GREATER MANCHESTER FAIR GROWTH CONFERENCE

18th November 2016

PROCEEDINGS

Overview

The conference was hosted by the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit (IGAU) at the University of Manchester and jointly organised by IGAU and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, with a view to informing work being undertaken to refresh the Greater Manchester Strategy.

81 people from local authorities, businesses, social enterprises, health trusts, charities, universities and other organisations attended to discuss what Fair Growth could look like in Greater Manchester and the opportunities afforded by devolution, policy change and other developments.

Councillor Jean Stretton, who holds the GM-wide portfolio for Fairness, Equalities and Cohesion, attended the conference and tasked delegates to:

- Agree on **what we are trying to achieve** in terms of Inclusive Growth, including a set of metrics that could be used to target future investment;
- Identify **existing good practice** across the region (getting people into work, increasing pay, local entrepreneurship);
- Agree on a **set of priorities and actions to drive forward the fair growth agenda** across Greater Manchester.

Participants responded with huge energy and pooled their knowledge to produce multiple suggestions as to practical ways forward. A real commitment to working together towards fairer growth was in evidence.

These notes summarise the presentations and discussions that were shared in the course of the day and highlight the opportunities and actions that could be taken.

Presentations can be found at: www.manchester.ac.uk/inclusivegrowth

Key points from the plenary sessions

MORNING SESSION:

FAIR GROWTH FOR GM: WHERE WE ARE NOW AND POSSIBILITIES

The conference began with some scoping of what an Inclusive Growth agenda might involve. Ruth Lupton, Neil McInroy and Jean Stretton each talked about the importance of this agenda and offered ideas for how it might be taken forward. Key points from each summary are outlined below. The slides from each presentation are also available on the IGAU website.[1]

Professor Ruth Lupton, Head of Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit

- **Offered a working definition of inclusive growth:** according to the OECD it is economic growth that creates opportunities for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society**.**
- **Outlined why an inclusive growth agenda was needed:** Greater Manchester faces issues of high levels of poverty, high incidence of low pay, low skills, and wide geographical disparities. These are problems in themselves and they also hold back the economy.
- Highlighted that inclusive growth is not the answer to everything **- making growth more inclusive cannot substitute for a social justice/fairness strategy, nor a poverty reduction strategy. Also many key decisions are in the hands of central government** but **more can be done locally**.
- Key spheres of action arising from IGAU's work: **developing a more inclusive economy** (wages, quality of work, opportunities for progression, local wealth building etc); **connecting more people to jobs** (health, skills, transport, employment programmes etc). Also issues around **agenda-setting and governance.**

Neil McInroy, Chief Executive, Centre for Local Economic Strategies

- **Made the case for developing an economy that works for its people, an economy with empathy:** social justice and development *is* an economic strategy. Good public services should not be seen as a cost but as a means to advance social justice progress and as essential to growth and productivity;
- Argued that this is becoming **the new mainstream approach building good city economies. Other cities around the world are doing it.**
- **Identified examples that could be put into practice straight away:** including looking at how anchor institutions spend their money, promoting coops and other institutions that lock in wealth for local people & developing an employment charter for the city region**;**
- Over the longer-term, achieving **a good city economy** might include creating a GM-owned community energy company, developing sources of alternative financing and looking at ways to create a GM industrial strategy

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[1] www.manchester.ac.uk/inclusivegrowth

Councillor Jean Stretton, GMCA portfolio lead for Fairness, Equalities and Cohesion

- **Emphasised that there are wide variations across Greater Manchester and action is needed to spread prosperity and investment much more widely to avoid areas being left behind:** while Trafford has an employment rate of 79%, in Rochdale it is 63%;
- **Offered examples from Oldham of how to connect economic and social goals:** among other things they have developed a Fair Employment charter, an employment support package and a careers advice pilot and have an Education and Skills Commission.
- **Identified some key steps to achieve Inclusive Growth in the GM Economy**: agree a set of 'good GVA' metrics that can be used to target future investment; embed Inclusive Growth into all that we do – including delivering on the GM Spatial Framework and refreshing the GM Strategy; recognise the importance of infrastructure and people/skills investment and continue to lobby government on infrastructure and skills devolution – but with realistic funding attached

AFTERNOON SESSION:

FAIR GROWTH: PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The afternoon panel session kicked off with a range of short presentations introducing different perspectives: a young person involved from RECLAIM; the Chair of the GM Social Enterprise Network and a local authority Chief Executive.

