A Tale of Two Cities: Complex Problems, Complex Solutions
A Response to the August, 2011 riots in Salford & Manchester.
A Tale of Two Cities: Complex Problems, Complex Solutions.
It is the nature of the world we live in that the riots of August, 2011, the seismic shocks of which reverberated around the world, are now barely remembered. There was of course an official report, a report which at the interim stage was sharp and incisive, but by the end had little new or interesting to say and seems to have been safely buried. So is there anything we can learn from what happened in those few days summer days? There is probably little new to learn, but there is much that reinforces what we already know, and what public policy, at least at national level, continues to ignore as reality yet again fails to oblige by coinciding with government ideology.

Riots of course are nothing new. They have been a consistent feature of English society for hundreds of years, so we really shouldn't be that surprised when from time to time they erupt. We always look for simple solutions, simple explanations of causes, but the mechanics of riots, why they happen in one place rather than another for example, are complex. Having said that, riots are not random acts. They do happen for a reason, because of something. These riots started off in London as a response to a particular very localised event but then spread across the country. Whatever the original motivation, they appeared to end up as the riots of the Thatcher generation, the greed riots, the something for nothing riots.

It does seem to be a question worth asking. Why did thousands of largely young people, if only for a few hours, think it was ok to just take what they wanted, or worse still in many cases, just to take something whether they wanted it or not because they could. As the austerity policies of the current government risk pushing us back into another lost generation, this study centres around two physically indivisible cities, where rioting took place, but in locations only a few miles apart, apparently with very different drivers. It centres around the participants themselves, where they came from, and their justification or rationalisation of what they did.

Some of the conclusions particularly around early years and young people reinforce much that has gone before. Indeed when the ten local authorities of Greater Manchester asked a team of eminent economists to say what the city-region needed to do to improve its economic performance, their number one priority was to invest in better interventions with early years. Others are more questionable. At a time when public service is being fragmented and commercialised at an unprecedented rate, is the establishment of police commissioners, rather than the better integration of policing with other public services, really the way to go?

There will always be a tendency of those who took part in the riots to justify their actions. They can't. There will always be a tendency from some to take responsibility away from the rioters, and place the blame elsewhere, particularly on broader societal factors. We shouldn't. But we can use what happened in 2011 to fashion place-based solutions that improve the life prospects of many of our most excluded citizens. We can and we should. This study contributes to the debate about how we might to do that, and should be used to that end whilst there is still chance.

Foreword

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council

“We always look for simple solutions, simple explanations of causes, but the mechanics of riots, why they happen in one place rather than another for example, are complex.”
The August 2011 riots in Manchester and Salford brought to the surface deep seated and complex issues in our society that demanded in-depth analysis. To seek to understand the riots is not to condone the actions of those involved. The impact of the riots was felt at all levels in our community, and so reflection upon the causes and potential solutions not only provided, but necessitated, the forging of links in order to engage a wide range of people in a debate about complex social policy issues.

The Social Action & Research Foundation has built upon extensive engagement with a diverse range of partners to create recommendations to strengthen and develop existing structures in order to bring positive, long-term and cost-effective solutions. The measures outlined will seek to create communities that are better able to adapt, transform and deal with challenges as they arise. We have focused on five main policy areas and put forward potential recommendations within each area that contribute towards these aims:

**Family Policy:** Early intervention is essential in order to create the protective environment for children and families to develop resilience. To achieve this, we must develop a strengths-based and community rooted model of family policy.

**Young People:** We need to improve young people’s resilience and develop their capabilities in order to provide the supportive environment in which all young people can achieve their full potential. This includes improving literacy between transition from primary to secondary school, reducing school exclusions and tackling youth unemployment through an integrated strategic needs assessment.

**Police:** The connection between the police and communities can be strengthened through enhancing democratic accountability and ensuring that a wide range of alternative perspectives are included within the process. Furthermore, a public review into the effectiveness of Stop and Search across Greater Manchester should be undertaken.

**Restorative Justice:** Greater Manchester is in a unique position to build upon existing innovations in restorative justice, and strengthen the support for victims and communities to play a more central role. Evaluation of emerging community justice panel pilots can provide the necessary evidence and insights to ensure that interventions that work are mainstreamed within our local criminal justice system.

**Hot-Housing Public Policy:** A new approach to developing public policy that provides an over arching strategic framework, whilst allowing the space for creativity and flexibility required to enable the local expertise to flourish, should be explored. An example of this is the creation of a micro-finance model that empowers those living in deprived communities to develop entrepreneurial ideas, build economic and social resilience and reduce dependency.
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The Social Action & Research Foundation (SARF) is a social enterprise that co-produces policy solutions with different communities in order to eradicate poverty. We achieve this by building on our grass-roots connections, collaborating with those that live and work in communities and through strategic influence at all levels of the decision-making process.

SARF envision a different society than the one we are currently offered that privileges the market above all else. We want one in which the economy is made to work for society. In order to achieve this, our shared public services must be co-produced alongside communities contributing their essential knowledge to create an effective and accountable welfare state, which promotes active equality at a local level, and in which the voice of those experiencing poverty is truly valued.

These are challenging times for many people, and we find ourselves at a critical juncture in which innovative and robust ideas are required. SARF is excited to be in a position to contribute. In order to achieve this, collaboration will be essential across all sectors. A major partner is our home of the Biospheric Foundation. As tenants here, we feel we are part of a unique project, creating new ideas that contribute to social and environmental change in the Blackfriars neighbourhood and beyond. By developing a collaborative approach, we will provide interdisciplinary insights to shape policy solutions that are both innovative and pragmatic.

Our most important collaboration will be through strengthening and developing partnerships with those that live and work in our many communities. SARF believes that the best approach to developing policy solutions is through collaboration with those experiencing poverty. We want to democratise policy expertise and reconstruct the terms of debate, involving people not as objects to study, but as co-producers of new ideas.

This will involve collective mutual learning, which includes equipping the people that we work alongside with the skills to develop action research projects and translating policy in order for people to participate in the development and implementation of local solutions. We will share this work nationally and once established, our aim is to invest in practical solutions that have been identified by the communities we work with. Through this we will work together with our communities to achieve the transformation required to address poverty.
The independent Tale of Two Cities report builds upon a range of different methodological approaches, which have involved engagement with those communities that were directly involved or affected by the riots. This builds upon a central principle of SARF: that the key to developing policy solutions is involving the people that live and work in our communities, who can bring particular insights and perspectives that are often neglected in public policy. The riots provided a unique opportunity to engage a wide range of people in a debate about complex social policy issues and SARF is grateful to all those who contributed.

**Methodology**

The methodology that this report is based on includes:

- On the night of the riots in Manchester, we acted as an independent community observer. This involved witnessing the gathering of the initial crowds, the start of the violence and ended with the conclusion of the evening when the police curtailed the rioters. Throughout this period, we interviewed a number of rioters, male and female, during the course of the evening to hear first-hand some of the motivations behind the disturbances. We also participated in the Manchester Riots’ Clean up, which involved over a thousand volunteers coming together to clear the city centre the following day.

- As part of the Guardian and London School of Economics’ Reading the Riots project, we undertook several semi-structured interviews with those directly involved in the riots in order to discover the reasons that motivated them. Furthermore, during this time we spent a month speaking to people across Manchester and Salford in a range of venues including community centres, pubs, and libraries and also in the houses of several parents whose sons were in custody and documented these encounters.

- SARF hosted the Manchester and Salford Reading the Riots Community Conversations. This aimed at exploring the deeper social issues that the riots have revealed to develop some new thinking that might tackle them. Over 250 participants attended the events, including residents, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, academics and statutory agencies. Participants engaged in debate with senior panelists from Greater Manchester Police and both Salford and Manchester City Councils, as well as VCS representatives.

- Guided by the issues that were raised through the Community Conversations, we met with communities, practitioners, academics and decision-makers in Salford and Manchester in order to gain critical insights and develop our learning in order to be able to make policy recommendations that are rooted in practice and build upon the knowledge that exists within the community.

- We have undertaken a literature review of promising practice that is happening across the world, as well rooting our policy within wider academic studies. This has involved a study of the existing policy framework, through primary and secondary sources, as well as an exploration of its drivers, both at a national level and within Greater Manchester.
The August 2011 riots were arguably the most serious disturbances in the UK for at least a generation. Elements of what occurred were fairly instantly recognisable to anyone who had any experience of previous riots. But there were other aspects – not least the scale of the rioting and the speed with which they spread – which set them apart.

There were a great many instant diagnoses of the problems that underpinned the riots, but government set itself against any form of major official inquiry. In particular, it appeared that the general political response to the rioters themselves was to dismiss them as ‘criminals pure and simple’, requiring of no further action other than a swift and robust response by the criminal justice system.

It was against this backdrop that Reading the Riots was established. The brainchild of the Guardian newspaper, it was inspired by a study into the Detroit riots in 1967 which involved a collaboration between the Detroit Free Press newspaper and Michigan’s Institute for Social Research. The Guardian approached the London School of Economics (LSE) as a potential partner to conduct a major study into the causes and consequences of the summer riots.

The aim was to produce high quality evidence-based social research that would help explain why the civil disorder spread across England. The first phase of Reading the Riots was completed in three months, and used confidential in-depth interviews with 270 people who were directly involved in the riots across six cities, including Manchester and Salford. The picture painted was complex, but pointed to a variety of factors: alienated youth marginalised from mainstream opportunities, yet much influenced by a materialistic culture; distrustful and sometimes openly hostile and antagonistic relationships with the police; impoverished local communities perceiving themselves to be bearing the brunt of financial restrictions and declining economic prospects.

The first phase of the study was followed in early 2012 with a series of ‘community conversations’ – essentially grassroots-led locally-based discussions of the riots and the initial results of the research. The aim of these events was to explore the causes of the riots from the perspective of those in the communities most affected, and to stimulate discussion around the identification of the policy areas of most concern to local communities following the riots. Of the eight community conversations that were held, two of the most successful were those in Manchester and Salford, not least thanks to the organisational skill and networks of the Social Action and Research Foundation.

These two events raised common issues – again linked to the nature of policing, cuts in public services and, centrally, concerns for young people and their futures – and also illustrated some of the important differences in the disturbances in Manchester and Salford. Above all, what these and the other community conversations illustrate is the importance of local ownership of the core policy responses to such significant social issues. All too often ‘solutions’ are imposed by outsiders and however well-intentioned such interventions may be, they are almost inevitably destined to fail. It is precisely the local focus and practically-oriented concern of this report that make it so valuable.
A Guardian/ICM poll commissioned as part of the Reading the Riots study found that 86% of the public cited poor parenting as the main cause of the riots. Alongside ‘criminality’, it was the factor most likely to be blamed by the public. Indeed, David Cameron blamed ‘a lack of proper parenting, a lack of proper upbringing, a lack of proper ethics, a lack of proper morals.’ This is consistent with the wider narrative of a Broken Britain, which is populated by single parents, broken families and teenage parents that are unable to control their children - young people who are portrayed as feckless and wild and seen as the main agitators of anti-social and criminal behaviour.

This section will include an assessment of family policy and how this can be more inclusive and effective in reaching the most disconnected members of our community, whilst developing insights into building resilience within our families and communities.

The public policy narrative following the riots has blamed poor parenting, thus creating cultural stigma for so-called ‘troubled families,’ pushing them further to the margins and by focusing on a deficit model, undermines the potential to build upon the strengths that do exist. There is little evidence to support this perception, as family make-up was not gathered in terms of data collected on those rioters who were arrested, sentenced or processed. Qualitative evidence from some young people and parents of those involved in the riots suggests the story is not as clear cut, and that many parents did indeed try to keep their young people indoors to prevent them from committing offences. The further demonization of families living in poverty, whom potentially have complex needs, re-enforces an environment that is already hostile. These families are deemed ‘hard-to-reach’ or ‘troubled,’ yet public policy often neglects to consider some of the underlying causes that may weaken resilience in families and contributes to the persistent poverty levels we see in some of our conurbations. We need to consider how to best break the cycle of deprivation that can contribute to some individuals making less than positive choices.

Troubled Families?
Families that have troubles are constructed within the dominant government rhetoric as families that cause troubles, and this is not always the case. Our cities need to adopt a more nuanced approach than this. For example, 57.2 percent of single parents are in work, up 13 percentage points since 1997<sup>2</sup> and 61 per cent of children in poverty have working parents, up from 45 percent from the mid-nineties.<sup>3</sup> If we want these families to create stable, secure and protective homes for themselves and their children then it would seem prudent to create an environment that develops a strengths based model, which builds on the capabilities of these families. We must also ensure services are delivered by a wide range of agencies, coordinated in an effective way by local authorities. We must ensure that services are delivered by a wide range of agencies, coordinated in an effective way by local authorities, which involves a key role for the wider community and VCS. This would lead to a reduction in the numbers of

**Recommendations:**
1. Early intervention is essential in order to create the protective factors for children and families to develop resilience.
2. Greater Manchester should develop a strengths-based and community rooted model of family interventions to complement existing policy.
3. Statutory sector agencies should reflect upon commissioning for more social value and work more closely with VCS agencies that have established relationships with disconnected communities.
families that are the most disconnected from services and that experience the worst social outcomes, whilst beginning to tackle entrenched poverty in our communities. This poverty impacts on children in a range of different ways, for instance, children eligible for free school meals are more likely to be excluded from schools, have lower levels of literacy, and more likely to end up in custody, all issues highlighted later on in our report. A critical factor behind this is that in areas of deprivation, families are at more at risk as family and community protective factors may be weakened. Community risk factors such as high levels of unemployment, lack of social networks and a lack of recreational activities coupled with family risk factors like living in a family experiencing financial stress, overcrowded houses and low basic skills increases vulnerability to lower achievement and aspirations, as well as criminality. This pattern is discernible through the map in figure 1, which shows a clear correlation between deprivation and those getting involved in the riots.

Quite often, solutions such as having a lead agency to coordinate interventions that support families are overlooked. It is critical that there is one point of contact for a family to be able to develop long term relationships of trust with. This will increase the possibility of breaking down the barriers that often exist between families that have been more difficult to engage in mainstream service provision. Good practice such as schemes like Home Start where volunteers regularly visit their families sometimes as often as once a week to build relationships and instil trust should be replicated. Regular contact with families will provide more insights into seemingly small changes that might be occurring within the home, but which point to issues that require further and more in depth interventions. However, complex approaches as well as a significant cultural change in policy towards working with families are also required.

