**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CO-DESIGN PROCESS FOR A GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY WEALTH HUB**

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| **SUMMARY**  This intention of this report is to:   1. Provide a summary of the co-design process to date for a Greater Manchester Community Wealth Hub. 2. Summarise the first co-design workshop and ideas suggested by stakeholders. 3. To pose a set of key questions to aid prioritisation and the next steps of co-design – located throughout the report in grey boxes. 4. Outline the next steps of the process in the coming months, and signpost opportunities for involvement. |

**INITIAL PROPOSAL AND EARLY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

This co-design process has come about as a result of the Independent Inequalities Commission’s recommendation for Greater Manchester to: *“Create a Community Wealth Hub to support and grow co-operatives, mutuals, social and community enterprises, staffed by people from the co-operative and community sector who understand the market”.*

Early work included:

* Research and stakeholder mapping.
* Exploratory conversations with stakeholders in the sector, including representative bodies.
* Launch of the co-design process by Cllr Elise Wilson and Mayor Andy Burnham.
* Receiving and processing stakeholder suggestions through a GM Consult consultation.

A comprehensive outline of the process to date is provided in the slides circulated with this report.

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| **A note on terminology:** In the workshop, it was agreed that the term “social business” would be used to refer to the diverse range of social enterprises, co-operatives, employee-owned and other businesses that the Hub is intended to support, so as to make conversations as easy and accessible as possible to all those attending. The key point is that GM is looking to support business behaviours that generate wider social value – not support any one governance model. “Social business” is used below, unless a point discusses one of these business types specifically. |

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| **Social economy** organisations traditionally refer to the set of associations, cooperatives, mutual organisations, and foundations whose activity is driven by values of solidarity, the primacy of people over capital, and democratic and participative governance (OECD Definition). |

**FIRST CO-DESIGN WORKSHOP**

The first co-design workshop was attended by approximately 50 stakeholders from social businesses, support organisations and public sector organisations. The aim of this workshop was to gain greater clarity and consensus on what the Hub should be/do, and to inform a brief for the detailed co-design discussion which will follow this initial workshop.

Presentations were given by Rose Marley (Co-operatives UK), Sarah Longlands (CLES) and Lisa Dale-Clough (GMCA), to introduce attendees to the concept of Community Wealth Building, as well as where the Hub might sit within local approaches to creating Community Wealth.

Additionally, Rachel Summerscales (GM Community-Led Homes Hub) and Ian MacArthur (Good Employment Charter) provided insight and advice during an interval midway through, from the perspectives of their own work developing and managing “hubs” of their own.

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| **Top tips from Ian MacArthur, GEC:**   1. **Don’t rush:** listen to all views but manage expectations. You won't make everyone happy immediately, success depends on the depth of foundations and consensus around where to start. 2. **Don’t start with money:** start with a good idea, driven by the impact and a clear vision of an inclusive economy. 3. **Don’t call it a hub:** maybe it's more of a platform – it doesn’t have to be at the centre of things. 4. **Don’t forget implementation** and feasibility. Think about the money, people and the time that you need. 5. **Don’t be afraid to take the first step:** do something impactful; be seen to be doing things; make it so people want to be part of it; create a movement not a hub. |

Subsequently, participants engaged in discussion and shared their thoughts on the Hub, structured around four key questions – these were discussed through a ‘world café’ format, with participants grouped around tables, discussing with neighbours, and then sharing and commenting on the ideas of other tables:

1. What should be the *purpose* of the Hub?
2. What *impacts* should the hub aim to create?
3. What should be the key *functions* of the Hub?
4. What should be the Hub’s *operating model*?

**IDEAS EXPRESSED BY STAKEHOLDERS**

The ideas expressed by stakeholders in the workshop have been structured under the four themes outlined above.

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| Additionally, having received initial presentations at the beginning of the workshop, participants were each asked to write down one “burning issue”, an initial reaction to what they had been presented with. Where relevant to the four themes, these have been incorporated. The remainder have been transcribed in full in the associated ‘Record of Discussion’ document. |

What should the purpose of the Hub be?