Cara Kennedy (RECLAIM)

- Reminded the conference of the **scale and urgency** of the issues that need to be tackled. **1 in 3 children are in poverty in places like Moss Side**
- Inclusive growth must address **poverty and equalise opportunities**, levelling the playing field no matter where you are from.
- There are good examples of locally-led projects where **local people are taking action for change**, for example the Moss Side Food Project
- But these need to be supported by **increased funding opportunities, rebalancing economies and a language and approach that doesn't make people feel second best because of where they come from.**

Chris Dabbs (Chair of GM Social Enterprise Network)

- Spoke about the need to think more broadly about **balanced growth,** taking into account environmental issues and climate change as well as social goals and geographical rebalancing;
- **This needs a different vision for Greater Manchester** and **strong leadership at all levels** – we need to find ways of 'doing this better together'.
- The **VCSE sector is an important economic actor** and this tends to be is under-recognised;
- **We also need to understand how to value wider non-monetary contributions** that are being made, currently not counted as economic output but without which the economy would collapse: for example unpaid carers.

Donna Hall (Chief Executive, Wigan Council)

- **Argued that we need to replicate what works and tailor to specific communities:** need to set out challenging policy goals and a clear set of action to drive a fair growth agenda.
- Devolution is an opportunity but **not all the action needs to happen at city-region level.** An inclusive growth strategy for GM might be better seen as a collection of different strategies at different levels.
- **Getting skills and education offer right is a key challenge for GM**: we are not providing young people with the skills they will need in the future;
- Just because something is devolved doesn't mean it is responsive to local people. **The main message is that what we want is services run by local people.** The Wigan deal was based on an ethnographic approach - listening harder to people and trying to change the relationship. Wigan has also invested £7.5m in community groups to support community-led change

Workshop 1: Skills and the Workplace

Actions and opportunities – skills and the workplace

The discussion highlighted the **disjointed nature of the skills and education system in Greater Manchester** and articulated a vision for a different approach that would contribute to the health, wellbeing and prospects of the local community. Too many young people are being failed by the education system instead of being set up to contribute and benefit from local jobs and opportunities.

Greater Manchester used to have a great adult education system but this has been dismantled following several rounds of cuts to the adult education budget. Concern was raised that an obsession with accreditation and targets would put remaining provision at risk and mean the loss of a wider social context of learning in GM. Participants noted that the current system is difficult to navigate, both for young and older people, and very bad at giving people second chances. Limited to no access to good quality careers services compounds these issues. Given these challenges there is a clear opportunity for GM to articulate a more ambitious vision for a skills and education system that serves the needs of local people and businesses. This would include pre-16 education and could help to clarify future devolution asks from the Department for Education.

Participants also noted the importance of **raising the quality of employment available to people in Greater Manchester**. The Living Wage was part of the picture, but it cannot deliver a 'good job' in and of itself; a Living Wage job only delivers a living wage if it offers decent, guaranteed working hours as well. It is also the case that many jobs that need to be done are not paid – e.g. caring, volunteering in the community – and some that are paid do not offer adequate terms, e.g. social care jobs. It was argued that the social care system offers low wages and poor terms because wealth has been extracted through payments to shareholders. One route to address this is to rethink how we deliver basic services such as care and utilities in the community and whether more of these services could be owned by co-ops and other community groups.

Actions and opportunities – skills and the workplace

- Establish a Greater Manchester learning commission or convention to steer GMCA thinking and articulate a vision for a true 'learning city region'. This could be led by Jean Stretton;
- Identify which aspects of educational policy need to change to achieve this vision and take ideas to Government/DfE;
- Clarify pathways and ways to reduce drop-off and ensure all young people are participating in valuable training and learning. Get better at sharing best practice across Greater Manchester and encourage more conversations between colleges, schools and learning providers to raise awareness of what is on offer;
- Offer young people free or discounted travel to ensure that they can access specialist provision available in different parts of Greater Manchester;
- Each participant should take action individually to improve the local education offer, e.g. by volunteering in schools once a week;
- Develop a clear ask for local employers and make it easier for them to influence provision and offer opportunities to local people

Actions and opportunities – good jobs and decent work

- Re-double action to promote the Living Wage across the city region alongside promoting job security, decent working hours and opportunities for progression;
- Develop a new set of measures to assess whether we have good jobs and employment opportunities locally. The idea should not be to prioritise work first at the expense of setting people up in stable jobs that will enable them to contribute to wider community.
- Look at devolution of social care and identify how it can be commissioned to achieve wider social aims, rather than solely on the basis of cost;
- More widely, aim to repatriate the 'foundational economy' to Greater Manchester. One route would be to promote community-owned institutions in the care sector, e.g. co-ops;
- Build on the experience of implementing local employment charters to develop an overall charter for Greater Manchester. This might look to promote action on low pay but also job security and progression;
- Explore the idea of a universal income and how it might enable people to get on with doing things locally that need to be done but which are not currently paid;
- Use social value agenda to drive good practice among GM employers. Need to focus on outcomes rather than outputs;
- Raise the bar on apprenticeships through the public sector to drive up quality, rather than focussing on quantity. One route might be to encourage businesses to offer real wage rather than paying trainees at the low apprenticeship minimum wage;
- Look at ways to retain talent in Greater Manchester and offer more opportunities for progression for sectors that are dominated by SMEs.

WORKSHOP 2: An Entrepreneurial Economy – providing opportunities for new ventures

The discussion highlighted that for many people setting up their own business and becoming self-employed was not a route to a stable and decent income but a form of precarious work with insufficient pay or working hours (underemployment) being cited as risks. There was a perception that some unemployed people may be moved towards self-employment by government services when they have not been able to secure other employment and for some this may be a 'second choice job'. The focus instead should be on quality self-employment opportunities.

The question of whether social enterprises can scale up was discussed. Funding sources were considered a factor here as well as support services and networks. Participants discussed the risk that people may invest their savings or pension with their business, leaving themselves exposed, whilst social entrepreneurs, people with low income histories or poor credit scores may have difficulty raising capital from traditional business investment services. Support policies should help to mitigate the risks of self-employment. Good market information was also seen as important: people should be aware of the success rates of different types of business activities within localities. The number of failed cupcake businesses in some areas was given as an example. Creating stronger networks between social enterprises could also help with learning and greater collaboration between organizations. Finally, it was noted that not all social enterprises are looking to upscale. Small 'micro' social enterprises focusing on specific client groups, such as in social care, can be an important supplement to the more general services that some larger organizations in the sector offer.

Policy changes present further challenges to start ups. Changes to the tax credit system through the introduction of Universal Credit however will place additional pressure on the self - employed as after an initial 12 month period their income will be assessed in relation to a given threshold regardless of whether this level of income is being achieved (minimum income floor). Although this policy change was seen as partly being about preventing people using low hours self-employment as an alternative to unemployment benefit (i.e. claiming tax credits) there was some concern that the minimum income floor would punish genuine entrepreneurs who may be struggling in the initial startup phase of their business.

Action and Opportunities
- Build networks and collaboration for people who do not usually access such services or necessarily identify themselves as entrepreneurs. Networks for people from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Ensure people from more disadvantaged communities are supported to consider entrepreneurship but also made aware of the risks and support available;
- Seek out the good guys in the private sector who want to share their skills and experience and promote business citizenship;
- Create infrastructure to allow local businesses to offer greater support to entrepreneurs ;
- Social enterprise working for not profit if scaled up could help provide social care at a lower cost in context of current funding crisis across GM;
- Identify specialisms in different districts e.g. Green Economy Oldham.

- Some discussants highlight the need to promote entrepreneurial activity at an early age and raise awareness of children in school of such vocational routes. Some people had been working in local schools to help with this agenda;
- Anchor institutions should play a role in encouraging and supporting local businesses;
- Explore co-location of entrepreneurship alongside and private and voluntary organizations;
- Another respondent highlight that some people with entrepreneurial characters may become misdirected into a life of crime and consider how local agencies could work better with local criminal and probationary services on helping promote entrepreneurship.

