

# Changes at Macc: Improving Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure in Manchester

**A Report on Consultations with local Voluntary and  
Community Sector Organisations during February -  
March 2012.**

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## Acknowledgements

Duo Development would like to thank the many people and organisations that helped to make this consultation possible: Macc for organising the consultation events in the many different areas and venues across Manchester; Manchester's Voluntary and Community Infrastructure organisations for their positive, openness approach to working together to share information; and to all the organisations and individuals who participated in the consultation attending the events and taking the time to share their views in an honest, open, realistic and respectful way (participants list is available in Appendix 2).

All views shared have been very helpful and have informed this report. The recommendations reflect these views and a bit of artistic licence from Duo Development.

## About Duo Development

Carol Savage, owner of Duo Development, is a freelance consultant who specialises in assisting organisations and individuals to become more effective in what they do.

Carol has worked in the voluntary sector as a volunteer and paid worker, from a local to a regional charity since 1993 until 2010 where she was made redundant and decided to go freelance. As a qualified coach and NLP Practitioner, Carol specialises in training, facilitation and consultation.

In case you are wondering why Duo Development when there is just Carol? Carol believes that people can be more effective with appropriate support – therefore Duo represents the two parties working together – the client and Carol.

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## Executive Summary

This document will present the key findings arising from the Macc consultation undertaken by Duo Development.

### Background and Context

In March 2011 Manchester City Council approached Manchester Voluntary Sector Infrastructure stakeholders (see Appendix 1) to consider how a new single service can be developed to meet the needs of the sector based on the '*Infrastructure Support for Third Sector Manchester: A New Framework*' published by Manchester City Council in February 2011. The process resulted in Macc becoming the voluntary sector infrastructure lead for Manchester. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.macc.org.uk/macc/bigmacc.php>

### Aims of the Consultation

Macc asked Duo Development to carry out a consultation to seek views as to what Manchester voluntary and community sector organisations wanted so they could ensure they provide an appropriate and effective provision to Manchester's voluntary and community sector.

### The Consultation Process

63 people from 49 organisations were consulted by attending one of the six events run in Wythenshawe, Levenshulme, Manchester City Centre and Beswick.

The consultation format was carried out using three main principles; to engage, to challenge (where appropriate) and to be flexible. The facilitation style used was structured yet simple, it was to ask questions and encourage discussions around the following key headings:

- To enable the understanding how Macc became the lead voluntary and community sector infrastructure.
- Macc's support to deliver their services, specifically on Commissioning, community engagement and capacity building.
- Accountability of Macc.

### Key Findings and Recommendations

The key findings are structured around these key headings and the questions asked of those taking part in the consultations. There were other views which were expressed which participants put forward some of which don't fit neatly under the three main areas headings and where relevant these have been included. Below are the highlights of the recommendations contained within the report as there are too many to list:

## **Understanding the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Manchester**

In past fifteen years Manchester's voluntary sector infrastructure has been very fragmented, with a large number of agencies all providing a variety of roles. The consultation raised the following as important;

- To tell the story of how the voluntary sector infrastructure has evolved over the past ten years.
- To know, understand and empathise with the Sector and in doing so will have the evidence, the confidence and the right to challenge.
- The need to raise Macc's profile visibly and physically in order to be accessible especially to the small grass roots organisations

## **Support from Macc**

Each consultation raised the importance of Macc having a central role to co-ordinate the infrastructure support with the emphasis on "co-ordination".

- To be "a resource hub" where the voluntary and community sector can go to for information, advice, and support knowing that if "they can't help directly they will know someone who can".
- To operate within the three main principles in supporting the Manchester voluntary and community sector roles: Communication and translation, Co-ordination, and to be influential with an open, transparent and trustworthy culture.

## **Commissioning**

The consultation highlighted two main recommended roles which Macc can play around Commissioning: as a capacity builder and as a campaigner.

- To develop the knowledge, skills and systems of individuals and organisations to raise their confidence in their ability to tender or to be part of a consortium.
- To build a case and campaign for intelligent commissioning.

## **Community Engagement**

Although it was acknowledged how difficult it is to co-ordinate community engagement and that it can only "be as good as what people put in to it" and report back to Macc. The participants felt the recommended areas would help Macc be more effective in community engagement. These included:

- To learn the lessons from previous and existing community engagement practice and networks.
- To build upon and work with existing networks and other local infrastructure organisations.
- To improve channels of communication between the sectors.
- To develop a clear set of guiding principles on community engagement.

## **Capacity Building & Training**

Manchester Community Central provides information and support to build the capacity and sustainability of voluntary and community sector organisations in Manchester.

- To support organisations (especially the grass roots groups) on a more intense one to one support at certain times in their organisations development.
- To ensure there are different ways to deliver training whether this be formal (accredited or non accredited) and/or informal.
- To ensure that training is affordable.

### **Accountability of Macc**

Accountability was discussed by participants with many of the areas which they wanted Macc to coordinate and to be accountable for have been identified within the findings and recommendations. However what was less clear was the specific mechanism which they wished to be used to measure and assure accountability in these and any wider areas.

- To investigate the area of accountability and how to measure it.

## Introduction and Background

This document will present the key findings and recommendations arising from the Macc consultation undertaken by Duo Development.

In March 2011 Manchester City Council approached Manchester Voluntary Sector Infrastructure stakeholders<sup>1</sup> to consider how a new single service can be developed to meet the needs of the sector based on the '*Infrastructure Support for Third Sector Manchester: A New Framework*' published by Manchester City Council in February 2011. The process of the development of a new single service was on-going and facilitated by Voluntary Sector North West. The process resulted in Macc becoming the voluntary sector infrastructure lead for Manchester. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.macc.org.uk/macc/bigmacc.php>

Macc asked Duo Development to carry out a consultation to seek views as to what Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector organisations wanted so they could ensure they provide an appropriate and effective provision to Manchester's voluntary and community sector. This report attempts to summarise all the questions and views posed and expressed at the consultation events.

The consultation process ran from February 2012 to March 2012 and included a six round-table events involving 63 individuals from 49 voluntary sector organisations. Consultations were attended by a diverse range of voluntary sector organisations ranging from national charities based in Manchester to grass roots organisations based in Wythenshawe.

Manchester's voluntary and community sector is comprised of approximately 3,000 large, medium and small voluntary organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives, faith and sports groups. They deliver a diverse range of services such as; development, housing, arts, culture, sport, health & social care, childcare, law, crime, civil rights & information, education & research, and the environment. However, it is acknowledged that as with most areas, there are many more organisations across Manchester, particularly small community groups whose details are not included on any lists or databases.

"Voluntary Sector Infrastructure" has many definitions, but put simply, it is a structure to co-ordinate and utilise resources to support, develop and promote frontline voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver their services or activities more effectively. NAVCA, the national membership body for voluntary sector infrastructure organisations, defines "local support and development organisations" as those which;

- Provide specialist expertise, information and support and develop the skills local people need to run successful organisations and groups.
- Spread good practice, prevent duplication of effort and support joint working.

- Help groups find funding and make effective use of resources.
- Promote equality and diversity by fostering a wider understanding of the needs of disadvantaged and under-represented groups.
- Make sure policy makers understand the needs of local voluntary organisations and community groups.
- Help public bodies engage effectively with local voluntary organisations and community groups.
- Provide a forum for local voluntary organisations and community groups.
- Encourage more people to volunteer and get involved in voluntary and community action.

Macc's new objectives to account for their new role are:

To support and promote voluntary and community activity in Manchester by;

- Promoting the voluntary and community sector.
- Building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector organisations by providing them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to make a socially useful contribution to Manchester.
- Promoting volunteering and active citizenship.
- Promoting and supporting co-operation and partnership working between the voluntary and community sector, the public sector and other relevant bodies.
- Promoting the health and wellbeing of people in local communities.
- Championing equality and diversity by advancing education and raising awareness, promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds, conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues and publishing the results to the public.

