate</li> <li>• Continue to support Unite's period dignity campaign</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Women &amp; girl's voices in policy development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake mapping exercise of existing women &amp; girls service delivery, including schools &amp; colleges</li> <li>• Recognition of where women &amp; girl's voices are currently represented and where there are opportunities for GMCA and other policymakers to convene and support other mechanisms</li> <li>• Over time develop capacity to increase representation and influence of women &amp; girl's voices in policy development and service delivery</li> <li>• Once plans are in place, consider holding a GM Summit in early 2020 to highlight the work being undertaken to make GM the best place for women to be.</li> </ul> |

## 6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The draft proposal for the development of a Woman's Voice Task & Finish Group, along with areas for priority development into a work programme have been considered by the GMCA Economy, Business Growth & Skills Overview

& Scrutiny Committee. Scrutiny Members identified a number of actions, which have been considered and included in the updated priority actions table at section 5.

- 6.2 The action areas identified included the need for the emerging work programme to include priorities around women and girl's mental health and tackling discrimination. Scrutiny Members are also considering any additional relevant stakeholders, which may be invited to join the Task & Finish Group.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.