Stakeholder suggestions were as follows:

* To **support the growth and sustainability of social businesses**, by being a **catalyst for change rather than providing a single solution**: must be adaptable, agile and respond to place-based needs
* To act as a **connector and facilitator**, not just a delivery unit or centralising presence: connect up existing opportunity and add value to what's there already, not duplicating existing services
* Substantial **coalition-building** element: Breaking down silos that exist in current support across Greater Manchester; bringing together the sector and support organisations with the public sector and other anchor organisations
* Filling the void between support for business and support for charities – a stakeholder question: *“what is the difference between the Community Wealth Hub and Business Growth Hub, and why should the two be separate?”*
* **Unpick social investment** at the city-region scale, providing better connections to funding/investment; **Facilitating the flow of money into places that need it**
* ***“Addressing market failure but raising the bar”*** *–* supporting social businesses to help fix broken private and public sector markets and delivery structures
* To create a platform for **incubating social businesses, scaling-up organisations and creating social primes**
* **Campaign for and champion the social economy**
* To **reach all places** in Greater Manchester and **better connect** activities/knowledge sharing across 10 districts – ensure a **consistent quality of support is available** regardless of where in GM.

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| **Key question:** which of these suggestions would you say should be the initial priorities for the Hub? |

What impacts should the Hub aim to create?

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| **Note:** *Measurement* of the Hub’s impacts was highlighted as a key consideration by numerous stakeholders: this involved intelligence gathering to build better data across business types in Greater Manchester, better consumer/spend data, business productivity/social accounting data across social economy, etc.  This measurement of impacts extended into suggestions of online tools measuring and tracking social value across all business types, with the suggestion that the behaviours common within the social economy should be encouraged beyond it, and that perhaps other business types looking to improve their practices could be enabled through the Hub. |

Stakeholders’ suggested impacts were as follows:

* Starting a **social business to be the default approach** for business start-ups – social value is normalised and doing business the right way is the norm.
* An environment that’s good for social businesses, not just a target number of social businesses created via the Hub – longevity and sustainability.
* **A financially stronger social economy:** reduction in grant dependency and support becoming self-sustainable, increased productivity (where appropriate), improved staff retention and wellbeing.
* **A fairer city-regional economy more broadly:** a buoyant social economy, but simultaneously a reduced number of extractive businesses and better practices across all business types.
* Greater public sector/private sector/consumer **awareness of and engagement with** the social economy.
* Increased **diversity and representation** in the sector, targeting those who face disadvantages accessing community wealth.
* Further **system change in procurement practices** of public and large private sector organisations.

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| **Key question:** What do you think should be the initial priority for the Hub in terms of target impacts? |

What should be the key functions of the Hub?

The key functions suggested by attendees can be grouped broadly into the below four categories, covering connectivity, direct advice, financial/investment functions, and engagement and policy functions.

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| **Note:** A common statement, alongside the more specific functions below, was that the Hub’s functions will need to cater for the diversity of the social economy, i.e., different business models, sizes, levels of maturity, geographies. |

*Making connections, developing/coordinating support infrastructure*

* Enabling more effective access to and co-ordination of the range of support available across the VCSE and business sector
* A peer support function where members provide and receive advice from each other
* A platform for sharing of best practice and advice from other social businesses
* Provide a platform to connect private businesses and social businesses: investment opportunities, procurement (‘meet the buyer’ events with anchors), etc
* Enable joint charge procurement via coordination and identification of opportunities to pool resources
* A matchmaker, connecting social businesses
* Social prime contracting
* Bring together social businesses working in similar markets/to solve similar issues – thematic working/action groups

*Advice and development support*

* Provide bespoke support rather than generic advice – Hub should not have a generic offer
* Triage role, advising best routes for individual needs and helping Hub users to navigate the support that is already out there
* Support for organisations to become bid ready
* Skills development and learning – wrap-around support and clear signposting to further support in GM
* Legal advice to frontline organisations
* Incubator for social businesses

*Financial/investment functions*

* Catalyst for accessing funding and generating own income
* Create/coordinate an “Evergreen”-style fund for community wealth, providing seed and growth capital for social start-ups and scale-ups.

