

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CULTURE & SOCIAL IMPACT FUND COMMITTEE
HELD THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2025 AT THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE,
103 PRINCESS STREET, MANCHESTER M16 6DD**

PRESENT:

Councillor Neil Emmott	GMCA Portfolio Lead for Culture (Chair)
Councillor Janet Emsley	Rochdale Council (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Karen Hon	Bolton Council
Councillor Tim Whiston	Manchester City Council
Councillor Aftab Hussain	Oldham Council
Councillor Frankie Singleton	Stockport Council
Councillor Leanne Feeley	Tameside Council
Councillor Catherine Hynes	Trafford Council

OTHER OFFICERS:

Alison McKenzie-Folan	GMCA Chief Executive Portfolio Lead for Culture
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OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Sam Elliott	Head of Service, Bolton Council
Marie-Claire Daly	Head of Culture and Creative Policy, GMCA
Hafiz Khokhar	Project and Policy Officer, GMCA
Joe Heys	Senior Policy Officer, Culture and Night Time Economy, GMCA
Jenny Hollamby	Senior Governance and Scrutiny Officer, GMCA
Gareth Williams	Principal, Night Time Economy, GMCA
Philip Cooke	Libraries and Archives Lead, Manchester City Council
Neil MacInnes	Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture, Manchester City Council
Marie Holland	Arts and Engagement Officer, Tameside Council
Sam Elliott	Head of Service, Bolton Council

C&SIF/01/25

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Nadeem Ayub, Councillor Dane Anderton, Councillor Peter Dean, Councillor Jilly Julian, Councillor Charlotte Morris, Councillor Paul Prescott and Councillor Hannah Robinson-Smith.

Introductions took place around the table.

C&SIF/02/25

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED/-

1. To note that the GMCA Portfolio Lead for Culture (Councillor Neil Emmott, Rochdale Council) be the Chair of the GM Culture & Social Impact Fund Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.
2. That Councillor Janet Emsley, Rochdale Council be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year.

C&SIF/03/25

**TO NOTE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE AGMA
STATUTORY FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE 2024/25**

RESOLVED/-

That the Membership for the 2024/25 municipal year be noted as follows:

Member (Councillor)	District	Substitute (Councillor)
Nadeem Ayub (Lab)	Bolton	Karen Hon
Charlotte Morris (Lab)	Bury	Vacancy
Tim Whiston (Lab)	Manchester	Leslie Bell
Peter Dean (Lab)	Oldham	Aftab Hussain
Janet Emsley (Lab)	Rochdale	Kathryn Bromfield
Hannah Robinson-Smith (Lab)	Salford	Jack Youd
Frankie Singleton (Lib Dem)	Stockport	Jilly Julian

Leanne Feeley (Lab)	Tameside	Hugh Roderick
Catherine Hynes (Lab)	Trafford	Rose Thompson
Paul Prescott (Lab)	Wigan	Keith Cunliffe

**C&SIF/04/25 MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT AND ANNUAL
DECLARATION FORM**

Members were reminded of their obligations under the GMCA Member's Code of Conduct and to complete an annual declaration of interest form which would be published on the GMCA website.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the GMCA's Code of Conduct be noted.
2. That all Members complete an Annual Register of Interest Form.

**C&SIF/05/25 TO NOTE THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE
2024/25**

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee noted its terms of reference for the ensuing year.

C&SIF/06/25 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Chair's announcements or urgent business.

C&SIF/07/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of agenda item ten, Greater Manchester Cultural Strategy 2024-2030, Councillor Leanne Feeley declared a personal interest by virtue of her working as a General Manager at Company Chameleon, 6 Barrass St, Openshaw, Manchester M11 1PU.

C&SIF/08/25

**TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2023**

RESOLVED/-

That the Committee noted the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 October 2023.

C&SIF/09/25

GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURE PORTFOLIO UPDATE

Members considered a report presented by Marie-Claire Daly, Head of Culture and Creative Policy, GMCA, which informed the Committee about activity delivered by the Greater Manchester Culture Portfolio between April 2023 and March 2024 under the 2023–2026 investment approach.

The main points referred:

- The annual budget of £4.425 million supported five strands of cultural investment and social impact commitments.
- The Inspire fund, launched in early 2024, provided small grants to freelancers and small creative organisations. In the first two rounds, 69 recipients were supported, with demand far exceeding expectations. Feedback highlighted the transformative impact of the funding on recipients' practice and sustainability.
- Under the Spirit and Sustain strands, 39 organisations delivered over 5.2 million cultural engagement opportunities across Greater Manchester. The average cost per engagement was 67p, demonstrating strong value for money. One organisation, MancSpirit, withdrew from the portfolio, and its remaining funds were reallocated to Trafford Council.
- The Collaborate strand, designed to support strategic partnerships, was delayed to align with the new GMCA Culture Strategy. Expressions of Interest opened in February 2025.

