

Date: 27 July 2018

Subject: The role of co-operatives

Report of: Cllr Allen Brett, portfolio lead for community cooperatives and inclusion

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#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

This report sets out proposals for a range of actions intended to help promote the use of co-operative principles across Greater Manchester. Specifically, the report proposes GMCA membership of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN) and the establishment of a Co-operative Commission for GM.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Leaders are asked to:

- Approve the proposal for GMCA to join the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network
- Approve the proposal for a Co-operative Commission for GM.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution (paragraph 14.2) or in the process (paragraph 13.1 AGMA Constitution) agreed by the AGMA Executive Board:		No
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the AGMA Scrutiny Pool on the grounds of urgency?		No
TfGMC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Greater Manchester is the home of the co-operative movement. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was established in 1844 and Greater Manchester remains the home of the Co-operative Group, the world's largest consumer owned business.
- 1.2. The building blocks of co-operation in GM are strong, with over 160,000 people in GM already members of a cooperative. Cooperatives collectively contribute £73 million to the local economy. The co-ops include credit unions providing financial services to communities, ten housing cooperatives, and retail, which is the largest sector and includes a number of organisations that are reporting significant increases in turnover. Cooperatives are also starting to emerge in key growth areas such as digital and green technology
- 1.3. Greater Manchester should be the most cooperative region of the country and be the most natural place for new cooperatives and mutual to establish and thrive.

## 2. CO-OPERATIVE COUNCILS' INNOVATION NETWORK

- 2.1. The Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network (CCIN) is a collaboration between local authorities that are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, local people for the benefit of their local community.
- 2.2. The CCIN recognises the need to define a new model of local government built on civic leadership, with councils working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities. This means a new role for local authorities that replaces traditional models of top down governance and service delivery with local leadership, genuine co-operation, and a new approach built on the founding traditions of the co-operative movement: collective action, co-operation, empowerment and enterprise.
- 2.3. The network, launched in 2013 is hosted by Oldham Council and has three GM members (Oldham, Rochdale and Salford).
- 2.4. The CCIN has carried out a number of programmes of work in recent years that are of interest to GM and resonate with the priorities and approach to co-operation advocated in our strategy. Recent work includes:
  - **Community-Led Housing: a Key Role for Local Authorities.** The CCIN Housing Commission concluded that the Community Led Housing (CLH) should be 'added to the strategic mix' to increase the supply of homes that local people can afford.
  - **From Co-operative Councils to Co-operative Places,** which concluded it is increasingly time for councils to be catalysts of place, working in equal partnership with local people to shape and strengthen communities.

- 2.5. Current CCIN projects and campaigns are also of relevance to GM. Their current focus is on co-operative approaches to devolution and working with citizens to decide budget priorities.
- 2.6. Given the alignment between the GM approach to policy development the approach advocated by the CCIN, Leaders are asked to approve GMCA membership of the network. The annual cost for CA membership would be £500.

### **3. GREATER MANCHESTER COOPERATIVE COMMISSION**

- 3.1. To support the continued development of the cooperative sector in GM and to ensure we are drawing on the benefits cooperatives can bring to our work, it is proposed that GMCA establishes a Cooperative Commission.
- 3.2. The proposed Commission would support on-going work as well as to provide practical policy recommendations for future consideration. In addition, this Commission would be a driver for the development of co-operative activity across the region and greater collaboration with the sector, contributing to the achievement of the ambitions of the GM strategy.
- 3.3. It is proposed that the Commission is supported by the Cooperative Party, who have carried out similar work in other parts of the UK (including with Ealing Council and the Welsh Assembly).
- 3.4. The Cooperative Party would work with GM and with colleagues across the cooperative sector to deliver this work. Beyond member and officer time, the Commission would be delivered at no direct financial cost to GM.
- 3.5. Following the model that has been used elsewhere, it is proposed the GM Cooperative Commission would:
  - Establish a small panel to guide the work (Chaired by the GM Mayor and/or GMCA portfolio lead for Community, Cooperatives and Inclusion)
  - Gather evidence from across GM on the role cooperatives play in achieving the ambitions of the GM strategy.
  - Hold a small number of evidence sessions, providing an opportunity to call experts in the GM region and cooperative sector.
  - Publish a report setting out findings and recommendations.
- 2.1. It is anticipated that the Commission would report within this calendar year.

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.