Workshop 3: Health and Work – How devolution can address health challenges and support more people into work

A central theme in the discussion of this group was the ways in which relationships between health, work, and other aspects of urban and social policy are understood and translated into joined up policy.

- Good health is crucial for employment but do we always put enough emphasis on this as an economic development strategy in general or in programmes to increase employment among particular groups?
- The emphasis on 'work first' in employment programmes doesn't always allow sufficient work on issues that can contribute to better health (and also ultimately to sustainable work and progression).
- Many wider issues underpin the good health that underpins employment. For example in relation to air pollution: " a poisoned workforce isn't a productive workforce". The importance of open space/green space was also emphasized in promoting mental health and physical activity, but policies and budgets are not sufficiently integrated to be able to see these as health producing/employment producing. Economic development (physical projects) can sometimes reduce open space, increase travel stress etc.
- In addition, the quality of work and pay are key factors as poor pay and stress can have a negative impact on health. In this sense the economy can be a contributor to health inequalities.

Participants raised concern that the devolution agenda did not have a strong social justice angle at present; if GVA and employment remain the topline priorities, cost-benefit analysis will continue to direct investment toward infrastructure and 'the usual suspects' and away from innovation around this agenda.

Some participants argued for 'a cultural shift' in thinking about the contributions that different investments, policies and spending make to reducing health inequalities. As part of this, and with the opportunity of devolution, health and social care commissioning needs to be seen as a driver of wider outcomes for the city region, but economic strategies also have to be considered in the light of their contributions to health and health inequalities.

There was a discussion about the role of social value in commissioning decisions. Two main points emerged; that social value needs not just to be seen on a tender-by-tender basis (instead commissioning should be an opportunity to build and support socially valuable institutions); and that it has to have teeth. Anyone can say they are delivering social value – how is this monitored?

Participants also discussed the role of employers in this agenda and highlighted the responsibility that they have to try to include people with poor health. At the same time, public sector organisations must make engagement as easy as possible for employers as it was still too difficult for many of them to navigate the system. At present the approach to engaging employers in this conversation was not sufficiently tailored. In particular, locally based businesses with strong community links should be targeted. The priority should be to work with businesses to change how they recruit and select candidates to encourage them to look beyond the CV. Participants also discussed how it might be possible to de-risk employing people with health issues. Some form of insurance might be offered to employers who agree to

take people on, or other incentives might be needed. Employing those furthest from the labour market needs to become a mainstream concern.

Additional support for people furthest from the labour market would be needed to back this up. Participants discussed whether it might be necessary to move from a sole focus on employment to other outcomes within payment by results programmes. The Working Well programme had also highlighted the advantages of having interaction with GPs within the employment support programme.

Action and Opportunities
- A more integrated strategic approach to health and the economy.
- Health inequalities to be higher up the agenda – not just for health commissioning.
- Explore whether it would be possible to offer some form of insurance to employers who take on people with health conditions to de-risk the decision for them. What other de-risking options could be considered?
- Tailor approaches to business engagement to reflect their concerns and differing needs;
- Look to incentivise a wider range of payment by results outcomes so that these are not just focussed on employment;
- Ensure that health and social care commissioning leads to investment in socially valuable institutions.
- Better monitoring of social value delivery through commissioning processes.

Workshop 4: The Cost and Quality of Living

The group identified several different areas of cost which has an impact on a person's standard of living and are relevant to the inclusive growth agenda. The discussion covered housing, energy, debt and money management, transport, food and internet access.

Housing costs were highlighted as a major issue. Housing providers in the group were well aware of the 'poverty premiums' faced by low income households for things such as energy. Each had schemes in place to help address this issue, with varying degrees of success. Providers also acknowledged underemployment of residents was a significant issue, and had schemes in place to support residents. However, cost pressures as a result of year on year rent reductions (1% reductions set by government) may mean some come to an end. The location of affordable housing was also noted as an issue, particularly when accessing jobs or training. Trafford College are collaborating with a local housing provider to bus residents who want to take a course from Nutsford to the college. One participant suggested that middle class homeowners could be encouraged to rent-out their spare rooms to lodgers on a more regular basis as this may go some way to providing cheap access to good quality housing.

