

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 5 December 2023

Subject: Our Manchester Funds Programme Overview

Report of: Assistant Chief Executive

Summary

The Our Manchester Funds programme provides significant support to the city's Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector. Mainly comprised of the Our Manchester VCS Fund and the VCFSE infrastructure contract, the programme also includes numerous other grant funding, partnership working and specialist functions that have evolved over time. This report provides the committee with an overview of the current programme, activities and priorities, bringing together new information, and information previously considered by the committee about individual aspects of the programme.

Recommendations

The committee is recommended to note and comment on the contents of this report.

Wards Affected: All

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| <p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p> | <p>As detailed within this report, the Our Manchester Funds programme has worked to embed the city's zero carbon ambitions in a proportionate way. Grant funded and contracted organisations are required to state their zero carbon commitments and there is ongoing monitoring of progress against this during the funded period. Support to realise these ambitions is available through the infrastructure support offer and the work of the Programme Team.</p> |
| <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p> | <p>The report details the measures that have been taken to embed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) approach proportionately and more explicitly in the Our Manchester Funds programme. In particular, EDI is a stated aim of the Our Manchester VCS Fund and lengths have been gone to, to ensure that the refreshed VCFSE infrastructure contract for 2024-29 has an EDI approach at its core. In addition, the reach and community impact of the activities delivered</p> |

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| | through the programme's main funds is monitored and reviewed on a six-monthly basis, to ensure that particular communities of identity are able to access applicable types of support in the right way for them, as agreed with funded groups. |
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| Manchester Strategy outcomes | Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS |
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| <p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p> | <p>Manchester's VCFSE sector generated a total income of around £500 million in 2019-20 and in addition to its paid workforce, created over 160,000 volunteering opportunities, with volunteers giving about 481,000 hours each week, valued at about £242 million per year (<i>Manchester State of the VCSE Sector report, 2021</i>). The Our Manchester Funds programme plays a critical role in supporting the health and sustainability of the sector and contributes to these outcomes.</p> |
| <p>A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p> | <p>The VCFSE organisations supported through the Our Manchester Funds programme are run and supported by a diverse range of skilled workers, including boards of trustees, those in paid roles and those providing support voluntarily. In addition to providing work opportunities, many of the funded organisations provide employability support (including but not limited to skills development through volunteering), often working with those communities and individuals requiring specific types of support to benefit from Manchester's economic success.</p> |
| <p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p> | <p>A critical feature of the Our Manchester Funds programme is to support organisations whose primary funded activity is to work in a strengths-based way with individuals and communities, to maximise their potential and have an active contribution in Manchester. This includes organisations providing activities targeted on a geographical, community or characteristic basis, delivered through a diverse range of supportive approaches.</p> |

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| <p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p> | <p>Organisations supported through the Our Manchester Funds programme frequently work with residents to celebrate their achievements, contributions and identities. Organisations promote Manchester as a place of choice by celebrating the value and diversity of the City and its people.</p> <p>The programme promotes the City's commitment to be a Real Living Wage City, with all applicants outlining their current progress towards paying the Real Living Wage, and stating their commitment to accreditation under the Living Wage Foundation during the funded period.</p> <p>Measures have been taken to ensure that all grant funded and / or contracted organisations involved in the Our Manchester Funds programme have specific zero carbon commitments and plans, and that they are supported to execute these during the funded period. This includes embedding zero carbon in the refreshed VCFSE infrastructure contract as part of the support offer.</p> |
| <p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p> | <p>VCFSE organisations have progressed the digital inclusion agenda significantly in recent years, adapting service delivery to online and / or blended options (accelerated by the response to the coronavirus pandemic), and working with key stakeholder groups to address and remove digital barriers. As a result, some resident groups (i.e. older people, people with English as an Additional Language, people with sensory impairments) are more able to connect with VCFSE services.</p> <p>The VCFSE infrastructure contract, developed and managed through the Our Manchester Funds programme, aims to support the connection, sustainability and resilience of the VCFSE sector in Manchester. This recognises the importance of a strong and collaborative sector, not only to support residents, but to also inform and influence the city's strategic ambitions.</p> |