**Early Intervention**

The independent Allen Report from January 2011 showed that early intervention is essential in order to provide a ‘social and emotional bedrock’ for families and their children before problems arise. The savings that can be made from early intervention are much higher than dealing with complex families at a later stage. Dealing with families at crisis point does not save money, is not as effective and is more consuming in terms of energy and resources being poured in. For example, an evaluation of the Nurse Family Partnership (a programme targeted to support ‘at-risk’ families by supporting parental behaviour to foster emotional attunement and confident, nonviolent parenting) estimated that the programme provided savings for high-risk families by the time children were aged 15. These savings (over five times greater than the cost of the programme) came in the form of reduced welfare and criminal justice expenditures, higher tax revenues, and improved physical and mental health. However, this requires long-term commitment as the measurements of early intervention are more difficult to quantify than those interventions at crisis point that are more visible.

Investing in children from a young age has proven to be beneficial to both families and communities. According to the National Sure Start Evaluation Team Research Report, Sure Start parents have reportedly been more able to provide a ‘cognitively stimulating home learning environment, a less chaotic home environment...engaging in less harsh discipline of their children’ and having greater life satisfaction.
Other benefits included a decrease in workless households in Sure Start areas. Furthermore, research carried out by the Centre for Public Policy at Northumbria University showed that Sure Start had improved children’s speech and language, child-parent relationships and added confidence in families as units. We must build upon on the lessons of Sure Start, but look to the future. The Greater Manchester Whole Place Community Budget includes potential to be able to embed this ethos of early intervention and the Manchester Investment Fund for complex families is an example of targeted expertise and resources. It is essential that any policy framework draws in a wide range of partner agencies, but critical to its success is the need to ensure a key role for service delivery from the VCS.

**A Community-Rooted Strength-Based Model**

The Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities (SFSC) is an inclusive community-rooted and evidence-based parenting programme, which is designed to promote protective factors that are associated with good parenting and better outcomes for children. Such approaches are much more effective in creating community resilience and a sense of shared futures that impact on all stakeholders within communities. An evaluation that used the Family Environment Scale to explore family attachment, cohesion, resilience and conflict, which drew on data from 1080 parents (699 of whom had completed SFSC) concluded that SFSC was the most successful of the four model programmes evaluated in promoting family resilience and dealing with family conflict.

Many local authorities have invested in clinical-based parenting programmes that focus on behaviour modification of the child. However this approach can often neglect the role of the wider community and the strengths that already exist within the family. More community-focused parenting courses which concentrate on holistic themes including how locality impacts on families, family values and rites of passage are needed in order to complement this approach.

Parenting support programmes in Manchester and Salford should develop pathways for individuals within families to make informed choices based on a solutions based approach. Such a model develops a framework of social support that can best enable parents to make responsible choices that benefit their family and wider community. It is essential that this is rooted within the wider community by developing support networks outside the structured programme and creating circles of interdependence within communities. As a result of this dependency on the state is reduced. In light of the proposed welfare reforms, such measures will be needed more than ever, as the support that has been traditionally provided by the state is reduced.

This community-rooted approach will also bring an increase in volunteering and more specifically, improved engagement with schools that can contribute to improved educational outcomes for children living in poverty. If we can harness these communities through strengths based models of parenting and allow space for both community and family aspirations, mapping how these are intertwined, we will be in a better place to build community resilience and social capital. Through investment with community based approaches that extend beyond individual needs, it is possible to create an environment that delivers long term sustainable outcomes and stronger local economic futures. Developing the capabilities of families can bring additionality to the investment in place and encourage people to be pro-active, ensuring they have a stake in their local communities.
This can contribute towards tackling persistent poverty in areas of multiple-deprivation because families will be better equipped to articulate the needs that are required within communities, as well as co-produce services and develop more effective social structures of support. This is particularly important for Salford and Manchester, which have experienced disproportionate cuts in government funding and face an uncertain future in terms of austerity.

The deeper structural economic factors that contribute significantly towards the persistence of poverty cannot be ignored. The government’s main focus on tackling poverty is based upon reducing dependency through employment. However, as unemployment and in—work poverty remains persistently high in the North West, alternative solutions are required. Employment is a necessary condition in tackling poverty, but alone it is not sufficient. The government have set out a ‘carrot and stick’ approach to welfare through a combination of incentives and consequences to support people into work.

Through this approach, the government neglects the systemic inequalities that exist within society and therefore fails to address the necessary structural change, which is essential to deliver social justice and tackle the inequalities that are all-pervasive. These are manifested nationally in 2.67 million people who are unemployed, with many more underemployed and experiencing in-work poverty, and with the 3.8 million children who live in poverty. By providing the structures of support through the family approaches articulated above, the consequences of this will be less harshly felt in Manchester and Salford than might otherwise be the case.

References
10. Ibid, p.30
13. Ibid.
The riots were by no means a purely young person’s phenomenon. However they did raise a clear issue about the role of young people within our society, and the chances that are available for them to reach their full potential. A comment that was raised several times throughout the process was that the riots were ‘the best day of our lives’. This was underpinned by a sense of hopelessness about the future. Such a statement should shock us all and lead to consideration about what processes and systems can be put in place to provide our young people with the chances that they deserve.

This chapter will build upon our section on families to focus on three interventions at different stages of young people’s lives that could make a significant impact. This includes improving literacy between transition from primary to secondary school, reducing school exclusions and tackling youth unemployment. All these recommendations are designed to improve young people’s resilience and develop their capabilities in order to provide the supportive environment in which all young people can achieve their full potential.

Promoting Literacy in Schools
Data from young people appearing before the courts as a result of the riots revealed that only 52 percent had achieved level 4 or above in English at Key Stage 2, compared to the national average of 78.9 percent. More needs to be done to prevent pupils progressing into secondary school ill prepared and thus more likely to underachieve, which can lead to behavioural problems and worse social outcomes later in life. This is indicative of wider evidence that shows poor literacy is strongly associated with later lower achievement throughout education and continues to have an impact throughout life, further highlighting the importance of early interventions. Research suggests high economic returns measured in terms of reduced criminality, educational progression, behavioural and emotional resilience, health improvement and reduced welfare payments. The national policy landscape is supportive of such action in terms of the regulatory framework, as the new Ofsted framework which took effect from January 2012 places greater emphasis on literacy. This needs to be complemented with more practical projects that work with schools, parents and relevant VCS providers to co-produce solutions. Furthermore, the importance of libraries within this process needs to be considered.

Such interventions should be targeted and reflect on the wider factors that influence low achievement. These include the number of pupils with eligibility for free school meals, the neighbourhood employment rate and the proportion of low educational qualifications amongst parents. Schools that include high proportions of such indicators should receive appropriate support and resources that would enable a targeted approach. Alongside this, parental involvement is essential. Therefore, schools should adopt strategies that enable families to participate more in their child’s education as part of the wider family policy highlighted in the section above.

Recommendations
4. Deliver targeted support to improve literacy levels at key stage 2.
5. Develop restorative approaches in schools to reduce school exclusions and develop the resilience and responsibility of pupils.
6. Design an integrated strategic needs assessment to tackle youth unemployment that is coproduced with young people throughout the commissioning process.

Young People
Young People

Case Study: The Tutor Trust
The Tutor Trust, a Manchester-based social enterprise provides one example of an intervention that could potentially have a significant impact. The Trust is a not-for-profit broker linking undergraduates and other potential tutors with disadvantaged schools that wish to provide tuition for their pupils. It selects, trains, and insures tutors, and also handles the logistics of organising lessons. A recently announced project will work with ten schools to work with children before they get to secondary school – from next year it will help youngsters preparing for their English and maths SATs. This is being independently evaluated and can provide some essential lessons in terms of improving the literacy of pupils in Manchester and Salford.

Reducing School Exclusions
Ministry of Justice figures released based on data manually collected at the courts revealed that 10 percent of convicted rioters had been permanently excluded from schools, compared to 0.1 percent of all fifteen year olds. Furthermore, 36 percent had received one or more fixed terms exclusions compared to 5.6 percent of all pupils aged fifteen. SARF has focused upon wider social policy issues highlighted by the riots, and there is considerable evidence that shows much worse outcomes for children who are excluded from schools across a wide range of social outcomes including unemployment and chances of being in custody.

Those children excluded from school are more likely to require adult supervision than their peers; therefore removing them from the protective environment of school is likely to be counter-productive. In addition to this, Barnados estimate that a permanent exclusion costs £65,000. However keeping children in school in itself is not enough and the motivation must be to improve educational outcomes alongside other positive measures. Therefore, it makes both social and economic sense to develop interventions that reduce the number of exclusions from school, whilst continuing to ensure the priority of a safe learning environment for all pupils. In cases where exclusion becomes unavoidable, there should be more freedom for school governors to enable a phased transition to another school and provide the support that is required, whilst allowing for the exclusion not to be on permanent record.

The most recent figures available show that in 2008/9, Manchester had 4710 students temporarily excluded from primary and secondary schools, compared to 980 within Salford. In 2007/8 Salford piloted a restorative practice approach in schools and this has potential to be extended. Restorative practices in schools can drastically reduce the levels of truancy, fixed term, and permanent exclusions. The restorative approach is based upon personal relationship building with the pupils and providing them with support and resilience upon which they are better placed to overcome challenges. The protective factors are strengthened and include an increase in ability to take responsibility, problem solve and improve self-esteem. The best approaches involve trained staff (who have skills around SEN, cognitive and emotional development and cultural difference) and the use of both formal and informal restorative approaches that encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its consequences. Evidence shows that such an approach is effective; for instance in Barnet, schools trained in restorative approaches reduced fixed term exclusions by 51 percent compared to those that had not been trained, which saw a 65 percent increase.

“The riots should have been a wake up call, but weren’t...they will happen again as the current generation are lost.”
(Manchester Community Conversations Participant)
Case Study: Richmond High School, California
Since 2009, Catholic Charities of the East Bay (CCEB) has been supporting restorative practices at Richmond High School, a school in the San Francisco Bay Area with around 1,600 students, almost all of whom are from minority backgrounds. In January 2011, CCEB received significant grant funding to run a pilot project at the school to demonstrate the efficacy of instituting restorative practices in a large, urban high school. This built upon previous work that had produced a cohort of restorative practice champions and trained practitioners developing a two-pronged approach. The first set of activities, which served to demonstrate the efficacy of restorative practices and create further buy-in, consisted of taking referrals directly from administration and staff to facilitate disciplinary and conflict resolution circles, which would be led or supported by trained students and staff.

The second set of activities supported the institutionalisation of restorative practices in the school and focused on training administration and staff to use restorative practices in their everyday interactions with students and coaching teachers to use restorative practices in classrooms. This has led to a 63% reduction of in the number of fixed-term exclusions given and a strong evidence base that can contribute to further innovations in the field.

Embedding Practice into Restorative Schools
Further evidence from the Ministry of Justice figures shows that 50 percent of 10-17 year olds before the courts in the North West were eligible for free school meals compared to 16 percent of all pupils. A recent report by the Children’s Commissioner shows that children in receipt of free school meals are three times more likely to be excluded than pupils in the same cohort that do not, although poverty is likely to be a correlate and not a cause of the behavioural issues that can lead to school exclusions. What is clear is a disproportionate impact. Therefore, we would recommend that there should be targeted interventions to those schools with the highest numbers of pupils with the characteristics that are most likely to be factors in increasing the chances of exclusion, for instance children from certain ethnic minorities, children with Special Educational Needs and those children that live in poverty.

In order build a restorative school, restorative practices cannot be viewed as a ‘programme’ that is delivered. Rather it has to be embedded into the fabric of the school, including how teachers and support staff are trained and oriented, how community is intentionally built to include all members, and how policies and procedures are developed and implemented. Creating an oversight team or advisory group that includes administration, teachers, support staff, school governors and parents that are well trained in restorative practices as well as strategic direction from head teachers, can help to ensure that the school becomes and remains a restorative community.

This training should include a focus on hard skills that trainees could use immediately, such as restorative conversations and hand-shake agreements. In busy schools in which teachers have many conflicting responsibilities, two-hour sessions that could be delivered after school or during an extended lunch period are potentially most successful. This should focus on restorative solutions to student behaviour, emphasising the disproportionate impact of school discipline procedures and the impact of suspensions on future life outcomes and then teach concrete skills to use in their dealings with students.

Young People
“It was the best day of our lives”
(A young rioter from Salford)
Young People

To make all this work, key stakeholders must buy into restorative practices and change school policy away from exclusionary responses to student behaviour. The figure below sets out a framework for developing and monitoring restorative approaches in a school setting.

Figure 2: Restorative Approaches

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Restorative strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved truancy rate</td>
<td>Reduced truancy</td>
<td>Circles with chronically truant students to determine the cause of truancy &amp; develop</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>restorative action plans.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Circles with “truancy tolerant” teachers to understand effect on the school of truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved emotional safety of students</td>
<td>Reduced number of students sent out of class</td>
<td>Work with teachers who make the most referrals on strategies to de-escalate student-teacher conflict in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect students to supportive communities</td>
<td>Increased number of students returning from suspension who receive follow up</td>
<td>Re-entry and reintegration circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilise school resources to support returning students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers build relationships and positive</td>
<td>Increased number of teachers doing community building activities</td>
<td>Orientation with all teachers at the start of the year on community-building strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom environments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support for teachers on strategies as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve educational attainment of failing</td>
<td>Improve educational attainment of the worst performing 10% of pupils.</td>
<td>Circles with failing students to determine cause of truancy &amp; develop restorative action plans</td>
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Addressing Youth Unemployment

Current figures of youth unemployment are unacceptable, with up to one in five young people aged 16-24 claiming job-seekers allowance in certain ‘hot-spot areas’ in Greater Manchester. Furthermore, the figures are likely to be higher than reported, as many young people simply do not bother to sign on and belong to a hidden element of young people not engaging at all, whom operate within a shadow economy. For particular sections of our communities, this unemployment is not the sole result of the recession, but the product of long-standing structural factors that cascade through generations and reflects a deeper crisis in the economy. Therefore, in order to be able to tackle this, we need to understand both the short-term and long-term factors that cause youth unemployment and what interventions will be most effective. The best way to achieve this will be to ensure young people are at the heart of any policy or developmental work.

Young People need to be supported in order to best utilise their knowledge and expertise about the conditions that shape their lives and the contexts within which they are situated. The complexity of the issues means that there is no simple panacea. SARF proposes that an integrated strategic needs assessment is undertaken, which involves all agencies, but has young people at its core. In order to encourage a more holistic approach, this must focus on the whole range of needs that young people have independently from the services they are perceived to use. It also requires cross-border and multi-agency coordination that involves young people in the design and delivery of services. This must also include the needs of those young people that are at the point of disengagement but who are still within education,
as well as those young people aged over twenty-four who are struggling with sustainable transitions into the labour market whom will not appear in the statistics of those not in employment, education or training (NEET). Although parsimonious, the current conception of NEETS misses such nuances and furthermore, is based on a deficit model that views young people as problems, rather than as potential assets.

The integrated strategic needs assessment could be driven by a research project that is undertaken into the causes and potential solutions to youth unemployment in Manchester and Salford that involves young people as co-producers of policy. This will be most effectively delivered in partnership with VCS organisations in each respective area that have established relationships with young people. The proposed project would involve developing writing, reading and numeracy skills, as well as more specific research skills such as designing questions, data collection and analysis. This must allow for the creativity of the young people to emerge in terms of innovative methodologies. As well as providing an important evidence base, the project will also keep the participants involved in learning, develop self esteem and strengthen connections to their local community and wider civil society.

In order to ensure that young people continue to be involved in the integrated strategic needs assessment, it is important to embed their knowledge within commissioning structures. Hammersmith and Fulham is one of four Youth Innovation Zones in England, and have recently re-designed how its services operate. This involves an innovative model of commissioning young people’s services, based upon initial consultations with over 1000 young people. The consultation reviewed the proposed Youth Service delivery model. The consultations also looked at improving collaboration to improve outcomes for young people and explored geographical spread, early intervention, workforce development, progression for young people, allocation of resources and communication. Following this, the Youth Commissioners project was established, in which a group of young people have been trained in the commissioning process, enabling them to be involved in making decisions on what activities and services are funded for children and young people within the borough. The young people undertake the following:

- Drafting of Service Specifications and evaluation criteria.
- Assessment of applications.
- Feedback on projects plans against service specifications.
- Monitoring visits of the provision and provide written and verbal feedback.

The approach articulated above sets out the basis for an integrated strategic needs assessment that has young people at its heart and focuses on their capabilities. There is also potential to draw in emerging resources around this. The Youth Contract through which the government will make approximately £1 billion of funding available over the next three years is open to both the private and voluntary sector to create new employment, education and training opportunities for young people.

The Department for Work and Pensions states that local authorities should work in partnership with VCS organisations to deliver this in the most effective way. Salford and Manchester City Councils should consider providing cross-border match funding for this and provide the support and avenues of influence that are required. Furthermore, Greater Manchester is one of 21 areas of England that will receive a share of a new five-year £100 million fund to tackle youth unemployment from the Big Lottery Fund.
Young People

The areas in the initiative, known as Talent Match, have been chosen because they have high levels of unemployment among 18 to 24-year-olds. The indicative amount for Greater Manchester is £9.6 million over five years, but this is not guaranteed. Strategic support from AGMA would be beneficial.

The schemes will need to demonstrate that they will achieve outcomes such as improving access to better quality local employment and training and developing confidence and optimism in young people who have been unemployed for more than a year. It is important that a range of partners are brought together including statutory agencies, employers and colleges, although it must be driven by VCS organisations that have the connections with young people.

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   It must be noted that these will not account for ‘unofficial exclusion’ in which pupils are excluded but kept out of the figures.
18. Office for the Children’s Commissioner, (2012), Full Inquiry into School Exclusions: They Never Give Up on You” Available at: http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_561 p.23
Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the communities that it serves could greatly benefit from enhanced accountability and co-production within the way it functions. In particular, there must be focused work within deprived communities, as this is where the effects of policing are the most pronounced. The emergence of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) has the danger to reduce policing to politics and personalities. However, if delivered in partnership with the local authorities of Greater Manchester, the police and other key local partners, it provides an opportunity to improve policing policy and implementation.

This section develops learning from the riots to provide policy recommendations that are intended to create a more effective and equitable police force. This can contribute towards the Greater Manchester Strategy's priorities of strengthening a sense of place and sustaining governance including effective, efficient and accountable decision-making frameworks and delivery mechanisms. However, it is also important to note that the ability to affect crime rates is limited, as these are influenced much more significantly by socio-economic factors; therefore, we must be realistic about what can be achieved and manage expectations in terms of short term reduction of crime.

Views of the Rioters: “The police are the biggest gang out there.”
This view of the police, or variations of it, emerged frequently in 270 interviews of people who took part in August's riots across cities in England. Of those participants questioned for the Reading the Riots study, 85 percent said policing was an “important” or “very important” factor in why the riots happened. This compares with 68 percent of the general public. At the Community Conversations, there were similarly different and opposing emphases on the causes of the riots – on poor police relations, or criminal involvement. However, there was acceptance that this reflected a complex pattern, which is a welcome comparison to the government’s assertion that it was due to 'criminality pure and simple.'

We must remember the impact that the riots had on many victims that live in the communities that were affected and always consider the needs of law-abiding citizens. However, whilst it could be argued that the views of the rioters were a post-event rationalisation from criminals, in order to avoid riots in the future, it is of critical importance to gain an understanding of what motivated people to create destruction in their own communities. To dismiss such opinions would also appear to reflect an unwillingness to ensure that all voices are heard. The feeling amongst some people that there is a police abuse of power suggests an issue with sections of the community that the police have not been successful in developing a dialogue with. At the Salford Community Conversation it was noted that previously good relations between local officers and young people had disappeared, despite official police satisfaction levels increasing to 86 percent following the riots.

**Recommendations**

7. Enhance existing democratic accountability in Greater Manchester through strengthening the role of Police and Crime Panels in order to best scrutinise the new Police and Crime Commissioners to connect policing priorities with communities, ensuring that a wide range of alternative perspectives are included within the process.

8. Develop an evidence base through co-produced policy with communities to better inform policing policy.

9. A public review of the use of Stop and Search across Greater Manchester that involves a wide range of partners. This must ask the questions: what does an effective stop and search policy look like and what outcomes are expected?
Police

The official modes of community engagement often tend to neglect those that would argue that police policy is overly intrusive, especially in deprived areas. But it is only by listening to these voices, in addition to the wider community, that policing policy can become more effective.

Whilst we understand the difficulties that exist for the police, the tactics employed must be assessed. According to a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, despite halving in the last three years, GMP is twenty-one times more likely to stop and search a black person. This is not solely a matter of race inequality. In Salford where there was a more visceral anti-police motivation than Manchester, race was not an issue. There are socio-economic determinants that exist also. This can be seen with the perceived interpretation of dispersal orders in such a way that can be considered disproportionately punitive towards young people in deprived areas. For instance, such dispersal orders were introduced after the riots in Salford, in which police were enabled to disperse groups of two or more people – of any age – who were hanging around. On one hand, it could be argued that this is essential in tackling anti-social behaviour. On the other hand, it could be perceived there is a criminalisation of non-criminal activity, despite questionable effectiveness. For example, data reveals that fewer than 3% of stop and searches lead to arrests. This perception can serve to increase resentment within particular sections of our community and widen disconnection. The calculated cost / benefit results of the current model must be evaluated.

