



The Greater Manchester
Combined Authority, our new
elected mayor and devolution

Introduction to an Information and Resource Pack for Councillors

Below is the introduction to a resource pack. It was originally produced as part of the LGA's pilot project around engagement in the area, and in its final form includes a number of handy assets, such as infographics. It is written from the perspective of GMCA, to be distributed to councillors and others looking to help with engagement around devolution.

1. The challenge

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is the authority for the Greater Manchester city-region. Their story is about the role of Councillors, staff, and engaging residents and communicating the core messages about devolution. Below is the introduction to a longer resource pack written by GMCA to help local councillors to do this.

Devolution remains an abstract concept for some, usually recognised as an economic boost, but less frequently seen as a democratic win. The GMCA programme must be seen as something done with the city region's residents – not to them.

There is already a GMCA website, including an issue-specific engagement function. The ten councils' 600+ councillors are vital now, in explaining what the GMCA and the new elected mayor will be able to do – and in engaging local residents in these changes as they happen. Councillors' knowledge of what is needed locally, and the relationships they hold, are essential in engaging with the community as devolution takes shape.

This resource pack takes the GMCA online materials and provides templates and tools to help roll them out. It provides some of the basics for explaining and advocating the new devolved arrangements, designed in ways that councillors can personalise themselves.

It is produced for the many situations where a councillor performs their duties – from meetings with stakeholders to community events – helping offer responses to enquiries or questions from residents.

Residents need to know what devolution means in real terms, before they will feel excited or empowered

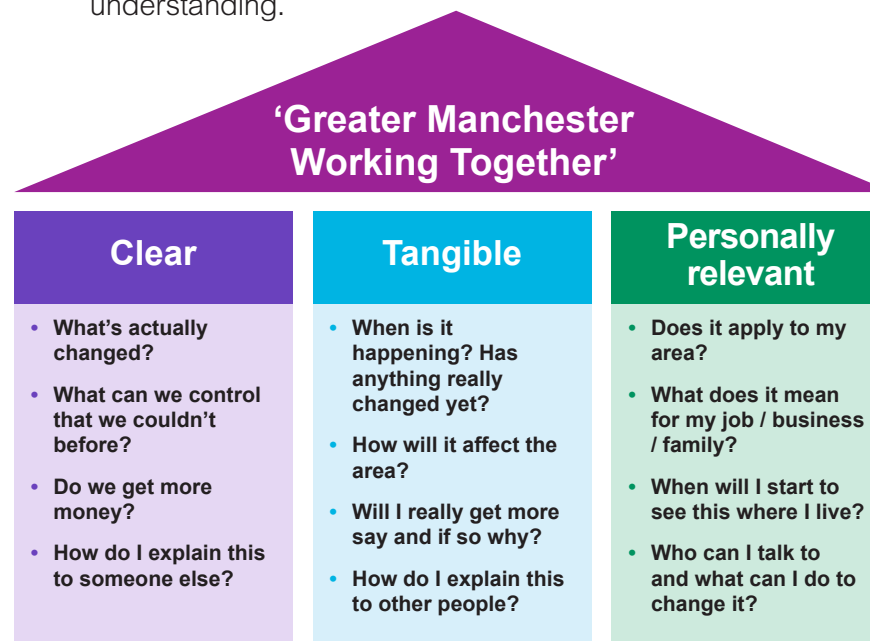
2. Message and focus

Residents need to know what devolution means in real terms, before they will feel excited or empowered. People must know the ‘what’, the ‘how’ and the ‘when’, before they can be inspired by the ‘why’. To bring Greater Manchester’s busy residents on board, a deeper explanation of the nuts and bolts needs to come first – delivered by a trusted councillor core.

The emphasis of this resource pack is therefore on the real change that this devolution programme will deliver ‘before and after’, so GMCA feels clear, tangible and personally relevant. What does GMCA actually mean? How does it fit in with, and complement, existing local government and representation? What will it actually change? What will it actually do in your community? How can residents get involved and find out more? How do you explain it to colleagues, or draw it on the back of an envelope?

The message house on the right sets out some of the central themes, for councillors to use when considering how to communicate the new devolved powers. If you haven’t used one before, a message house is a simple tool you can use in communications, to underpin all the different messages you’re putting out therethrough different channels. It gives a basic, condensed structure for what you’re trying to say put across. The roof is the overarching message, and the pillars (or walls) represent the separate components of the message.

The message for explaining GMCA is ‘Greater Manchester Working Together’, and it has three central pillars: ‘Clear’, ‘Tangible’ and ‘Personally relevant’. These messages don’t affect the more general, aspirational themes around democratic empowerment, service reform, geographical identity and economic growth. Rather it gives a set of more immediate things to emphasise and address when explaining the project – before moving into the project’s wider message. Before the big picture messages can resonate, there needs to be a more immediate drive to unpack what devolution means. This can lay the groundwork for more optimistic and inspirational things later on, once there’s a more tangible understanding.



3. Content

The resources within this pack will help to provide councillors with a set of usable resources to adapt to local circumstances, so as to explain and champion the GMCA.

The content includes infographics and a Q&A, which can be shared online and offline to make the project 'clear'. The infographics, for example, will show in a distilled, visual form what will change in terms of structure of governance and control of policy.

The pack also includes examples and anecdotes (transport improvements to the Wythenshawe, Stockport and Bolton interchanges for example), so that once people are clear about the big picture, they also see that GMCA is 'tangible'. The timeline will help people know when devolution is coming and what's been delivered already.

Meanwhile, items like the advice on how to frame the issues, the set of personalised leaflets, tailored prompt cards and calls to action should help people to see the project as 'personally relevant'. Obviously, councillors have an even bigger role to play here, by picking examples relevant to their ward or sector or interest.



This pack helps to provide councillors with a set of usable basic resources which can be adapted to their specific wards

The pack will include items and assets such as:

- A **short strategic communications document** that aligns with the brand strategy which includes:
 - **60 second introduction**
 - follow-up **Q&A**
 - version of the **message house** above, with more explanation
 - short URL for the existing GMCA survey, and **advice on framing it**
- **Prompt cards** for a ten-minute speech and an accompanying **slide deck**
- 6 x **two-side leaflets**, aimed at the different audiences councillors interact with: ‘What GMCA means for you as...’
 - a small business or social enterprise
 - a parent, young person or student
 - a tenant or commuter
 - a service user
 - a potential investor in the area
 - someone working for the local authority
- 2 x **infographics**, to visualise the process through online and offline channels – and clarify for local people how devolution will increase the collective influence of Greater Manchester and get the best deal for the area

The resources are tailored, personalised, branded and will be built upon by councillors – to reflect the needs of their specific roles and wards. They are made available in an online space for councillors to access.