## **Background to the Consultation/ Local Climate**

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In past fifteen years Manchester's voluntary sector infrastructure has been very fragmented, with a large number of agencies all providing a variety of roles: at one point there were 18 different organisations involved and yet there were also some major gaps such as there being no Volunteer Centre. Despite a series of reviews by the City Council the strategy for developing voluntary sector infrastructure in the city was uncertain. The history is long, complicated and open to a large amount of interpretation.

- Community Network for Manchester was established in 2001 as a project within Voluntary Action Manchester to provide a structure to engage local organisations in the new decision making structures of the Manchester Partnership.
- In 2005 Voluntary Action Manchester did not get its core funding renewed from Manchester City Council. A new service specification developed by the City Council was put out to tender and won by The Scarman Trust but aimed at very small organisations working with less than £50K per year.

- In 2007 Community Network for Manchester left Voluntary Action Manchester and became an independent organisation.
- In 2009, Macc formed a partnership with Community Network for Manchester and Voluntary Action Manchester to win the main voluntary sector capacity building contract which had once again come up for tender. The new service was subsequently launched in January 2010 as “Manchester Community Central” with a commitment to develop a brand which would be identifiable by local voluntary and community sector organisations and remain in place no matter which infrastructure agency was the service provider.
- Voluntary Action Manchester closed in April 2010.
- In late 2010 Manchester City Council launched a consultation with the local voluntary and community sector to gather feedback on existing infrastructure provision and future needs. This also included research into other English cities to consider different models.
- In early 2011 the Council convened a group of local infrastructure stakeholders to respond to a proposal to consolidate existing provision into a single organisation with a new role. During this process the Macc Board offered to ‘put whole organisation on the table’ and restructure all aspects of the organisation - services, management, governance and premises. (The full list of stakeholders involved in this process is included in Appendix 1)
- Community Network for Manchester closed in June 2011.
- In autumn 2011 the City Council confirmed that it would proceed to invest in the restructuring and development of Macc as the lead infrastructure agency.
- During this time Macc also took the lead on submitting a bid to the national Transforming Local Infrastructure fund launched by the Office for Civil Society. This was based on a partnership of 14 local organisations and designed to expand the development beyond the brief established by the City Council. The bid was confirmed as successful in January 2012. (The list of partners is included in Appendix 1)
- Manchester Youth Volunteering Project closed in late 2011 and undertook to handover its learning and assets to the new Volunteer Centre which launched in January 2012.

Despite all these changes to the infrastructure, the voluntary sector in Manchester has been ‘getting on with the job’. Grass roots organisations have been the most consistent throughout all the changes: people and organisations have come and gone but the grass root organisations are still there, still surviving and still providing a valuable service to their communities.

# The Consultation Process

To achieve the aims of the consultation a process was designed which allowed voluntary sector organisations from across Manchester to express their views, needs, issues, concerns and to make recommendations. The process was designed to ensure that groups, no matter how large or small, whether from one area or from another were able to feed in their views.

## Method

Round-table consultations were organised across Manchester in Levenshulme, Wythenshawe, Beswick, and the city centre. The locations were selected to gain maximum opportunity and impact by reaching as many organisations as possible.

Six consultation events were held, with 63 delegates attending from 49 local voluntary and community sector organisations.

Attendance at the consultations varied with some better attended than others. Where the groups were smaller, the opportunity was taken to dig further into the information gaining a more in-depth and detailed view from those taking part.

## Principles

The consultation was carried out using three main principles;

1. **Engage:** It is vital that people felt engaged in the consultation. The key to making sure that people felt engaged was to ensure participants understood what was being asked of them and how that would affect them. This process of engagement has been shown to raise the confidence of those taking part helping them feel able and/or want to contribute.
2. **Challenge:** While it was important to facilitate and empower participants to express their views, it was equally important to challenge views that were deemed unrealistic; based on assumptions; or destructive/not relevant to the consultation.
3. **Flexibility:** Although the consultations were structured it was important that participants were listened to. For that to happen the structure had to be flexible to take in the diverse range of views into consideration. The delivery was adapted to meet the needs of the participants involved.