A number of examples of local projects **aiming to reduce energy costs** were discussed. Participants noted that some food banks were now offering fuel vouchers alongside food parcels. It was argued that improving the insulation of private housing (both owned and rented) would do a great deal to reduce energy costs. The Green Deal was a vague attempt to do this, but failed for a number of reasons. Draft proofing would be the most effective intervention. Warm Homes Oldham is a good example of how this could be successful. It was also acknowledged that while reducing the cost of pre-payment meters was a national issue this was a campaign that GM could advance too.

Helping households out of debt should be a big priority. A number of examples of organisations working closely with credit unions were given. The Oldham Credit Union is working with local housing associations on Jam Jar accounts, allowing people to save money in their accounts for different bills, e.g. rent, electricity, gas etc. Credit Unions operate across the city, and many are offering alternative lending services, but too often opportunities aren't taken up by citizens. Better money management should be promoted through schools.

Participants discussed the potential for **action on transport costs**. The bus devolution bill offers an opportunity to address the cost of bus fares and is a key lever for GMCA. While action on costs was needed, participants also highlighted the need for action to encourage people living in deprived communities to travel beyond their local area. One participant gave an example where she had taken a group of housing association residents living in one of the outer GM boroughs on the train into central Manchester. It had been the first time that some had used the train despite living a few hundred yards from the station. Lower transport fares could help this. There was also a need to look at the timing of transport and how it relates to shift patterns, for example for those working late or in the early morning.

A number of projects across GM are trying to **tackle food poverty**, going beyond the emergency support offered by foodbanks. The Community Shops, or 'Pantry' Model, was given as a good example. Stockport Homes are working with the Pantry model, where surplus food from supermarkets is provided. People pay a £2.50 'membership' fee and receive at least 10 items of groceries, including fresh fruit and veg, offering significant savings. It was unclear where this could be done at scale though. It was highlighted that many of the people accessing foodbanks did not have cooking facilities at home, making it much more difficult to eat healthily.

Opening **up access to cheap internet services** is increasingly important as many services are 'digital by default'. Some housing associations are offering free wi-fi access in some locations and Virgin were doing some work with housing associations to offer lower cost broadband options. The cost of the technology needed to access the internet was also seen as an issue. Many low income households are reliant on a smartphone for internet access, which can have implications for things such as children's ability to do their homework. One participant suggested that council and benefit claim forms need to be optimised for smartphones, as many claimants may only have a phone to access the internet.

Action and Opportunities
- Sharing best practice across GM on each of these issues needs to be better. Chief Execs are good at meeting up, but front line staff rarely get opportunity to learn from each other;
- Look at the location of affordable housing across the city region as well as how well these areas are served by local transport and how residents might be able to access jobs or training;
- One participant suggested that middle class homeowners could be encouraged to rent-out their spare rooms to lodgers on a more regular basis as this may go some way to providing cheap access to good quality housing.
- GMCA should take up the campaign to reduce the cost of pre-pay meters and overall energy costs. Encouraging draft proofing is also important and Warm Homes Oldham is a good example of how this could be successful.
- GMCA, local authorities, third sector and businesses can help to boost credit union membership. One example would be to offer pay roll deductions for credit unions as many public sector organisations already do;
- Promote money management teaching in GM schools and setup road shows to take advice into the community
- Local authorities and housing providers across GM could share best practice and agree a joint approach to dealing with debt and debt collection;
- Explore how we might use public sector buying power to provide cheap access to tablets and netbooks for GM residents;
- Council and benefit claim forms need to be optimised for smartphones, as many claimants may only access the internet through their phone;
- GMCA could change the narrative around social value to encourage more businesses to engage with it;
- GMCA could work with local businesses to encourage them to use CSR budget locally rather than nationally. Example was given of Warburtons, who sponsor national projects but are less willing to engage locally.
- The Mayor must focus on the cost of living and not just on health and social care activities. They will have 'soft' powers to influence this agenda – can convene, and provide leadership. It is not enough to see this as a CSR activity for some businesses

WORKSHOP 5: Taking Back Control, how communities can lead devolution

This workshop highlighted that a concerted effort was needed to open up the conversation about devolution to a wider range of people. A key challenge lies in knowing how to mobilise residents so that they feel that they are part of 'team GM', rather than simply being a resident of Salford, Bolton or Rochdale with no stake in discussions. Failing to do so would lead to further disengagement and potentially a low turnout for the mayoral election.