- Stockport was the 2023 Town of Culture, and Bolton was announced as the 2024/25 Town of Culture.
- A revised approach to the programme was agreed to reduce administrative burden and improve strategic alignment.
- Creative Improvement Districts progressed in Stockport, Wigan, Rochdale, Oldham, and Salford, with seconded Officers supporting local cultural ecosystems and night-time economy strategies.
- The Greater Manchester Music Commission supported international showcases, music therapy initiatives, and a campaign to honour Black musicians with blue plaques.
- StreamGM, GMCA's cultural streaming platform, reached over 55,000 global viewers and supported 38 paid creative opportunities through new content and live broadcasts.

A Member asked how the expansion of the Bee Network and the integration of additional transport services such as buses, trams, and active travel routes might help increase participation in cultural activities across Greater Manchester. The Member requested that future reports include information or analysis on how improved transport connectivity was supporting wider access and engagement.

A Member referred to page 40 of the agenda pack and asked why the financial figures relating to the departure of MancSpirit from the GMCA Culture Portfolio did not appear to reconcile. The Member requested clarification on the breakdown of the figures. It was explained that the figures on page 40 might appear not to add up because only a portion of the funding allocated was released. The majority of the payment was withheld until the organisation could demonstrate that it had met the agreed criteria. In the end, only one quarter of the total allocation was paid, and the remaining was retained and reallocated to Trafford Council to support cultural activity in the borough.

A Member expressed regret that MancSpirit had withdrawn from the GMCA Culture Portfolio, noting that it had been the only funded project based in Trafford. The Member highlighted that Trafford had developed a strong and active cultural

framework, which had already been activated and was delivering positive outcomes. The Member highlighted that Trafford Council was preparing to submit a bid for Greater Manchester Town of Culture in the coming years and asked when further updates on that process would be provided. In response, it was confirmed that the remaining funds were ready to be transferred to Trafford Council. These funds would support the delivery of cultural initiatives locally, and it was anticipated that this would help strengthen Trafford's position as it prepared to bid for Greater Manchester Town of Culture in the coming years.

A Member noted that Tameside was not referenced in the section of the report relating to Creative Improvement Districts and asked whether there were any opportunities for Tameside to be involved in future phases of the programme. The Member expressed interest in having a conversation with officers to explore how Tameside could participate in this work.

A Member made reference to Tameside's annual Whit Friday brass band contest and highlighted that the event regularly attracted over 10,000 visitors and celebrated a long-standing cultural tradition. They expressed a desire to explore how the event could be recognised and would speak to Officers directly.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the report be received and noted.
2. That future reports include information or analysis on how improved transport connectivity was supporting wider access and engagement.
3. That Officers speak to the Councillor from Tameside about Creative Improvement Districts and the Whit Friday brass band contest.

C&SIF/10/25 FROM THE OTHER – VERBAL UPDATE

Members received a presentation From The Other, a Greater Manchester-based creative organisation that aligned closely with the aims of the GMCA Culture Portfolio. Their mission to support underrepresented artists and communities through storytelling, performance, and inclusive engagement complemented the GMCA's

strategic priorities around representation, wellbeing, and community participation. As noted in the report, From The Other was awarded funding annually under the Spirit strand of the Culture Fund, recognising its contribution to Greater Manchester's cultural ecosystem and its alignment with the fund's objectives to promote equity, creativity, and local impact.

RESOLVED/-

That the presentation be received and noted.

C&SIF/11/25 GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURE STRATEGY 2024-2030

Members noted the report that informed the Committee about the new GMCA Culture Strategy, approved by the GMCA in July 2024.

RESOLVED/-

That the report be noted.

**C&SIF/12/25 GREATER MANCHESTER CULTURE WORK PROGRAMME
2025/26**

Members noted the verbal update provided by Marie-Claire Daly about work taking place in the financial year.

The main points referred:

- The new Collaborate fund had been launched, with decisions made and projects scheduled to begin in May 2025.
- Officers had entered into negotiations with all cultural clients to agree updated deliverables, effective from April 2025.
- The programme had been aligned with the National Industrial Strategy and the broader Greater Manchester Strategy to ensure strategic coherence.

- A sector-wide consultation had been launched via GM Consult on 10 March 2025 to gather feedback from stakeholders.
- A draft industry sector plan had been scheduled to go through the Greater Manchester governance process between the end of April and May 2025.
- The current three-year GM Culture Fund agreements were due to end in March 2026, prompting a review to ensure the new CreateGM strategy remained fit for purpose.
- In June 2025, GMCA had planned to commission research to assess the impact of GM-level cultural investment, with a report outlining future options to be presented to the Combined Authority.
- A new funding round had been scheduled to open for applications in Autumn 2025, preparing for the next phase of cultural investment beyond 2026.

A Member asked given the Committee's role in monitoring, was there an opportunity for this Committee to have a more active role in shaping or influencing the investment programme itself. It was explained that an update on the investment programme would be taken to GMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee by the end of March 2025 to outline progress. Officers were happy to involve this Committee in that process. While this Committee currently monitored investments made, Officers would welcome any input from Members on the investment approach itself.

RESOLVED/-

1. That the update be received and noted.
2. That Members contact the Team with comments on the investment approach.

C&SIF/13/25

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

That meetings take place twice a year in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference.