

## Roundtable Event with Salford City Mayor – Paul Dennett



Date: **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

Time: **12:30 – 15:00**

Venue: **Salford Lads and Girls Club, 1 Ignatious walk, Salford, M5 3RX**

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### Introduction

Alison Page from Salford CVS began the roundtable by extending appreciation to all attendees and thanking City Mayor Paul Dennett for being available and willing to participate. We are fortunate as a sector in Salford to have such access and influence over the Mayor.

Attendees then introduced themselves and which organisation they were representing. It was emphasised that Paul Dennett was attending as the Mayor of Salford, not the Mayor of Salford City Council.

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### Paul Dennett's Presentation:

City Mayor Paul Dennett began by providing a broad description of the development of the Council's corporate plan, including the underpinning financial picture, alignment with the Greater Manchester Strategy, the Workforce Strategy and the Annual Directorate Business Plans.

It was emphasised that, although financial pressures within Salford and in the wider Greater Manchester Health and Social Care system present real risk and uncertainty over the potential of delivering aspects of the plan, the Mayoral team and the wider council remain committed to their [values](#) and to the people of Salford.

Key points from his presentation include:

### **Delivering Good Growth:**

- An extended period of neoliberal policies in local and national spending have proven antithetical to reducing inequality and improving the lives of residents in Salford.
- Emphasis on the need for an inclusive economy, sustainable employment, and good pay, where the benefits and opportunities of the city's growth are shared more widely.
- Complexity with devolution and Greater Manchester's investment management must be managed properly.

### **Providing a Good Home for All:**

- Recognition of the housing and homelessness crisis despite Greater Manchester's efforts.
- Challenges with accelerated asylum and delays in private renting sector improvements.
- Acknowledgment of the public sector's role in delivering necessary homes, and how Derive is attempting to deliver high quality, low carbon social and affordable homes.

### **Tackling Poverty and Inequality:**

- Overview of collaborative efforts over the years and how SCC is learning from those with lived experience of poverty.
- Discussion on challenges due to the cost of living, austerity, and the pandemic.
- Focus on improving academic achievement and attainment and maximising the income of residents to lift them out of poverty.

### **Making Salford a Child Friendly City:**

- Consideration for UNESCO Child Friendly City Accreditation.
- Anticipation of the awaited Ofsted report in mid-January.
- Discussion on potential benefits of galvanizing people for accreditation.
- Overarching idea that Salford a great place for children and young people to live their lives and feel safe, heard, cared for and able to flourish.

### **Improving Health and Care Outcomes:**

- Discussion on challenges with the Health and Social Care Act and ICB.
- Concerns about the deficit across GM ICB and cuts imposed by Central Govt through NHS England.
- Emphasis on retaining sovereignty of place and the importance of targeting the reduction in health inequalities through early help and intervention.

### **Creating Places Where People Want to Live:**

- Importance of creating pride of place for residents, with sustainable, healthy and accessible places for people to thrive and grow.

## **Responding to Climate Change**

- Commitment to responding to climate change, continuing with the track record in environmental policy.
  - Making the city as resilient as possible to the effects of climate change through local and regional leadership.
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## **Alison Page's Presentation**

Alison Page presented the priorities of the VCSE Sector in Salford, which were developed in 2018 in response to the strategic direction of the council. These included a focus on involvement, recognition, collaboration, value, and investment.

### **Involve:**

- Emphasis on reviewing influence in wider Integrated Care System (ICS) structures.
- Seeking a stronger role and participation in Local Authority (LA) commitments to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

### **Recognise:**

- Aiming to enhance influence in LA commitments to EDI, emphasising the need for acknowledgment and recognition of the sector's role.

### **Collaborate:**

- Improving the approach to decommissioning services by fostering better collaboration between the public and VCSE sectors.

### **Value:**

- Recognising and appreciating the value of volunteering in the city, highlighting its importance for community well-being

### **Invest:**

- Maximizing public and private investment into the VCSE sector for sustainable growth and increased positive impact.
  - Ensure that investment in the VCSE sector includes grants, access to and use of community buildings, and supports the development of relationships with commercial businesses
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The meeting then took a break for refreshments, kindly provided by Salford Lads' and Girl's Club

## **Q&A Session**

The meeting then asked pre-submitted questions to the Mayor.

Some questions were not asked or answered on the day, and therefore were asked via email and responded to by the Mayor. These questions are marked with \*

Question *	By Whom
<p>What are the plans for how the new £746,000 of Arts and Culture funding allocated to Salford will be spent, and will there be funding allocated for accessible events?</p>	<p>Kay Fairhurst <i>Salford Disability Forum</i></p>
<p><b>Answer</b></p>	
<p>The funding awarded by Arts Council England in July will fund a wide range of free to access events and activities across the city. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creative Events</b> – such as pop-up mini festivals in town centres, light up events in parks and green spaces and ‘We Invented The Weekend’ Festival.</li> <li>• <b>Make it in Salford Creative Training</b> – to support local people and creatives through creative skills development and training, for example producing creative work outdoors</li> <li>• <b>Artist commissions</b> - to work with young people in schools including SEND schools</li> <li>• <b>Health and wellbeing activity</b></li> <li>• <b>Volunteering</b> - developing inclusive opportunities for volunteers</li> </ul> <p>The project is designed to ensure accessibility is embedded within the heart of delivery. For example: activities will be free to attend/take part and delivered in accessible venues and in locations with suitable access. There is budget allocated to support costs of participants, artists or volunteers in terms of personal access costs, travel, volunteer expenses etc.</p> <p>We will also support freelancers, practitioners and artists with access needs to access grants through the government’s Access to Work scheme.</p> <p>There is budget allocated to enable translation, interpretation and alternative formats for printed/digital materials/resources. Accessibility plans will be developed which may include working towards accreditation such as the ‘Live Events Access Charter’. Project staff, volunteers and event staff will be supported to access training opportunities to promote inclusion and accessibility e.g. unconscious bias training, Deaf Awareness, anti-racism, dementia friendly etc.</p> <p>We will also ensure that creative programming and commissioning is inclusive and supports opportunities for a diverse range of artists including artists with disabilities, artists from the global majority etc.</p> <p>A project steering group will be established to inform project delivery, including a range of partner organisations with skills and expertise that will be able to support the project team and delivery partners to deliver the above.</p>	

Question	By Whom
<p>According to a statement made at the recent GM Planning Conference on the 31st of October, 'Greater Manchester is booming,' with £20 Billion investment in development.</p> <p>How does the City Mayor think that this statement can be reconciled with the data relating to child poverty, unemployment and homelessness in Salford?</p>	<p>Bruce Poole <i>Salford CVS</i></p>
<p><b>Answer</b></p>	
<p>The economic boom in Greater Manchester, as claimed, cannot be reconciled with the prevalent issues of child poverty, unemployment, and homelessness in Salford.</p> <p>He emphasised the need for a more equitable distribution of resources, and that the increases in foreign investment into Greater Manchester cannot be understood as simply a net-benefit for the residents of Greater Manchester.</p>	
Question	By Whom
<p>We have been doing some detailed client voices work with some of our homelessness clients (funded by the Holts Charity). Two significant policy issues have emerged.</p> <p>The first is about improving the clarity of the council's communication in homelessness decision letters. Officers have already committed to working with us to improve this. I'm asking here that you keep an eye on this work.</p> <p>The second issue is to persuade social housing providers not to unnecessarily rip out carpets when they re-let properties. This causes costs for newly housed homeless people through extra heating costs – or more likely, just cold properties. It causes extra costs for the council through calls on Salford Assist, delays in re-housing people in temporary accommodation, etc.</p> <p>A number of national charities are supporting a developing campaign to change social landlords' behaviour – can we ask the Mayor for his support and his good offices in influencing our local social landlords to change these practices?</p>	<p>Tom Togher <i>Salford Citizens Advice</i></p>
<p><b>Answer</b></p>	

The Mayor expressed interest in supporting this initiative, suggesting collaboration with the Strategic Housing Partnership forum.

The Mayor stressed the importance of working collectively to address issues with social landlords.

**Question**

**By Whom**

According to Data from Shelter, there are 76,000 households waiting for a home in Greater Manchester. How does the City Mayor reconcile the targets set for social housing with the huge numbers of people needing affordable housing?

Jo Walby  
*Mustard Tree*

**Answer**

Mayor highlighted challenges with land value uplift, developers' profits, and the need to explore alternative solutions, including potentially buying houses from developers.

He emphasised the complexity of the issue and the importance of collaborative efforts.

**Question \***

**By Whom**

With regards to the regeneration of Pendleton, we are seeing prices and rents at an all-time high. Emmaus Salford, currently a Community Hub and providing housing for 25 people who have experienced homelessness, is itself being made homeless.

The City Council state they are working with us, but nothing has been proposed yet, which makes the charity very unsettled. Can you help?

Jackie Smith  
*Emmaus*

**Answer**

The longstanding regeneration plans for Pendleton have brought about significant, and much needed, investment into one of the most deprived parts of the city. Much of this investment has gone into existing social housing in Pendleton to bring them up to the Decent Homes standard. Other investment has improved the quality and choice of housing, improved the public realm, provided new and improved greenspaces, parks and new children's play facilities, and 200 of 500 new homes built are let at affordable rents. There are also plans to build a Youth Zone in Pendleton that will provide young people access to incredible facilities including a state-of-the-art gym, recording studio, rock climbing wall, sensory room and employability support.

As a consequence of the national housing and homelessness crisis the housing waiting lists still has 5,000 people waiting for affordable homes. With the help of local Registered Providers and the council's own local housing company *Dérive Salford*, we must continue to increase the supply of truly affordable housing in our city for Salford residents. Providing these homes is the best mechanism we have to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, tackle soaring costs in the housing market, ensure housing standards and keep a check on skyrocketing rents.

As part of this commitment to new affordable housing delivery, 14 'move on homes' have been developed by *Dérive* and *For Housing* to be allocated to rough sleepers or at risk of rough sleeping, with a further 24 in the pipeline for delivery in the next 12 months.

The site of the council owned building that has been let to *Emmaus* on a short-term agreement, has always been included in the regeneration plans for *Pendleton*. Whilst plans have been submitted for the next phase of development including a further 146 new affordable homes, this does not include the *Emmaus* site and plans for the site to develop an *Extra Care* scheme are still being drawn up. The short-term agreement with *Emmaus* has been extended to reflect this position, and we commit to continue to work with *Emmaus* to support, in any way we can, finding alternative suitable accommodation, and I have asked officers to contact you directly to continue dialogue.

Question	By Whom
<p>Considering the spotlight on GM regarding the safety of women and girls in custody, and the report into local authorities failing in dealings with victims of child sexual abuse; can you confirm your commitment to ensuring that the health and wellbeing of victims / survivors in Salford is a priority?</p>	<p>Michelle Warburton <i>Salford CVS</i> on behalf of Duncan Craig <i>We are Survivors</i></p>
<p><b>Answer</b></p>	
<p>The Mayor affirmed that the health and wellbeing of victims/survivors in Salford is a top priority. He mentioned ongoing work and efforts to address issues related to women and girls in custody, citing the <i>Pendleton</i> police station situation as an example where pressure is being applied.</p>	
Question	By Whom
<p>There is a growing evidence base showing that culturally appropriate mental health service provision is more effective, efficient and timely when delivered by the VCSE sector than in parts of the statutory sector. How can you help to move</p>	<p>Jonny Wineberg <i>We Stand Together</i> <i>Community Futures</i> <i>Trust CIC</i></p>

funds into the VCSE sector so that residents can get better value for public funds?	<i>Jewish Action for Mental Health</i>
<b>Answer</b>	
<p>The Mayor acknowledged the challenges in increasing spending but mentioned that various options are being explored to increase funding for mental health services. He stressed the importance of finding effective ways to allocate funds to ensure better value for public funds.</p>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
Who was consulted and how many Salford-based grassroots / frontline charities received money from the £3.2 million waste levy funding that the council allocated to alleviating poverty in Salford?	Jennifer Anne Smith <i>Salford Loaves and Fishes</i>
<b>Answer</b>	
<p>The Mayor provided insights into the quick mobilization and consultation efforts, focusing on anti-poverty initiatives such as Salford Assist. He emphasized the importance of addressing poverty-related issues promptly and efficiently.</p> <p>The Mayor agreed with the point however, that the VCSE sector in Salford is well equipped to deal with funding allocation at very short notice and should not be excluded from any process due to perceived time constraints.</p>	
<b>Question *</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
How do you (The Council) ensure fairness and equity in resource allocation to VCSE sector organisations serving ethnically diverse communities in Salford, including those who live in Salford but use services outside the area?	Circle Steele <i>Wai Yin Society</i>
<b>Answer</b>	
<p>Over the past several years, the council has had to implement vast budget savings. Together with the changing and growing population in Salford and the need to deliver high quality and responsive public services, the council has had to focus even more closely on its key priorities (The Great Eight), which guides the council's budget setting process and where limited resources are allocated.</p>	



To inform this process, all service areas across the council, in consultation with their respective lead members, undertakes rigorous business planning and performance management to make sure that the council remains focused on supporting the ambitions for the city and making the most of the reduced resources now available. This process considers a range of factors in determining resource allocation including the funding available to the council, population and demographic changes (including amongst ethnically diverse communities), levels of need and service demand and consultation etc

In addition, when the council does seek to commission services externally including from the VCSE sector, we follow robust procurement and commissioning rules and processes that applies to all spending allocations with third parties including VCSE organisations.

The rules are in place to ensure fairness and equal treatment of all bidders and provide value for money for local taxpayers. The council's constitution sets out the rules governing the strategic management of 3rd party spend. These Contractual Standing Orders (CSOs) contain the specific rules for different levels of spending and the procedures on how services should be undertaken by, or on behalf of, the council.

Following these processes and rules robustly ensures the council can demonstrate fairness and equity in the allocation of its finite resources and provides transparency and accountability for the way decisions are made.

Question	By Whom
Does the City Mayor agree that building strong partnerships with our sector is a way of avoiding such leakage and how does this correlate with the insourcing of Salford-only based VCSE organisations?	Lisa Dickinson <i>Aspire</i>
<b>Answer</b>	
The Mayor agreed with the importance of strong partnerships and clarified that insourcing is intended to address inefficiencies and create a more robust system. He stressed the need for dialogue and collaboration to understand concerns and find mutually beneficial solutions.	
Question *	By Whom
<p>The Council has published its Insourcing Framework, but the internal process of implementation and decision making remains unclear.</p> <p>Recent experience of VCSE members subject to the framework has been poor communication, lack of openness and transparency, drawn out timescales causing extreme</p>	Michelle Warburton <i>Salford CVS</i>

<p>anxiety leading to workforce attrition and financial and business instability.</p> <p>Can the City Mayor give his reassurance that the process for implementation and decision-making will be published alongside the framework?</p>	
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**Answer**

As we briefly discussed, it is my belief that council services should be delivered by the organisation best placed to meet the needs of the local people in terms of ensuring safety, quality, responsiveness, standards, and providing high employment standards for employees, which could be either through direct council provision or delivery through VCSE organisations.

To support the existing process for determining service delivery models, the council has developed a supporting internal guide for services (the Insourcing Appraisal Framework) as a tool to help inform those decisions, as part of the usual way any option appraisal is undertaken.

However, the framework is for guidance only to support services to review delivery arrangements and develop business cases (as appropriate), when contracts come up for renewal. Decision making remains vested with the City Mayor and Cabinet in the usual way.

I acknowledge concerns and perceptions of how this might have been applied in practice, and absolutely commit to ensuring that good commissioning and procurement is the standard across the organisation – including collaboration and co-design with the VCSE sector where appropriate. But none of that takes away the council’s legal requirement to undertake legally compliant and good practice procurement in how we invest public funds (which includes consideration of all service delivery options) and our commitment to balanced, objective and evidence-based decision making.

<b>Question *</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
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<p>Please can you update us on the work to add to/amend the Social Value Portal metrics, so they are more appropriate for VCSE organisations?</p> <p>Can you also update us on the review of costs to access the portal and the pause on payments whilst these issues are resolved?</p>	<p>Phil East <i>Salford Foundation</i></p>
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**Answer**

As discussed previously and as communicated by the Director of Policy & Performance in August, following approval by the Lead Member for Finance, Support

Services and Industrial Relations in June, the SVP TOMS, guidance and help text has been updated, in line with discussions and agreement earlier this year with Michelle from Salford CVS as follows;

- SCC6 (NT17) Number of voluntary hours donated to support VCSEs (excludes expert business advice) This will remain in its current format to retain its proxy. Help text to the guidance updated to read 'Please note this measure should include hours of volunteering delivered by paid staff during paid staff time, or given time in lieu, only.'
- SCC6a - This additional TOM added in as 'Number of volunteer hours provided by volunteers (i.e. not paid staff) in the delivery of the relevant services/activities. Help Text to the guidance updated to read 'Please note this is to capture hours donated by volunteers and facilitated by organisations to support the delivery of service'.
- SCC7b - Number of new local businesses added to your supply chain – non-financial measure. Amended to the following as requested: 'Number of new Salford businesses added to your supply chain'.
- SSC8a - Added as 'Total amount (£) spent with VCSEs within your supply chain' Which carries a proxy value of £0.12 per pound. Help text to the guidance and TOMS updated to read: 'Please note this should only include spend with Salford based VCSEs as part of this contract'.

In terms of fees, the Council will continue to utilise the supplier pay fee model, as approved by the Lead Member for Finance, Support Services and Industrial Relations.

SVP have recently changed their fee structure effective from July 2023, with a confirmed annual fee of 0.2% of total contract value in Year 1, and a reduced annual fee of 0.15% of total contract value from Year 2 onwards, with a minimum fee of £750 and maximum fee of £7,500 (excluding VAT).

Given that this decision and fee structure was only agreed with SVP and approved by Lead Member in June of this year, this is to be applied to contracts let thereafter, effectively from July 2023.

The temporary suspension agreed by the Director of Policy & Performance was to allow the Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Industrial Relations to take decisions and grant approvals on a number of matters, including but not limited to both of the above.

Question	By Whom
What difference do you think the country electing a Labour Government would make on the ground to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups in Salford?	Alison Page Salford CVS

## Answer

Difficult to predict, but the Mayor expressed the belief that a Labour government would likely address poverty and inequality better than the current government.

Alison Page concluded the event by expressing gratitude for the fruitful discussion. She highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between the VCSE sector and the City Mayor's office to address pressing issues and work towards a more inclusive and resilient Salford.

The event concluded with Mayor Dennett expressing his willingness to include the VCSE sector in his manifesto, acknowledging the challenges and potential collaborations discussed during the roundtable.

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## Appendix



Roundtable  
Attendance 11.12.20