## Consultation Headings

The facilitation style used was structured yet simple - to ask questions and encourage discussions around the following headings. The facilitation style included asking questions in different ways to accommodate the three main principles shown above.

Some of the main questions asked are indicated below:

- **Understanding the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Manchester**
  - What do you know about Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Manchester?

- **Support from Macc**

- What support do you need and/or want from Macc in order to be more effective in what you do?
- What specific support do you need around commissioning, capacity building, community engagement?

Note: Volunteering had its own separate consultation those taking part in this consultation were not encouraged to talk about it at this consultation in as much depth although some overlapping views were noted.

- **Accountability of Macc**

- How can Macc be accountable?

## Key findings and Recommendations

The key findings are structured around the key questions asked of those taking part in the consultations. There were other views which were expressed which participants put forward some of which don't fit neatly under the three main areas of questioning and where relevant these have been included.

A summary of the main findings is provided against each of the key question areas and quotations from those taking part are included where they illustrate or bring to life a particular finding.

Recommendations are shown after the key finding to make it easier for the reader to understand more about why the recommendation has been made.

1. Understanding the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Manchester.
2. Support from Macc.
3. Commissioning.
4. Community Engagement.
5. Capacity Building.
6. Training.
7. Accountability of Macc.

### **1: Understanding the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure in Manchester**

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In the consultation the history of the voluntary sector infrastructure over the past 15 years to present day was discussed.

In most cases the discussion about the history of the infrastructure came up naturally, however in the cases where it didn't, the direct question was asked as to what people knew about it.

The depth of the discussions varied, dependent on who was present, but consistent throughout consultations was the need to know how Manchester Voluntary Sector evolved to where it is today. It was asked if Macc could make available a visual representation on this.

A **recommendation** would be for Macc to tell the story of how the voluntary sector infrastructure has evolved over the past fifteen years. There is an obvious need to be sensitive to how the story is told as one participant said there is a "need to be sensitive as people have fought tooth and nail to keep what they have got".

Although people are sceptical about the new infrastructure role, as the process has been Council led, there is an overwhelming support for one organisation (Macc) to be the lead on voluntary sector infrastructure. As one attendee said "it's a great opportunity to move forward".

There are concerns that sit alongside the support that it should “not make the same mistakes”. This seems to be based on the fact that the several changes in previous infrastructure organisations fragmented the sector; and with it knowledge, skills and services were lost. As someone asked “how can you get the organisations away from the service?” meaning that if there are changes in the future with Macc, (the organisation) how can Macc ensure the services will continue.

One suggested **recommendation** was to introduce an assembly which is discussed later within the report.

Another concern is whether Macc can challenge the Council, when needed/where appropriate, or will they feel compromised as the City Council are financing them.

One **recommendation** may be the way in which Macc engages with the voluntary and community sector - it can only challenge on what the sector believes. To do this it needs to know, understand and empathise with the Sector and in doing so will have the evidence, the confidence and the right to challenge.

This is a great opportunity for the sector and for Macc although it was recognised it will not be easy to co-ordinate the services that organisations have asked for within the consultation and deliver their contract.

A good way to start this new opportunity which came out in several round-table events was for Macc to build the trust and relationships with organisations and individuals by being a ‘role model’ in the way it delivers and engages with them. One participant summed it up by saying “action speaks louder than words...if Macc do so then ... majority will support them”. They also felt honesty, openness, transparency and equal partnership within a coordinated service/resource were positive traits to follow and work by.