Making Sense of Changing Government Policy
The PCCs potentially represent the ‘most radical overhaul of police governance in half a century.’ Although a controversial central government policy that could potentially undermine stability in local policing, Greater Manchester can use this opportunity to build upon its expertise and strengthen existing democratic accountability and partnerships. PCCs will formulate the policy plans of the police, represent the public and agree on budgets with the Chief Constables. They are designed to create ‘greater public engagement in policing both in terms of priority setting and active citizenship,’ that is based upon a duty to have a regard to the opinions of local people. Through partnership with local authorities and the VCS, there is a real opportunity to be able to develop a consensus around priorities on policing policy within Greater Manchester, as well as provide the space for innovative ideas to emerge in the public sphere, through ensuring that a range of different (and perhaps challenging) perspectives are included within the process.

Including All Perspectives
Democratic policing aims to bring the police and community together in order to address criminal and social disorder problems. The democratic accountability of the PCCs must not only rest upon elections, but be linked to local authority structures and ensure that strategies are developed that connect communities with the emerging governance structures in order to best enable dialogue and development to be embedded. The police are an ‘agency that distributes...social goods and alter life chances.’ Therefore, in terms of social justice, they should bring most benefit to the most deprived communities, which will involve including previously neglected voices. Developing effective responses and solutions is best guaranteed by working in depth with all partners and being inclusive of alternative perspectives.

“Young people in general cannot walk down the street without the police stopping them, [They say]: ‘Take your hat off, take your hood off, what you doing, empty your pockets, there’s four of you, you’ve got to split up, you can’t go round in a group – even when they are not doing anything wrong.” (A rioter from Salford)
However, this is not always the case, and GMP would benefit from including a wider range of knowledge, expertise and critiques within their community engagement processes.

It is important to develop what Nancy Fraser describes as ‘participatory parity.’ This aims to eliminate the barriers to democratic participation that are rooted in social inequality and exclusion based on difference. Traditional engagement mechanisms are more conducive to members of the community that already have the capacity to be able to articulate their views more persuasively. This can exclude those sections of our community who are most disconnected from public policy making and therefore, we require a range of strategies to create a more effective service.

Communities’ perception of crime will be influenced by factors that exist beyond the realities of their local areas, and so therefore, public participation must be balanced with a longer-term strategy that is based on empirical evidence. However, this evidence should be co-produced with all partners and include communities. This draws upon the local knowledge of communities and values the expertise that they have in terms of experience that can contribute to the professional knowledge of statutory agencies. That is, those live in neighbourhoods most affected by crime will have particular insights and perspectives that the police will not. This will lead to more effective policing as it will be better informed by local preferences and needs, with communities then contributing to improved outcomes and achievable solutions.

**Enhancing Democratic Accountability**

Accountability should rest upon explanation and cooperation rather than a calculative and contractual relationship. The Police and Crime Panels present an opportunity to develop such a process that builds upon the democratic mandate achieved through local elections. These consist of locally elected councillors, and potentially independent and lay members. They are designed to advise the PCC on proposed policing plans and budgets, as well as considering the progress at the end of each year as outlined in a ‘state of the force report’. They have an essential role in scrutinising the commissioner as well as contributing to the crime plan. Although the panels have no statutory role in consulting the public, through their local connections and influence, they can support the process of gathering public opinion, as well as scrutinising the methodology, approach and results of public consultations.

The statutory functions of the Police and Crime Panels focus upon a reactive approach to scrutiny, but this should be widened in order to include a more pro-active approach that engages in existing policy development and influences decisions before they are made, especially in terms of developing a police and crime plan. A commitment from the leadership of each respective local authority, both in terms of membership and direction, would bring real benefits to the process. Furthermore, there must be systems in place that ensure local issues are given a platform from the local commander level all the way up. This can be strategically facilitated through the Police and Crime Panels. As well as the local authorities, the VCS have an essential role in this process due to the reach it has into communities, which is based upon the trust and long-term relationships that exist.
Creating bridging opportunities is essential and following the Community Conversations, the Broughton Trust in East Salford has facilitated such engagement. The police are attending the local youth club to meet with young people and have established relationships as a result. Initial conversations were open, but not easy. The fact that the police have continued to return has been invaluable. Furthermore, lines of dialogue have been strengthened with senior police representatives. Lessons from why Leeds did not see rioting further suggests that youth workers’ connections are an invaluable resource.\(^{31}\)

Many of the existing engagement structures do not always provide the most effective means to include all perspectives and have been criticised by some as a mechanism of enforcement and information gleaning exercises, and not as a means of developing local priorities on policing. There needs to be appropriate resources made available to ensure more innovative and independent engagement delivered in partnership with the local authorities and VCS, which is used not to gather information on suspects, but as a means of assessing and evaluating policing in our communities.

This must ensure that different perspectives are considered than those that would be heard at conventional engagement mechanisms. This should then be connected to strategic influence through the Police and Crime Panel. The new model of governance provides an opportunity to connect communities to the new structures and systems of scrutiny, which can strengthen both democratic accountability and police effectiveness. The results of such engagement should be presented in public meetings to the Police and Crime Panels with the PCC present to be able to answer any issues. Through a coordinated approach, a strong evidence base that includes engagement with disconnected communities should be made open to the public to ensure greater transparency.

An effective Police and Crime Panel would make positive contributions to policy development that would lead to improvements to the effective delivery of community safety and criminal justice, which would make the case for the additional costs needed to resource effective engagement more compelling to justify. We realise resources are limited within the era of austerity, but as costs of the riots alone in Greater Manchester were estimated at £9 million, it makes financial sense.

As well as being effective and efficient, it is essential that the police are equitable, and rooted within a more equal distribution of power and opportunity, dealing with all citizens fairly and equally regardless of their social or economic status. There must be a monitoring of the new governance structures in order to determine their effectiveness in reaching all communities, and this should include a particular focus at a spatial level of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and also in terms of demographics that include socio-economic characteristics, ethnicity and gender.

**Public Review of Stop and Search in Greater Manchester**

The Police and Crime Panel can establish sub-committees in order to carry out investigations into specific areas of concern. By focusing on particular issues that have emerged, rather than general problems of disorder, it is possible to maintain flexibility and operational independence for the police.\(^{32}\) Whilst the disproportionate nature of stop and search must be clearly noted, we also need to question the effectiveness of its use as a tactic in which only 3 percent of stop searches lead to arrest.\(^{33}\)
To this effect, SARF recommends that a public review of the use of stop and search across Greater Manchester is undertaken. This must ask the questions: what does an effective stop and search policy look like and what outcomes are expected?

Such a review requires a necessarily in-depth study within the sub-region and should build upon Greater Manchester’s existing strengths in terms of the partnerships in place and the governance structures that already exist. This should pay particular focus in gaining evidence from areas and communities that are disproportionately affected by stop and search, for instance deprived LSOAs, young people or particular ethnic minorities. This would provide the necessary reach to ensure that a sufficient range of attitudes are included. Alongside the Police and Crime Panel, a critical role for VCS organisations should be built into the process in order to provide the necessary reach. Following the findings of this review, there needs to be a strategically driven and appropriate response by all partners, including Greater Manchester Police, the PCC, Police and Crime Panels and all involved local authorities. Within the process, a periodical review should take place once enough time has elapsed.

References
22. V. Dodd (2012), Police up to 28 times more likely to stop and search black people – study. Guardian [online] Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jun/12/police-stop-and-search-black-people
33. V. Dodd (2012), Police up to 28 times more likely to stop and search black people – study

“I feel it had and is have devastating effect...Even today the shops on and around the precinct remain closed or closing. I live in one of the tower blocks and love my flat and the surrounding environment. So overall the riots caused a lot of unnecessary disruption. I personally was very scared and frightened. My car insurance has been increased by 40% because of it. I would not like to witness riots in Salford again.”

(59, female, retired nurse).
People should accept the consequences of their actions if they commit a crime and be held accountable. Furthermore, the needs of victims must always be a central concern. However, whilst not seeking to condone the rioting, nor to neglect the role of individual responsibility, the sentencing following the riots has been considered by many as disproportionate and not accurate in all cases. This becomes more acute when contrasted with the punishments handed out in light of the MPs expenses or through the banking scandals.

Furthermore, as a paper on the riots by Carly Lightowlers and Jon Shute argues, the corrosive impact of criminal justice contact especially for new entrants into the criminal justice system - together with the evidence that longer prison sentences exacerbate crime as opposed to deter it suggests a need to balance punishment away from custody and towards more restorative approaches where appropriate. 

Restorative justice is explained by Theo Gavrielides as an ‘ethos with practical goals, among which is to restore harm by affected parties in a (direct or indirect) encounter and a process of understanding through voluntary and honest dialogue.’ Restorative justice works for and through the community implicating softer jurisdic measures that are more inclusive and allow interaction between the victim, the offender and the community. This is consistent with SARF’s ethos of building upon people’s capabilities and viewing people as potential assets to our community. Importantly it can lead to more accountability for those who have committed an offence, and should not been seen a ‘soft option.’

There are many well-evidenced benefits to restorative justice, which include:

› Increased victim satisfaction
› Reduced re-offending
› Value for money
› Stronger communities

Greater Manchester Probation Trust: Intensive Alternative to Custody

Greater Manchester Probation Trust has been recognised internationally for its Intensive Alternative to Custody initiative. This scheme has worked with young people aged between 18 and 25 from Manchester and Salford who had committed offences and were facing a court sentence of less than 12 months. Rather than jail, 342 low-risk offenders were sentenced to a 12 month IAC order which included a curfew, unpaid work and mentoring to support employment.

The program that ran from April, 2009 to July, 2011 cost £630,000, and research reveals that for every £1 put into the scheme, an additional 20 pence was recouped in savings through reduced benefits payments, improved health and reduced police time. In Manchester and Salford it generated savings worth £740,000. 27 percent of people on the scheme went on to find a job, compared with 11 percent of people who serve a prison sentence.
This was offered to everyone convicted in the riots, although take up has been limited, suggesting more focused engagement and support processes with victims, offenders and the wider community are necessary, as well as the need for more targeted strategies in relation to restorative justice and disorder.

This initiative has great potential to become part of mainstream action through the Transforming Justice pilot programme, which aims to reduce crime, re-offending and the wider impact of crime and dependency on society, and to reduce the overall cost to the criminal justice system.

A central aspect of this must be improved partnership working across public, VCS and private sectors in order to provide a joined up approach that enables the most effective and efficient outcomes. The Transforming Justice programme sits within existing Greater Manchester governance structures and reports to the AGMA Executive and will deliver at a neighbourhood, district and Greater Manchester level as appropriate. There is also real potential for Police and Crime Commissioners to have a coordinating role as supported by recent announcements that they would hold a budget for victim support. It is also recommended that connection with existing structures and emerging Health and Well-Being Boards are established in order to ensure that smarter commissioning is integrated.

**Community Justice Panels**

Restorative justice has great potential to lead to more co-produced outcomes around justice in our communities. Community Justice Panels are an alternative for first time low-level offences that would normally attract a reprimand or final warning for young people or a caution for adults. They bring together the perpetrators and victims, alongside their families and supporters, as well as volunteers from the local community, who are trained in order to be able to chair and facilitate the panels. This embeds restorative justice within neighbourhoods, which provides a further means to ensure that the full impact and benefits can be developed in a constructive way.<ref>Restorative Justice</ref>

Restorative justice is an emerging policy in the UK with community justice panels in Somerset being in action since 2005 followed by panels in Sheffield and Norfolk.<ref>Of the Government’s fifteen pilot neighbourhood resolution panels, seven are within Greater Manchester. These panels are community based and run mostly by volunteers. Cases are referred locally with the focus lying mostly on misbehaviour, which is not seen as serious enough for prosecution. Therefore it would have not been appropriate for all riots cases, pointing to a need to deal with issues on a case by case basis. The emphasis of restorative justice lies in the empowerment of victims and offenders instead of criminal justice professionals who often lack important insight of the impact of communities and families.<ref>Furthermore, an evaluation of the first community justice panels in Chard and Ilminster have shown that police administration time was reduced by 75 percent.<ref></ref> </ref>

Involving Communities

The development of restorative justice in Greater Manchester must place emphasis on supporting victims to feel empowered enough to play a central role in the process. The systems that are in place must be constructed in a way that is sufficiently supportive of victims. It is also essential that our wider communities are involved throughout the process. Learning from the model advocated by Partners of Prisoners, restorative justice must be viewed

**Recommendations:**

10. **Greater Manchester should build upon existing innovations in restorative justice, and strengthen the support for victims and communities to play a more central role.**

11. **As seven of England’s fifteen community justice panel pilots are in Greater Manchester, there should be evaluation to provide the evidence to ensure that interventions that work are mainstreamed within our local criminal justice system.**

12. **AGMA should consider embedding restorative approaches within the commissioning cycle to ensure that planning and implementation involves a wide range of stakeholders within the process.**
Restorative Justice

in the context of the wider community. Through this perspective, it then becomes critical that communities and other stakeholders are involved in the interventions that take place.

This will require awareness-raising in order to educate our communities on restorative justice and improve confidence within the model, as well as supporting those structures and organisations that can enable the most effective approach, both in terms of resources and a mutual approach to partnership that erodes distinctions between ‘professionals’ and the community. This can lead to improved outcomes in terms of more inclusive and resilient communities that contribute towards reduced re-offending. The evaluation of the early Sheffield community justice panels showed the need for strategic management and leadership and aligning performance measurement with the strategic development of panels. Therefore the oversight of local authorities will be crucial.

Measuring Success

Even though specific measurement of such panels has its problems, it has become clear that community justice panels play a strong role in reducing costs related to reconviction. Innovations in criminal justice are critical to improvements in outcomes. However, it is important that local innovation is given to freedom to operate and the performance targets of police ‘success’ requires national policy reflection. However, in order to be able to scale up such innovation, we need to be clear about what constitutes reliable evidence of social change, especially in terms of strengthening communities, an area that does not currently have the corresponding evidence base that exists in terms of reduced re-offending and victim satisfaction.

Restorative justice has promise to revolutionise how the criminal justice system in Greater Manchester operates. As restorative justice is part of GMP’s Policing Plan 2012/13, there is existing commitment and this could be supplemented with robust evidence. In terms of the community justice panels, SARF recommends that a full evaluation of the pilots are undertaken that includes a longitudinal aspect that follows those who have been through the process and those that chose not to. Furthermore, this must also identify the necessary conditions that have contributed towards success and which areas require strengthening. It would also need to consider the additional social value that has been developed through the programme. This would help to provide the evidence to ensure that interventions that work are mainstreamed within our local criminal justice system.

AGMA as a Restorative Authority?

Together with the restorative approaches that are outlined in the section on young people, Greater Manchester has the opportunity to be a restorative combined authority, drawing on lessons from Hull, which claims to be the world’s first restorative city. This should be explored as a credible option as part of the Transforming Justice programme by the AGMA Executive in partnership with the PCC and a range of agencies including Greater Manchester Probation Trust, the Youth Offending Services, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue, Victim Support and a wide range of VCS organisations. This should consider embedding restorative approaches within the commissioning cycle to ensure that planning and implementation involves a wide range of stakeholders within the process.

“Justice seemed to be dissipated in the heat of the moment with the need for politicians to seek retribution on the rioters. Nothing good ever comes when justice is weakened.”

(A Community Conversations participant)
As IARS argue, this must balance the need to set clear standards, whilst maintaining the necessary role for communities within the process. Therefore, if Greater Manchester develops such approaches, they must be consistent with the ethos of both restorative justice and coproduction. A Greater Manchester Restorative Justice Conference could bring together people that live and work in our communities in order to develop new approaches and explore the possibility of building upon Greater Manchester’s reputation of being at the forefront of international innovations in criminal justice.

References

“...there has been no systematic analysis of causes and simply a knee-jerk judicial response.”
(Lawyer at the Community Conversations)
Hot-Housing Policy

There were discernible geographical disparities in the way that the riots developed, differences which are bound up in specific historical and social contexts. These particular local characteristics need to be recognised and put at the heart of a suitable response. The north of England in particular is suffering disproportionately from the ill-effects caused by the recession and the subsequent government responses.

For instance, area based grants (ABG), which targeted investment to areas in need of regeneration and which laid great emphasis on tackling worklessness, have been ended. This has had significant impact in both Salford and Manchester. At the same time, the representation of northern voices in government is shrinking. Under the auspices of localism, we are seeing a centralisation of power and the emergence of a democratic deficit as policies are rooted in reality that many people in the north do not recognise. This was clearly articulated by participants at the Community Conversations, across all sectors.

On the other hand, Greater Manchester Combined Authority has driven forward a visionary scheme in the City Deal Two, which involves a £1 billion investment model and focuses on a new financial model to drive growth based on an ‘Earn Back’ principle. This provides a unique opportunity to capitalise on this devolved power and develop innovative and locally focused public policy that builds upon the expertise in Greater Manchester.

A key theme of the City Deal is the need to have economic growth. Whilst this must be a key driver for national and local government, solely concentrating on economic outputs severely limits the potential to invest in communities and effectively tackle some of the long-term and structural inequalities that people face. Such an approach can potentially exclude areas that form a ‘critical portion of the non-market economy.’ There must be a balance between the two. Successive investment and regeneration have changed the physical structures of place, yet entrenched social policy problems remain for some sections of the communities that live there. In order to address this, we need to involve all those that live in communities in order to best support the potential capabilities in a way that can drive social regeneration within some of our most consistently deprived communities.

SARF propose a new way of evidencing, shaping and delivering public policy that draws upon the range of expertise and knowledge of those that live and work in communities. In turn this will lead to more co-produced public services, which are effective and efficient and that deepen democratic accountability. This requires some creative thinking. Successful innovation in one area will not be directly transferable to others, and will require local reinterpretation. Therefore, the City Deal should put in place commissioning and performance frameworks that enable local innovation to flourish, whilst maintaining the necessary monitoring that is required in order to assess effectiveness.

It is important to provide the necessary space whereby policy ideas are nurtured within the local communities that they are rooted. In order to achieve this, the City Deal could provide a skeleton framework as well as a function that will provide the strategic and coordinated measures that are necessary. Alongside this, it is important to ensure adequate safety
mechanisms and a level of quality assurance and standards across the board. However within this framework, communities must be given greater voice within local decision making processes to be able to implement interventions and deliver co-produced services at a local level that are more in tune to local needs.

A coordinated approach will then be necessary to propagate the more successful innovations by supporting their replication to each locality, whilst allowing for a flexibility that can meet the specific needs and challenges of the area. This allows a basic framework with a universal policy approach to provide equity, whilst ensuring the flexibility for each co-produced project to be cross-fertilised with local expertise. The development of innovations in public policy and its implementation in Greater Manchester will then grow organically. This builds upon the successful and creative interventions that have already occurred, whilst providing more space, ownership and empowerment for such innovations to flourish, whilst providing the necessary frameworks to ensure the needs of all our diverse guarantees are met.

Micro-Finance

A concrete example of how this could be achieved is through the idea of micro-finance. There is an argument that one of the many complex reasons why public policy has not adequately addressed deep-rooted and entrenched poverty has been the over concentration of investment in physical regeneration. Whilst such interventions are essential to create sustainable places where people want to live, it could be argued that the long-term investment in people as assets has not been given the value that it requires.

We propose that local authorities adopt a model of micro finance that will support local entrepreneurs and increase social capital. Adopting a micro-financing model will enable entrepreneurship at a community level and enhance local economies, which in turn develops community resilience. We can develop this through learning from the Grameen Bank model which has proven to be cost-effective, has a proven track record and is transferable from rural to urban areas. The idea was the brain-child of Professor Muhammad Yunus, who first researched the idea in 1976. The bank was formally instituted in 1983 with the sole objective of working alongside those struggling to remove themselves out of poverty by providing micro-finance through a sustainable institutional framework.

This model is particularly effective because it empowers the individual to take responsibility and make informed choices whilst binding groups within communities to commit to supporting each other. Most importantly it will provide loans without requiring collateral.

The methodology of Grameen is simple yet very powerful. It includes investment in small loans at a local level to groups of five entrepreneurs who have difficulty accessing traditional loans and have come together to share risk, expertise and support. The initial investment is targeted to two members of the group. Depending on their performance in repayment, the next two borrowers can then apply and, subsequently, the fifth member as well. This enhances mutuality between all those involved, although in order to provide support, operations are characterised by intensive discipline, supervision, and servicing. This support and structure to manage credit is essential to the model, especially in light of the fact that it is the people who are furthest removed from the market economy that are supported.
This allows for managed risk, an incentivised scheme and an environment where innovative projects can flourish. The success of this approach shows that a number of objections to lending to the people living in poverty can be overcome if careful supervision and management are provided. The delivery system is geared to meet the diverse socio-economic development needs of these communities and support people to escape the vicious cycle of low income, low savings, low investment, and low income.

Greater Manchester has long been a location of visionary leadership, as well as innovative and creative excellence. We believe that there is opportunity through the City Deal framework to launch a micro-finance strategy targeted at the most vulnerable and poorest members of our communities. Using the Grameen Bank model of micro finance, we recommend that this approach is explored further within the context of Greater Manchester; it is locally-based, leads to a high rate of recovery and a rests upon tightly disciplined model. There is potential for this to be administered through the Credit Union Bank, which is well respected and has a credible and robust financial structure. It will also be essential to have local authority partnership with this initiative to provide strategic support. Through providing the means to develop the potential for entrepreneurship within our communities, we can invest in both the economic and social regeneration of some of our most deprived communities.

References
The Social Action & Research Foundation
The Social Action & Research Foundation (SARF) is a social enterprise that co-produces policy solutions with different communities in order to eradicate poverty. We achieve this by building on our grass-roots connections, collaborating with those that live and work in communities and through strategic influence at all levels of the decision-making process.

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