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Not applicable

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Our Manchester Voluntary & Community Sector (OMVCS) Fund, Scrutiny Committee – Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, 7 March 2023
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Infrastructure Contract Update – Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, 20 June 2023
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Impact Report 2023 - 2026 Update – Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, 5 September 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Manchester has a crucial role to play in realising the ambitions of the Our Manchester Strategy. The sector comprises over 3,800 organisations and groups, providing support to a diverse range of communities, both geographically as well as communities of identity. These organisations provide support that ranges from highly specialised, intensive support for some of the city's most vulnerable residents, through to organisations such as community centres and friends groups that provide more universal support. As well as supporting residents, the city's VCFSE organisations celebrate and demonstrate pride and passion in the city and its people.
- 1.2 The profile of the VCFSE sector is as diverse as the people that engage with it, be that as users of services or as volunteers and workers. Manchester's latest State of the VCSE Sector report (2021) identified that 66% of VCFSE organisations are classed as 'micro', i.e. they operate with less than £10,000 per year. Conversely, only 5% of organisations are large, i.e. they operate with over £1 million but less than £10 million per year. Similarly, the sector provides a diverse support offer, covering many characteristics including race, faith, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, carers and many more.
- 1.3 The VCFSE sector has seen significant evolution in recent years. The State of the Sector report found that many organisations have responded to funding challenges by generating new trading approaches and diversifying their income streams, with over 11% now defining themselves as social enterprises.
- 1.4 The city's VCFSE sector is a considerable economic asset. The total income of Manchester's VCFSE sector was almost £500 million in 2019-20. Around 85% of organisations bring in funding from beyond the public sector. The sector's voluntary workforce (including committee / board members) collectively give around 481,000 hours each week, valued at over £260 million per year (based on real living wage assumptions).
- 1.5 Despite this, the VCFSE sector faces significant challenges, as the demand for support continues to grow and diversify at the same time as the availability of funding becomes further restricted. This pattern is evident across the sector nationwide, and is reflected in Manchester, as the city and the Council grapple with continuing financial difficulties.
- 1.6 As community-led organisations, Manchester's VCFSE sector acts as a collection of essential assets that present resident voices and connections, to influence and inform the strategic direction of the city and its priorities. Engagement with the sector continues to inform several key pieces of work (for example, the Making Manchester Fairer programme), and can be further built on, not least in the development of the new City strategy.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (OMVCS) fund was co-produced with VCFSE and public sector colleagues, and originally launched in 2018. The OMVCS fund invested £2.4 million per year (£7.2 million over its three-yearly funding cycle) in the city's VCFSE sector, in close alignment with the aims of the Our Manchester Strategy 2015-25. The fund originally supported 63 organisations for three years (2018-21), which was subsequently extended into 2021-22 and 2022-23 owing to the impact of the pandemic and its destabilising effect.
- 2.2 Alongside this, the Council maintained its commitment to commission VCFSE infrastructure provision, ensuring organisations in the sector had access to essential types of support such as capacity building, advocacy, volunteer coordination and others. Working with Manchester Health and Care Commissioning at that time, Macc was successful in retaining its role as the Local Infrastructure Organisation in 2019. Progress on the VCFSE Infrastructure tender process was reported to this committee in June 2023, and an update will be brought back to the committee in January 2024.
- 2.3 The Our Manchester Funds Team (the Programme Team) was initially established to oversee the development, ongoing management and evolution of these two crucial areas of work. The team was conceived to demonstrate the Our Manchester behaviours in its relationships with the VCFSE sector: listening and responding, trying new ways of working, and working together to deliver for the city. This has been very positively received by sector representatives. In the ensuing period, the Programme Team's work has grown and diversified, to include the management of several shorter-term grant funding programmes, facilitation of boards and partnerships, contributions to wider Council objectives and others.
- 2.4 This report aims to give the committee a brief overview of the Our Manchester Funds programme of work in its current state, under the headings of:
- Main programme priorities
 - Targeted support
 - Partnerships and forums
 - Reflecting wider Council priorities in the programme
- 2.5 Several components of this programme have recently been reported to the committee in detail. In those instances, it is not proposed to repeat information previously considered by the committee. Instead, the areas of work will be briefly summarised and Members will be directed to the enhanced detail in previous reports.
- 2.6 The total VCSFE funding administered by the team in 2023-24 is over £5 million. The key elements of this funding are summarised in the sections that follow and include:
- Our Manchester Voluntary & Community Sector grants – £2.4 million

- Supporting Communities Fund – £1m
- Cost of Living Fund – £600k
- VCFSE infrastructure contract – £589,000
- Household Support Fund (working with Macc) - £400,000
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCSFE organisations support fund - £95,000
- Conversations 2 Cash (with North Manchester Together) - £30,000

2.7 As previously reported to this committee, the Council as a whole spends in the region of £35 million per year with the VCSFE sector through a wide range of commissioning and grant funding arrangements, in addition to the funding from other city partners such as the NHS and Registered Housing Providers.

Main Programme Priorities

3. Our Manchester VCS Funding Programme

- 3.1 As noted at section 2.1, the Our Manchester Voluntary and Community (OMVCS) fund is a £2.4 million per year (£7.2 million over its three-year cycle) grant programme aligned to the aims of the Our Manchester Strategy. The programme underwent a refresh in 2022, and now funds 43 VCFSE organisations, delivering many different types of support and services across a wide range of communities (geographically, as well as communities of identity).
- 3.2 The engagement and co-design process that led to the refreshed fund saw the inclusion of three interrelated aims for the programme, to ensure that funded organisation address one or more of:
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Health inequalities
 - Poverty action
- 3.3 This ensures that the OMVCS fund is strongly aligned with the Council's key priorities during its funding cycle. The work of the Programme Team is consequently tied into a number of other Council and wider partner workstreams (ie the Making Manchester Fairer programme, the Residents at Risk – Cost of Living working group and others), extending its reach and contribution.
- 3.4 The engagement and co-design of the fund also reiterated the importance of the three-year funding commitment. The VCFSE sector fed back that this not only provides financial stability for a longer period than is offered by many other grant funding arrangements, but creates the opportunity for organisations to plan and prepare for their futures more effectively. As such, three-year funding is a comparatively unique feature that contributes to the wider strategic aim of supporting a thriving, resilient and healthy VCFSE sector in Manchester.

- 3.5 The 2023-26 OMVCS fund aimed to increase the proportion of funds supporting organisations that are led by and / or supporting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, and organisations based in the north of the city. Some gains were made in these areas compared to the first round of OMVCS funding, as reported to this committee in March 2023. The Programme Team is committed to further considering these priorities during the funding period, in order to make further improvements in these areas for future funding rounds.
- 3.6 OMVCS funded organisations have recently completed the first round of six-monthly monitoring. Programme Team officers are reviewing these returns, which are overwhelmingly positive and strongly reflect the breadth and depth of support being enabled through this programme. All funded organisations will be offered the opportunity to meet and discuss progress and / or any support needs with named officers from the Programme Team before the end of the municipal year.
- 3.7 For fuller information on the OMVCS fund, Members are encouraged to review the Our Manchester Voluntary & Community Sector (OMVCS) Fund report, considered by this committee at its meeting of 7 March 2023.

4. Supporting Communities Fund

- 4.1 The Supporting Communities Fund (SCF) was newly established for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years, and offers £1 million of support in each of those years to support good quality community infrastructure, particularly in wards identified as priority in terms of the cost-of-living crisis. The SCF provides support for 17 community organisations, investing in them in the short-term with the aim of safeguarding their longer-term stability.
- 4.2 As noted, the significant focus of the SCF is around support for residents who are experiencing financial difficulties and associated issues linked to the Cost of Living crisis (ie issues with poor physical and mental health). It should be noted that whilst the £1 million budget here is an important investment, it is only one part of a wider Council programme of Cost of Living support. The outcomes and benefits of the SCF will be evaluated and fed into the wider understanding of Council investment and impact related to this priority.
- 4.3 As is the case with the OMVCS fund, organisations on the SCF programme have recently completed their first round of monitoring returns. These are being reviewed and again, the offer of support and discussion with the Programme Team will be extended in the coming weeks.
- 4.4 Further information on the organisations supported by the SCF is available in the Our Manchester Voluntary & Community Sector (OMVCS) Fund report of 7 March 2023.
- 4.5 A discreet budget of circa £100,000 per year has been reserved within the SCF to support the development of 'kick-starter' activities across the city. These are examples of activities that do not already exist in certain parts of the city, resulting in gaps in accessible services for residents in those areas.

The kick-starter approach aims to further strengthen community infrastructure, beyond funding well-established groups, on a piloting basis.

- 4.6 The Programme Team has established a co-production working group with colleagues from Neighbourhood Services, Adult Services and the Age-Friendly Manchester Team, to progress this in a considered and appropriate way. The working group has agreed that target activities should be: cost-of living activities within a priority ward, supporting vulnerable residents, provided by a grass-roots, locally based organisation that has worked with Manchester residents for at least 12 months. The activity could be a 'test and learn' opportunity or the expansion of an existing model but delivered within a new locality.
- 4.7 The process of identifying which activities will be supported continues, with the aim of initial financial support commencing before the end of the municipal year.