It was acknowledged that Macc needs to raise its profile visibly and physically in order to be accessible especially to the small grass roots organisations. **Recommended** suggestions of how they can do this could include:

- Go out and meet community leaders as the consultation did not seem to represent them.
- Take a ‘road show’ into local areas or have a stall where the footfall is good, it is key (initially) “to go to the people and not expect them to come to Macc”.
- Speak to the key people who know what is going on in an area.
- Involve media – newspapers, radio, newsletters.
- ITC if the design is right.
- Outreach surgeries asking what people want, carrying out health checks.

## 2: Support from Macc

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Each consultation raised the importance of Macc having a central role to co-ordinate the infrastructure support with the emphasis on “co-ordination”.

A **recommendation** from the consultation was for Macc to be “a resource hub” where they can go to for information, advice, and support knowing that if “they can’t help directly they will know someone who can”.

There are potentially three main supporting roles which Macc can play as the central coordinated resource. These appeared to be the values, features and benefits which were the main success factors for Macc across all of the question areas.

The three main principles were:

- **Communication and translation** – a service where jargon, new and unfamiliar, sometimes emerging terms, are translated into layman terms so that organisations can understand what the terms mean to them and where they have come from. The style, frequency and method of communication will be important. Communications must take place and be open.
- **Co-ordination** – Macc should play a co-ordinating and ‘enabling’ role rather than directly delivering. This will make sure that Macc strengths and benefits are maximised through sharing them right across the City with all areas feeling the benefits. It was seen as really important that Macc “do not re-invent the wheel”, “do not make the same mistakes” as before, but “build on best practice” and provide an “enabling role”.
- **Influential with an open, transparent and trustworthy culture.** It was seen as important that the voluntary and community sector was seen as strong, united and not afraid to challenge when needed through Macc. Specifically it was important that Macc is respected and listened to by authorities as the strong capable and trusted lead for the Sector. Trust was seen as central and based on Macc being self-less, caring, open and transparent.

## 3: Commissioning

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The consultation highlighted two main **recommended** roles which Macc can play around Commissioning: as a capacity builder and as a campaigner

### 1. Capacity Building

The majority of voluntary sector groups feel they are not in a position to nor have the opportunity to tender. It was identified that Macc has a role in capacity building the sector on the commissioning process by:

- **Being a central point for information and services** capturing what is out there and what is needed.

- **Helping the sector know and show to Commissioners what it is good at.**  
One attendee highlighted “in business commissioning is called selling, the commissioners are the buyers”. Thinking along these lines the voluntary and community sector need to know what they have got to sell and is it what the buyer are looking for.
- **Developing the knowledge, skills and systems of individuals and organisations** to raise their confidence in their ability to tender or to be part of a consortium. One suggestion was to use “a mentoring approach” where people can speak to a mentor (from the voluntary and community sector or City Council) before deciding to complete the forms.
- **Co-ordinating and/or developing the most appropriate model and/or structure** for the voluntary and community sector to enable them to be in position to tender. It was suggested to look at the GMCVO Wellbeing Consortium, they are now established and advanced in their set up.
- **Co-ordinating specific training** around commissioning and building a list of preferred training providers, one participant suggested the “Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs may offer free training”. Training needs identified:
  - What is commissioning and how the process works.
  - How to know when you are ‘commission ready’ – maybe to introduce a “kitemark” to show this.
  - How to show social value.
  - Tendering/bid writing.

## 2. Campaigning

The consultations have shown a consensus of need around Campaigning, influencing or educating the commissioning bodies and prime contracting organisations to help create a level playing field for the voluntary and community sector regarding commissioning.

Given the resources available this could not be solely Macc’s responsibility, however **it is recommended** that Macc look at what support is already present or develop new ways to take this forward. One suggestion was to have “commissioning champions/tsars who role would be to assist the voluntary and community sector and the commissioners.”