Participants discussed the need to think about including communities in devolution discussions on a number of levels. At one level there was need to mobilise citizens around formal Devolution processes at the city region level ('big D' Devolution) to ensure that they are aware of and can have their say about the transfer of powers in areas such as health and social care and the role the mayor will play. The group learned about the People's Plan which is doing work across Greater Manchester to engage people in developing policy alternatives and priorities.

At the same time there is a need to think about ways to devolve more decision making power to people from local authorities and other public services ('little D' devolution). A third challenge is to ensure that communities are empowered to take action on the things that matter to them. These latter two are ongoing efforts at sub GM level to which continuing attention is needed.

From this it is also clear that the conversation should not be restricted to influencing the formal devolution process: the Greater Manchester Strategy refresh also presents an important opportunity to take account of the priorities and views of residents. One participant also highlighted that not all communities were geographically concentrated, the LGBT and ethnic minority communities are spread across GM and might require different routes to engage.

Participants felt that badging these different ideas about community engagement and action as 'taking back control' was not helpful. To be meaningful, it is necessary to think about community leadership and engagement in specific contexts; in order to have a constructive conversation you need to identify who has control at present, why it might be a problem and how it might be done differently and to a better end. In addition, changing things and taking back control won't always be about politicians consulting with residents – sometimes it is about helping people and businesses operating locally to realise that they can already make an impact and to take steps to make things happen. One participant raised the importance of supporting people to know how to oppose changes effectively. An example was given of a local group which had mobilised around the closure of its local library. As a result the library has stayed open as a community-led operation.

Finally, participants discussed whether there might be a tension between business and community priorities around devolution. It was noted that business were more concerned to know what the impact of devolution might be for them, e.g. in terms of infrastructure, business support, training. It was unclear how this might be weighed alongside calls for deeper community engagement, which had the potential to slow down the decision making process.

Actions and opportunities

- Our Manchester and the Wigan Deal were highlighted as some good examples that are helping residents to take responsibility and understand the power they have to change things in their own communities – both are seen as asset-based approaches.
- In Wigan frontline workers are trained as ethnographers and see change as a partnership. The example of 'Our Benchill' in Wythenshawe was also cited as a good

example: Starting from residents' agenda, a multi-agency approach and an emphasis what citizens can do – how citizens and services can work together for change;

- In Salford the council had made a move to recognise unpaid carers as part of the care workforce, and therefore as key stakeholders in discussions and formal care services and policy.
- Opportunities exist to involve people not just in decisions about health and social spending but also around things that are already underway. The public sector needs to be open to change and to potentially stopping doing something that it is already doing;
- Ensure that consultation is 'fit for purpose'.
- Develop mechanisms to involve non-geographic communities.
- Build capacity through investment in communities so they can be more aware, more able to challenge and more able to change things for themselves.

Workshop 6: Young people and pathways to employment

The workshop participants discussed **ways to support young people to access employment opportunities** and some of **the barriers to social mobility** that exist in Greater Manchester. Participants from the Talent Match youth panel described some of the ways that the education and skills system had let them down and what they had been able to achieve through the TM programme. They had experienced a number of barriers, including a tendency for employers to discount applicants who do not have A*-C maths and English and difficulties in finding opportunities that fit around doctors' appointments. Issues around the potential for employer discrimination were also raised. Both participants had appreciated the chance to influence practice within the Talent Match programme and to meet other young people involved with the programme.

A particular issue was identified around the **availability and quality of information** given to young people as they make decisions about education and their careers. Many are not offered the opportunity to find out about different kinds of jobs and are asked to choose courses when they don't know what they want to do next. There is a real need to make space for people to change their minds and find routes back to education and into other training options at different stages.