5. VCFSE Infrastructure Support Contract

- 5.1 Progress on the VCFSE Infrastructure tender process was reported to this committee at its meeting of 20 June 2023. The report included the Independent Review of the VCFSE's infrastructure support needs, which involved engagement with VCFSE stakeholders alongside non-VCFSE partners and stakeholders, such as Elected Members and Council officers. Data and intelligence from this review and wider engagement was used to produce the specification for a new contract. Members are encouraged to review the report presented in June for further details of the specification.
- 5.2 Since the last update, the tender was published in September and the deadline for responses has now passed. The procurement exercise has moved to the evaluation stage of the process, with a diverse panel (in terms of characteristics, experience and expertise) of senior Council and Health officers has been appointed to assess, score and make recommendations. The panel includes expertise around health inequalities, neighbourhood working, VCFSE commissioning, social value and equalities. The Programme Team has also worked with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for VCFSE, Councillor Midgley, to maintain Member input on this commission.
- 5.3 This committee is scheduled to receive an update on the infrastructure contract procurement at its meeting of 9 January 2024.

Targeted Support

6. Cost of Living Fund

- 6.1 As part of the Council's wider activity to address the cost of living crisis and its impact on Manchester residents, a budget of £600,000 has been made available to VCFSE organisations to continue and / or enhance current delivery of activities which contribute to a sustained recovery from cost of living-related issues. The types of activity that the fund aims to support are:

- Advice services, especially related to financial management support
 - Debt recovery support
 - Support to access unclaimed benefits
 - Employability / supported employment activities
 - Adult education, especially when linked to employability support
 - Support for communities of identity at greater risk of financial and / or energy-related challenges in the winter
- 6.2 The fund does not prioritise emergency response type activity (ie establishment or maintenance of food banks) as this is resourced and supported through the Our Manchester Food Partnership.
- 6.3 The fund is supporting 44 organisations with a proven track record of delivering the types of services in scope. The grants will run for a 6-month period from November 2023 into April 2024. Each funded organisation will complete an evaluation form in May 2024, to further inform the range and impact of work supported in this financial year. Evaluation outcomes will be fed into the Residents at Risk – Cost of Living working group to inform its work in 2024-25.
- 6.4 Taken alongside the Supporting Communities Fund, the work to support the Household Support Fund (see below) and the inclusion of poverty action as an aim of the OMVCS fund, the programme is making a significant contribution to the Council’s wider activities to address the cost of living crisis.

7. Household Support Fund

- 7.1 Since 2021, the government has made funds available to upper-tier Local Authorities in England to support those households most in need from the current cost of living challenges, via the Household Support Fund (HSF). The HSF is currently in its fourth round (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024), and Manchester’s allocation amounts to £12.9 million in total. Since the inception of the HSF scheme, the funding has been distributed across a range of initiatives. This has included the Programme Team working closely with Macc to get funds out to residents via joined up working with the VCFSE sector.
- 7.2 The component of the scheme being delivered by Macc aims to extend the HSF opportunity to resident groups that may not routinely engage with the Council for a number of reasons, and instead have a more consistent level of engagement with VCFSE services. Through this scheme, residents are able to present at any one of a number of VCFSE referral partner organisations and receive support directly (either money or other goods, such as clothing, depending on the individual’s circumstances). The referral organisation is then reimbursed from the funding managed by Macc on the Council’s behalf.
- 7.3 To date, the model has:
- Involved more than 20 VCFSE referral partners to extend the reach of the funding into communities (geographic and identity) that may not otherwise

access support through the Council: participating organisations in recent rounds have received a small discretionary sum per each 20 referrals made, to recognise the additional capacity they have directed towards the scheme.

- Distributed almost £625,000 of funding, in payments of up to £400 value, to almost 2,500 residents.
- Particularly worked with organisations that support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, older people and disabled people (although the scheme has not been exclusive, and individuals' support needs have been considered on their own merits, on a case-by-case basis).

7.4 The HSF is a good example of the Programme Team supporting a significant Council objective by working in collaboration with the Local Infrastructure Organisation and wider VCFSE sector. This way of working with Macc has been well-regarded and adopted by other Council services, to manage the effective distribution of funds to the VCFSE sector.

8. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCSFE organisations support fund

8.1 A budget of £95,000 is available to support work that will contribute to good grant giving for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic VCFSE organisations in the city. The Programme Team will be co-designing this work with a number of VCFSE representatives, with the aim of delivery commencing in the new financial year. Further updates will be available for Members of the committee in future reports.

9. Covid Recovery Fund

9.1 As part of the city's response to Covid-19 and arising from the Manchester Funder's Partnership between MHCC, Manchester City Council and One Manchester, the Covid Recovery Fund was a joint investment of £1.02 million, launched in 2021. All funds were allocated in the 2021-22 financial year, with projects funded for varied periods. It aimed to increase the resilience of the VCFSE sector in Manchester, so that it can continue to provide critical services that support Manchester's residents. The fund's purpose and themes are to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of Manchester's residents, and
- increase sector resilience and address health inequalities within the city

9.2 Most projects have now completed their funded period, with a small number of projects scheduled to complete in early 2024. A small remaining proportion of funding is also being used by Macc to support further capacity building activity.

9.3 The Programme Team is supporting Young Manchester to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the programme and, in partnership with Macc, formulate plans for capturing and disseminating learning. Young Manchester will also undertake an evaluation in the next financial year, following the completion of all funded projects.

Partnerships and Forums

10. North Manchester Together and Conversation 2 Cash

- 10.1 North Manchester Together (NMT) was created in 2019 in response to the North Manchester Inquiry in 2019 which set out how to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester. This concluded with the need for a long-term approach and the development of recommendations grouped under key themes to develop a stronger, more vibrant and thriving voluntary and community sector in North Manchester.
- 10.2 The NMT steering group is made up of contributors from the panel inquiry process who represent multiple interests across North Manchester and who all share a passion for the area and the role of the VCSFE in its future. This includes senior officers, colleagues and politicians who champion the cause of North Manchester across the region and at a national level. NMT continues to progress the development of the recommendations, aligning budget priorities against it whilst tracking its progress against the delivery plan.
- 10.3 Within the NMT programme of work is Conversation 2 Cash (C2C). C2C is a mini-grants mentorship scheme, which supports groups to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence, and strengthen their governance. This, in turn, helps to strengthen the VCFSE offer in North Manchester. Groups that complete their bespoke development objectives, with their mentor's support, are able to access a small grant of £2,000.
- 10.4 A successful first round was completed in 2021, with seven organisations receiving bespoke support from an experienced mentor and making good progress on their developmental goals.
- 10.5 C2C began its second round of support in June 2023, following a successful communication period which resulted in 24 applications (up from 14 in round one), including two from every North Manchester ward. The programme is running at its full capacity, with 12 organisations being supported by five mentors. Groups will receive an increased grant of £2,500 following completion of their development plan.
- 10.6 Considerations will now be made by the NMT group around the future of the fund and if a third round will be held.

11. Manchester Funders Partnership

- 11.1 The Manchester VCFSE Funders partnership is made up of numerous VCFSE funders across Manchester, chaired by Manchester City Council's Deputy Leader and Executive Member for the sector, Councillor Joanna Midgley. Its focus is to work together to support Manchester to have the funding conditions in place to enable a vibrant, strong, diverse and thriving VCFSE sector. This involves ensuring that the sector is continually championed and has its

contribution and needs recognised at the right level. It also involves partners working together to improve strategic oversight of grant making, through the sharing of data and intelligence and the alignment of relevant processes.

11.2 To date this work has included co-investment between partners in infrastructure support and Population Health funding, the creation of a Covid Recovery Fund (see section 9) and increasing the number of partners who publicly report their grantmaking data. The partnership is currently re-evaluating its role and work in the context of the cost-of-living crisis and working to identify and address strategic gaps in funding.

11.3 Organisations represented on the partnership include:

- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Macc
- Manchester City Council
- Manchester Integrated Care Partnership
- MCR Active
- One Manchester
- We Love MCR Charity
- Young Manchester.

11.4 The Partnership meets on a quarterly basis and other Manchester funders are invited to join the partnership by contacting the Programme Team.

12. Our Manchester VCFSE Board

12.1 The Our Manchester VCS (OMVCS) Programme Board was established to provide governance and assurance for the ongoing development, delivery and evaluation of the OMVCS funding programme. This is underpinned by the aim to support a thriving, resilient, effective and sustainable voluntary and community sector in Manchester that:

- Makes a vital contribution to meeting the aims of the “Our Manchester” strategy.
- Is equitably distributed across geographical communities and across communities of identity.
- Operates in accordance with “Our Manchester” principles.