The **recommendations** raised were that Macc should:

- **Build a case and campaign for intelligent commissioning that:**
  - **Assists the Commissioners to understand and be aware** of the flexibility, skills, experience and services that voluntary and community sector are providing, or could provide to help deliver public services
  - **Ensures more impact is gained from community sector involvement** in setting priorities, putting local, contact and experience weighting into tenders
  - **Influences the culture of commissioning** so that Commissioners separate their commissioning function from their service delivery function; moving from

“decision maker”/ director of outputs to the “decision enablers” / enabler of outcomes

- **Challenges Commissioners on the barriers** which affect the voluntary sector from tendering. Examples being: unnecessary processes, the amount of information required, the language used on applications, the short turn around for submission and lack of access to accurate information
  - **Advocate the need for Commissioners ‘in-house’ services** to have a similar performance/contract management process as the external ones.
  - **Seek feedback from service users, communities and providers** in order to review the effectiveness of the commissioning process in meeting local needs.
- **To encourage and promote the need to involve grass roots organisations to national organisations in their tenders.** Not only is it cost effective but it stops “the Tesco effect” when a large company moves into an area many of the small companies are forced to leave or close.

#### 4: Community Engagement

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Community engagement can be many things, from ensuring that people are able to influence the decisions, to understanding the needs and priorities of different communities. The approaches used will vary depending on the reason, the issue and the community to be engaged with.

Until recently this was the role of Community Network for Manchester (CN4M) which has now ceased operating and which has now become one of the roles of Macc. The community engagement outcomes, taken from ‘A New framework - Area Co-ordination and Third Sector Team’ (March 2011), were as follows:

- To strengthen the contribution of communities and the third sector to the achievement of the Manchester Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To support the implementation of Community Engagement Strategy and tools.
- To develop and support appropriate community engagement structures to engage effectively with communities of place, identity and interest.
- To enable communities and third sector organisations to influence decision making across the Manchester Partnership.
- To supporting community action and enabling communities to identify needs and develop solutions.
- To champion and role out good practice community engagement across the city
- To work with individuals and encourage them to take an active role in their communities.

Although it was acknowledged how difficult it is to co-ordinate community engagement and that it can only “be as good as to what people put in to it” and report back to Macc. The participants felt the consultation **recommended areas** would help Macc be more effective in community engagement. These included:

- **To identify areas and understand/be aware where representation takes place**, who is representing who, what is the purpose of their representation, how it is measured/who are they accountable to, and how effective is it. As there was confusion as to who is who, who does what and is whether there are further areas that should be represented.
- **To learn the lessons from previous and existing community engagement practice and networks**; and to improve areas where it was less successful
- **To build upon and work with existing networks and other local infrastructure organisations** to offer a co-ordinated approach across the city. A co-ordinated approach would ensure that community engagement continued and the information protected which was still productive if changes happen again to the lead organisation. This would protect the contacts, community, information, knowledge, structure and service as well as stop duplication.
- **To continue to have Manchester Community Central** as the service brand as it provides information and support to build the capacity and sustainability of voluntary and community sector groups in Manchester.
- **To use different methods for engagement** whether that be formal or informal networks, forums (face to face or ITC), groups (peer support, thematic, ward or breakfast meetings), newsletters, website, and voluntary and community sector case workers to name a few. To be aware of and know who are the “gatekeeper” to access grass roots organisations.
- **To understand and be quite clear on the purpose of engagement** It is important that there is clarity as to what is the purpose of the engagement, what are the benefits to the individual/community. If they know the benefits then they can choose to attend or not.
- **To support and, where possible, resource the networks/methods with the outcome being they will/can function independently.** It is important that people, communities, organisations come together because they want to and not only because there is money to bring them together as it is more likely that the network will cease if the money is taken away. A way to encourage individuals, communities or organisations to run a network/meeting would be to give them the skills, knowledge or information that can be transferred to benefit their own organisation.
- **To improve channels of communication between the sectors.** The participants indicated that the voluntary and community sector could contribute more to overall service planning and provision if voluntary and community sector representatives were “trusted and treated as equals”. An example would be for the voluntary and community sector to have “not one seat but two seats” around the table with authorities.
- **For Macc to get the support of the voluntary and community sector to be a “collective voice” which would give them more “weight of argument”.** There were concerns that Macc might feel comprised in challenging, negotiating, lobbying, and /or advocating for the voluntary and community sector to their funder in areas such as core funding, flexible outputs and outcomes.

- **To have meaningful partnerships**, where the skills of “lateral thinking” developed in the voluntary sector could be used for the benefit of all sectors. Most thought that the relationship could and should be improved, pointing out, “we are all working to the good of the service users”.
- **To have an annual “celebration event”, or “conference” or “Assembly”** to “show what the voluntary and community sector” has to offer and what it has achieved and to set where it wants to go. It was suggested that this could be linked up with the existing celebration events such as Lord Mayor’s, Manchester day etc.

### Rules/principles of engagement

It is important that there are clear set of guiding principles on community engagement. Examples of this would be:

- Consistency – having information in one central place that is open to all voluntary and community sector organisations and where appropriate other sectors.
- To respect the needs of those who want to be engaged
- To ensure that all communities have the opportunity to be effectively involved.
- To ensure individuals have the confidence, knowledge and skills to engage.
- To translate ‘heavy’ jargon documents into an accessible format containing simple language.
- To share best practice and “top tips”.
- To manage expectations - to go back to basics on how people work together
  - Build a culture of sharing, trust and honesty
  - Clear understanding of roles/guidance of role
  - A clear plan with what a group or individual wants to achieve and how will they know they have achieved it based around a clear structure (may be capacity building needs here)

## 5: Capacity Building

Manchester Community Central provides information and support to build the capacity and sustainability of voluntary and community sector organisations in Manchester. The service works closely with other local infrastructure organisations to offer a co-ordinated approach to support across the city. Information and support is available via a telephone information service and on their website. This service is managed by Macc.

There was overwhelming support for this service in its current format, however it was recognised there may be a need for Macc to carry out face to face work if there is a shortage of delivery organisations due to the funding cuts. The participants **recommended** areas of development support needed and how Macc could structure this support as shown below:

- **It was suggested that a health check could be used to assess the organisations needs.** Participants acknowledged the difficulty Macc will have in

providing the much needed support for grass roots organisations across the city, due to the limited resources available compared to the number of voluntary and community sector organisations. It was suggested that Macc could introduce “different levels of support” dependent at what stage of development the organisations (especially the grass roots groups) was in. It was agreed that organisations would need more intense one to one support at certain times in their organisations development, usually at the beginning and/or crisis point.

- **It suggested to have a “market place” where organisations/individuals could exchange specialism, where resources could change hands and organisations** It was mentioned that The Scarman Trust tried a similar activity called ‘Can do’ it was suggested that Macc look into how beneficial this was to organisations and individuals.

## 6: Training

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It was acknowledged that training is still an important role for Macc to coordinate and/or deliver where appropriate. The suggested main **recommended areas** are;

- **The importance to ensure there are different ways to deliver training** whether this be formal (accredited or non accredited) to informal. For example one to one, online and groups whether that be peer support, thematic, within existing networks and/or meetings (i.e. ward meetings).
- **The need for training to be affordable** “so money is not a barrier”, the cost discussed ranged from Free to £25. Another suggestion was to utilise the resources of the private sector such as training rooms, sponsorship or negotiate free spaces on their training if appropriate.
- **An organisation training wants/needs could be linked to the “health checks”**. Below are examples what participants envisaged what training they would like Macc to co-ordinate:
  - Equality Act – to help organisations know what their obligations and enhancement can be
  - Bid writing – especially for smaller organisations to understand the language, what are funders asking for/want to know
  - Commissioning – which has been mentioned previously within the report
  - Business planning – more funders are wanting to see business plans which the voluntary and community sector are unsure what should be in them and how to articulate what they do (organisations) within them (the plans)
  - Funding – what specific funding is available? To be more relevant to the needs of the organisations than general funding.
  - Impact – how can organisations show what they do? How can social value be shown and measure
  - Media – the voluntary and community sector are getting more and more in the public eye and sometimes not for the ‘right reasons’. It is important that organisations know how to handle the media good and bad (especially if something is written out of context).