Participants noted that there had been a few GM wide initiatives to raise awareness of apprenticeships, for example, but more action was needed around this. Many schools still do not promote apprenticeships and instead encourage students to stay on to study A-levels. Opportunities to gain and develop the transferable skills so valued by employers were also being crowded out as there was an increasing focus on exam outcomes.

Where apprenticeships are offered to young people, the widespread tendency for employers to offer the minimum wage for apprentices could still block this route, particularly for those in low income families. One participant also noted that there were issues with the ways that benefit assessments take account of apprenticeships, offering another challenge for young people wanting to take up these opportunities. The limited availability of part-time apprenticeships could also prevent young people with other commitments from taking up this route.

Participants agreed that it was important to **involve young people in service design** when creating employment support for them as well as consulting with employers and front line staff. Including young people in the conversation doesn't always make for a comfortable exchange. The needs of young people might not match with the needs of employers and views of people working on policy or practice. However people can work together to accommodate these differences and to better understand the challenges that young people face.

Action and Opportunities

- Reform the GM careers advice offer to enable young people to make informed choices and identify routes back into education and learning for those who change their mind;
- Identify more opportunities for young people to have their say about the support and services that are available to them, and to co-design future programmes;
- Take action to ensure that apprenticeships are being promoted to young people, parents and employers across Greater Manchester; Employers and representative bodies to explore the scope for large employers to help small businesses to share apprenticeships;

- Apprenticeships could be a key means of achieving real social mobility for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The apprenticeship levy offers opportunities here as there will be incentives to create opportunities for young people and those from disadvantaged groups, such as care leavers;

- Turn the focus back on to the quality of apprenticeships. Ensure that apprenticeships are offering young people and other workers a route into well-paid, skilled work. GMCA could play a key role in monitoring outcomes from apprenticeships in different sectors, and skills providers should aim to track outcomes for learners;

- Explore the potential to increase the number of apprenticeships that are on offer at higher wage levels, rather than offering basic terms and conditions at apprentice min wage level to young people. The public sector might lead the way on this;

- Businesses that offer work experience and other opportunities should be encouraged to offer advice and guidance to other businesses and raise awareness of basic health and safety guidelines and issues that might need to be taken into account, particularly where they may take on someone under 16;

- Move employers away from an exclusive focus on young people with A*-C, possibly through supporting employers with their recruitment and selection processes. Employment support programmes can help here by working directly with employers to introduce candidates and address any concerns;

- Encourage employers to offer flexible opportunities to accommodate people with health problems or other commitments;

- Universities and other education providers should explore opportunities to offer higher level apprenticeships and develop partnerships with employers;

- One participant suggested that small employers in particular might be incentivised to take action and raise wages through tax breaks. This was an example of something that could probably not be achieved at GM-level.

WORKSHOP 7: Anchoring Communities – how we can make our assets work better

The workshop considered how the major institutions in Greater Manchester might contribute to a more inclusive economy and society. It highlighted a range of actions that were already underway but it was agreed that these need to be accelerated and that leadership at Greater Manchester level would be key to this. Participants discussed the need to recognise a wider range of organisations as 'anchors', these might be committed to a place in different ways. Participants discussed the tension between developing a standard ask for partners with firm commitments on specific objectives, perhaps aligned to a wider outcomes framework, and the need to be flexible and realistic in order to engage a wider range of institutions and have a greater impact.

'Anchor institutions' can be conceptualised in a number of ways. A working definition was proposed that covers large employers, those rooted in a local area and with strong networks and local relationships. In addition, an ability and capacity to support change would be essential. There was a need to ensure that the term was not translated narrowly and that in addition to universities and local authorities and other public sector bodies, this group would include VCSE organisations, churches and football clubs. To support this broad definition of an 'anchor institution' it would be necessary to recognise that organisations can be committed to a place in a different way, necessitating different approaches to engagement

The private sector was seen as a significant resource that should be tapped into but it was argued that businesses aren't sure how to give back and it would be necessary to develop a distinct social value or anchor brand in order to engage them. Such a brand could also help to connect wider socially valuable activities/programmes across GM. Councils could act as key partners in developing/maintaining engagement of private sector.

The idea of developing a standard ask for all partners was proposed. Partners would lead by example and a review of internal practices across the partnership could be undertaken to identify good practice to share. It was also suggested that leading local organisations could help to create a culture shift locally by demonstrating leadership on issues such as the Living Wage. Leadership at a strategic level would also be key: the GMCA might play a role in establishing, for example, a standard weighting and monitoring approach to procurement. To succeed and have impact it would need to apply not just to councils. In addition, the rationale for taking part in the broader partnership would need to be front and centre – organisations would need to know how and why they should be involved and there should be a firm commitment to achieving specific outcomes.

At the same time participants discussed the need to adapt to the different capacities and skills of anchors was acknowledged. It was suggested that they should establish minimum strategic priorities and then deliver bespoke asks, or Local Charters, underneath this. The latter would be tailored to the situation of different anchors but would require firm commitments in order to demonstrate impact. An active campaign around these would be needed in order to drive change and share learning and best practice.

Finally, participants discussed why this wasn't already happening in Greater Manchester. It was noted that it takes a long time for changes in workplace culture to be embedded and translate into practice. There was also a question of resource and the need for internal coordination to ensure the clear communication of the rationale for change across the whole organisation. In

addition, concerns about risk and legal issues could be a barrier. Challenging these ideas and re-interpreting practice could take time.

Action and Opportunities

- Develop a distinct social value or anchor brand in order to build the rationale for taking part in a GM-wide anchor institution partnership that will drive culture change and support the sharing of best practice. This brand could also help to connect wider socially valuable activities/programmes that are underway across GM;
- A review of how mainstream spending is undertaken was suggested. Institutions should look to flex their approaches and spend differently in order to drive good practice. The new spatial framework was seen as a key opportunity;
- Align priorities and indicators for the partnership with the wider objectives that are being set under the Greater Manchester framework;
- Develop a universal ask of anchor institutions underpinned by local charters that tailor asks to the circumstances of different anchor institutions. Firm commitments would be necessary in order to take part, and these would need to be backed up and evidenced.

WORKSHOP 8: Greater Manchester and the post-Brexit economy – cohesive communities and new global relationships

Barriers and Risks

The discussion in this workshop was more heavily weighted towards reviewing the barriers and risks associated with Brexit than around identifying opportunities and action. However, participants identified a range of priorities for action in this area.

It is far too early to say what the initial economic impact of the Brexit 'shock' will be as it may take another 6 months to start fully feeding through to the economy through price rises. Increases in the costs of food, fuel and other living costs will be a major issue for local communities and businesses. At the same time higher inflation from currency devaluation and demand side measures (e.g. infrastructure development) could impact on the broader macro-economic environment and shift monetary policy focus towards inflation control in a potential stagflation scenario, increasing borrowing costs and deflating housing market with the risk of recession in the next few years still not off the books.

It is also not possible to say what the implications of Brexit will be in the medium to long term but the current situation is creating considerable uncertainty for local businesses and government. For example, trade tariff adjustments could be a problem and there is an expectation of reversion to WTO rules. Meanwhile some sectors of the economy, such as health and social care, have high migrant workforce and issues of skills shortages are potentially acute.

Inflation will likely create push for wages and turn more of a focus on productivity gains. Technological investment could provide better paid jobs but also substitute lower paid ones leading to greater unemployment. Equally though, some sectors of the economy find it more difficult to raise productivity through technology and these are often low paying sectors. Broader potential unemployment growth may further offset wage push.

Finally, it was noted that there was a potential risk that Brexit will normalise more discriminatory and racist discourses and behaviour. The national increase in hate crimes was listed as an example. However there was no evidence of an impact on community cohesion across GM as yet.

Action and Opportunities
- There is a policy window where EU provision is being withdrawn to influence the nature of substitute measures. For example in the case of measures introduced to replaced ESF money there is the opportunity to look at the funding criteria and processes here to promote an inclusive growth agenda;
- GMCA to monitor closely trends in cost of living and assess the potential impact on low income households;