*Engagement and Policy functions*

* A communications and outreach function – promoting existing support to (prospective) social businesses; raising awareness about the social economy within the public sector/private sector/consumers/education system.
  + The Good Employment Charter was identified as an exemplar for good “branding” in this regard.
* Policy function – a think tank approach to researching, lobbying for the social economy; engaging in the “battle of ideas”
* A ‘Community Wealth Partnership’

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| **Key question:** which of these functions do you think the Hub should prioritise? |

What should be the Hub’s operating model?

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| **Note:** It was widely suggested that the Hub’s purpose should dictate the operating model (form following function), making discussions on this point more abstract at this early stage in the process.  Additionally, many highlighted that the final operating model of the Hub may differ from its initial form, and that: *“we shouldn’t wait for it to be a perfect finished model before starting – need to find a good interim model”* (also *“it needs to be flexible and able to evolve”; “operating model starts with purpose,* not *job roles or channels”*). This would require an *“evolutionary model, moving towards independence but in need of an interim structure”*. |

* Needs to be community led, independent, agile, accountable and connected
* It may not need to be a completely new product, instead bringing together resources and platforms, creating a system for assessing need and opportunities for growth
* Where it sits in relation to public sector organisations should depend on how it grows, but it has to avoid becoming a competitor to other support bodies
* Working towards a membership model:
  + Membership could be open to all who sign up to principles and the values of the Hub, rather than conditional on business structure. A question asked by an attendee: *“Will the Hub recognise the social value of private sector organisations, and should it?”*
  + Clear entry criteria focused on *“what you can give and what you can get”*
  + Membership could have different levels – an organisation can have as much or as little interaction as they desire
  + If a membership model is pursued, should that membership be paid for or sponsored?
* There could be clusters of organisations working on the same issues/in similar geographies – create a space to discuss issues and opportunities in common
* Initially a cross-sector partnership with the public sector
* Bring together specialist knowledge of sector practitioners and capacity of the public sector
* Debate over level of structure/formality: *“something loose, informal and collaborative”*
* It will require staffing and resourcing, otherwise it will become nebulous and unengaging
* Supported by secondments from member organisations

*Form: Physical – Virtual, Location*

* Related to the suggested membership model and questions of form, a platform cooperative model was suggested, through which support and financial access would be provided to other coops through an online format
  + An ‘innovation cooperative’ model was also suggested
* The idea of a *“platform with tendrils”* was proposed, with the “tendrils” constituting groups working into existing gaps in provision.
* Connect people in person through various physical locations and online, depending on access needs – hybrid model of delivery
* A physical Hub could co-locate with the premises of local partners and members of the Hub. Using local partners’ spaces would also increase accessibility for local areas
* This would allow geographical flexibility, which could be furthered via a “roadshow” of geographic hubs across different business types, which could move as required
* Rather than a centralising Hub, a “spider’s web”

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| **Key question:** What do you think should be the Hub’s operating model when it is launched? And in 5-years’ time? |

**NEXT STEPS**

Workshops

There will be two further workshops over the next two months:

* **Monday 11 July** – To understand the potential use of the Hub.
* **Thursday 25 August** – To design how the back-end support network behind the Hub will function.

These will be whole-day workshops structured as Design Sprints, with a smaller group of attendees (approximately 20), and led by Naomi Timperley of Tech North Advocates. The aim of the two workshops will ultimately be to produce an operating model proposition, which can be taken to the GM Mayor and Leaders at the GMCA in the autumn of 2022.

Stakeholder input from the first workshop (as well as responses to this report) will directly shape the exact questions and working themes used in the two Design Sprint workshops.

We want to bring together a diverse range of experience and views in the next co-design stages, and ensure that all stakeholder groups are represented and able to input.

Engagement alongside workshops

With the small groups that will attend the two workshops, it will be vital to engage those stakeholders not attending, in particular future potential users of the Hub:

* GMCA staff will be working through networks and contacts to ensure there is a dialogue as the design develops.
* As with the previous stage of the co-design process, stakeholders will be able to input and comment on the ideas emerging from this first workshop via GM Consult.