12.2 The Board provides a quality assurance point for key aspects of the programme and their connection to wider city and cross-sector priorities. Its aims and terms were developed a number of years ago, and the Programme Team aims to review and refresh these in 2024-25.

13. Reflecting Wider Council Priorities in the Programme

13.1 The work of the Programme Team is informed by the council’s wider strategic priorities, including:

Real Living Wage

- 13.2 The city's ambition to be a Living Wage city is an embedded requirement in both the Our Manchester and Supporting Communities grants programmes, requiring funded organisations to either hold the Living Wage Employer accreditation mark at the point of application, or commit to working towards accreditation by March 2025. Progress is tracked through the six-monthly monitoring process.
- 13.3 In addition, the recent infrastructure specification requires that any contracted provider is expected to have or commit to working towards Real Living Wage accreditation within the first two years of the contract.

Zero Carbon

- 13.4 The city's goal of being zero carbon by 2038 requires action across all sectors, with local VCFSE organisations being supported to reduce carbon emissions. This is difficult in the context of increasing demand and reducing resources, but despite this, there are many exemplar VCFSE organisations driving and delivering work at organisational and community level. To support funded groups further, the Programme Team has developed a four tier offer for groups funded through OMVCS and SCF as follows:
- **The Carbon Literacy Project's 'Community Leaders' training.** Funded groups are being offered training, with one person per organisation attending to then become a fully carbon literate trainer. This work on a train-the-trainer basis, with that individual then equipped to train other people on carbon literacy in the organisation they represent. The training will be delivered on 4 and 5 December 2023, which coincides with Carbon Literacy Action Day and COP28 negotiations.
 - **Knowledge Sharing.** The Programme Team has collated a list of useful zero carbon-related resources and funding opportunities which provides a starting point for organisations.
 - **Peer Learning.** The Programme Team will organise annual events which include a zero-carbon focused session, to promote knowledge sharing and peer learning. The first event was held in the summer and groups shared their zero carbon asks and offers with the team and with one another.
 - **Monitoring.** The programme's six-monthly monitoring process now includes a section on working towards zero carbon, and the Programme Team will use data to liaise with colleagues such as the Climate Change Neighbourhood Officers to identify themes, challenges or requests for help that can be responded to.
 - The infrastructure specification asked providers to outline their plans for reducing carbon emissions in line with the city's ambitions and how this will be monitored during the contracted period. The new specification also includes the expectation that support for reducing carbon emissions will feature in any future capacity building support offer.
- 13.5 As well as the examples given above, the Programme Team works closely with internal and external stakeholders across its wider work to support

priorities such as tackling inequality and social value. Further examples include:

- The team works with other colleagues to develop effective grant making in response to strategic challenges. These are aligned to the priorities of Making Manchester Fairer and are reflected in the OMVCS and SCF grants programmes. The team has previously designed and delivered funding in partnership with Community Health Equity Manchester (CHEM) and work is ongoing to develop further funding within this remit.
- Through the North Manchester Together partnership, work has taken place with the North Manchester Business Network to align requests for support from the VCFSE with offers from local businesses. Learning from this process demonstrates that this should be a two-way process and that VCFSE often have offers of their own that local businesses can benefit from, such as advice and guidance offers for staff, coaching, mentoring and support to embed good inclusive practice within the workforce.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 As demonstrated throughout this report, the Our Manchester Funds Programme administers a wide range of support for the VCSFE sector and this achieves significant impacts in the city. The Programme Team has a wide-ranging set of skills and responsibilities, which are fully utilised to maintain the various areas of work within the programme to a high standard, and in turn, support the aims of a thriving and effective VCFSE sector in Manchester.
- 14.2 Subject to all areas of work being progressed as expected, the cumulative investment in the VCFSE sector (actual and committed spend) supported by the Our Manchester Funds Programme in 2023-24 will amount to circa £5.2m. This is not a fixed annual amount, as new opportunities to support grant giving are forecast for 2024-25.
- 14.3 Moving forwards, the Programme Team plans to build on these approaches to maximise the capacity for good grant giving in the Council. It will also seek to establish mechanisms to monitoring Council-wide and partnership funding to the VCFSE sector, in order to demonstrate the cumulative investment and impact of the arrangements.