## 7: Accountability of Macc

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Accountability was discussed by participants with many of the areas which they wanted Macc to be accountable identified within the findings and recommendations as areas for Macc to own/ facilitate/ co-ordinate/ arrange or oversee. However what was less clear was the specific mechanism which they wished to be used to measure and assure accountability in these and any wider areas.

One idea which was suggested several times within the consultations was **the establishment of a voluntary and community sector “Assembly”**. It was suggested that the voluntary and community sector Assembly could be “housed at Macc but they don’t own it”. The benefit of this approach was related to the importance of the voluntary and community sector retaining the knowledge, information and best practice regardless of who the lead infrastructure was and this was connected to historically the loss of knowledge, information and best practice when changes in the infrastructure lead had taken place.

The **recommendation** in this report is **to investigate the area of accountability and the measurement for it**. Further consultation work could be used; to test these areas and measures; to investigate how the accountability could work and the role, purpose and remit of any type of 'Assembly' in achieving the right level and type of accountability.

## Conclusion

This report contains the findings from the six consultation events held around various areas of Manchester. There are a lots of recommendations within this report and it has been acknowledged throughout that Macc has a difficult role to play to please everyone. However it is now up to Macc to digest and consolidate this information with their contractual obligations and to see how it could move forward by prioritising and allocating appropriate structures and resources.

Whatever Macc decide to do it is important they operate within the three main principles in supporting the Manchester voluntary and community sector roles:  
**Communication and translation, Co-ordination, and Influential with an open, transparent and trustworthy culture.**

As a couple of the participants said “it’s time to start being kind to each other” and “trust in Macc to work together” to achieve what we want to achieve. “It’s a great opportunity”.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

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### *Stakeholders involved in the City Council process*

- Macc
- Third Sector Essentials
- Manchester Council for Community Relations
- Lesbian and Gay Foundation
- Greater Manchester Youth Network
- Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation
- 4CT
- Community Network for Manchester

### *Partners in the Transforming Local Infrastructure bid*

- Macc
- Third Sector Essentials
- Manchester Council for Community Relations
- Lesbian and Gay Foundation
- Greater Manchester Youth Network
- Faith Network 4 Manchester
- Gaddum Centre
- Learning, Skills & Enterprise Network
- Manchester BME Network
- MERCi
- People's Voice Media
- The Charity Service
- TogetherWorks
- Voluntary Youth Manchester

## Appendix 2

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### List of organisations participating in the sessions

42nd Street  
Addaction  
Age Concern  
African Caribbean Care Group  
African Caribbean Mental Health Services  
Barnardo;s  
BME Network  
British Red Cross  
Cheetham Communities Together  
Christie/Macmillan  
CMFT Community Services  
Community Transport Manchester  
DePaul UK  
Drax the Methodist Church  
East Manchester NRT  
EMERGE  
Europia  
FC United  
Friends of Chorlton Meadows  
Get Experienced  
GIO  
Greater Manchester Youth Network  
Groundwork  
Imperial War Museum  
Irish Community Care  
Kenyon Area Residents Association  
Lightbowne Action Group  
Macc  
Make It Happen  
Mancshester Adult Education  
Manchester Cathedral  
Manchester City Council  
Manchester Events Volunteers  
Manchester Generation Project  
Manchester Methodist Church  
Manchester Museum  
Manchester Young Lives  
North Manchester Black Health Forum  
Outlook (Lifeline)  
Praxis Care  
Rusholme & Fallowfield Community Forum

## Appendix 2 continue:

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Scouts  
Shelter  
South Manchester User Group  
The Pankhurst Centre  
Third Sector Essentials  
Trans Forum Manchester  
Tree of Life  
WAC (Water Adventure Centre)

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