Minutes Greater Manchester Moving Board Meeting

Date	26/03/2026
Time	9:30 - 12:30
Location	MMU, DB 3.33, Dalton Building, Chester Street, M1 5GD
Chair	Mike Perls MBE
Attendees	Gillen, Seamus, Perls MBE, Mike , Will Baker, Sally Carr MBE, Dan Cropper, Lee Davies, Richard Davis, Caroline Grime, Jill Harrison, Warren Heppolette, Eve Holt, Abigail Irozuru, Hayley Lever, Marisa Logan-Ward, Matt Stocks and Beth Sutcliffe
Absentees	Steven Pleasant MBE

1 **Welcome, introduction, and apologies**

9:30

Minutes:

Apologies: (Trustees), Leanne Feeley, Rob Mukherjee, Steven Pleasant MBE, Sarah Brown-Fraser. (Observer) Rachael Ntongho (observer).

Online: (Trustees), Dan Cropper, Marisa Logan-Ward.

Guest: Seamus Gillen (Board Evaluator - Value Alpha)

The Chair (Mike Perls MBE) introduced the meeting. He thanked everyone for their contributions and hard work in recent meetings.

The Board Evaluator (Seamus Gillen) Introduced himself:
Seamus introduced his role and focus, emphasising his approach to governance is in support of the GM Moving entity. He noted experience across both local and central government, with around half of his time dedicated to board evaluations. He also referenced other clients in accompanying slides. He highlighted that he had worked with GM Moving on two previous occasions, expressing that these engagements were positive, and added that GM Moving is an example of a successful board.

2 **Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising**

9:35

Minutes:

All present approved the minutes from the previous Board Meeting.

3 Actions from previous meeting

9:40

Minutes:

All actions have been duly completed.

4 Strategy

Minutes:

The Strategic Director - Health and Operations (Beth Sutcliffe) started the strategy section by reinforcing our mission and purpose and thanking the Senior Independent Director (Warren Heppolette) for the speech he gave at the Active Partnerships National Network Health event on 25th March. The speech was inspiring and clear on the need to maintain clear purpose and mission.

4.1 Story of the work (video)

9:50

Minutes:

The Strategic Director - Health and Operations, introduced a video that was created to celebrate International Women's Day. The video outlined key challenges and barriers to movement and physical activity experienced by women and girls, whilst also showcasing recent imagery from GM Moving projects.

4.2 Celebrating progress and impact - last quarter

9:55

Minutes:

The Strategic Director - Health and Operations, reflected on feedback from IPSOS (Sport England's Evaluation and Learning Partner), on the GM Moving October 25 system partner reporting. GM Moving have achieved the highest possible ratings across all areas, except for two, with the impact on population levels of physical activity receiving mixed ratings for learning. The whole team have undergone a session to explore how to strengthen quantitative data and partner perceptions, with some useful data currently collected internally, but not all of it is currently reflected in GM Moving's reporting.

The Impact Evaluation was discussed further, with a focus on understanding performance across the Active Partnership Network, particularly whether any other Active Partnerships achieved strong ratings in relation to population levels of physical activity learning. There is a broader challenge to strengthen performance in this area across the network.

There is ongoing dialogue with the Active Partnership Network and Sport England to better define what good looks like. It was acknowledged that the team responded very positively, demonstrating maturity, adaptability, integrity and a focus on meaningful outcomes.

Questions were raised about the availability of comparative data and whether performance can be mapped against other Active Partnerships. A summary does exist, but full comparative data is not currently available.

Positive feedback was given on the video shared earlier in the meeting, which was seen as effectively highlighting strengths. Discussion focused on its intended audience and how widely it is being shared, with a view to increasing visibility and impact. The video was recognised as a valuable resource for illustrating barriers and enablers.

4.3 External environment - context and conditions

10:05

Minutes:

The CEO (Hayley Lever) opened a discussion to reflect on the context and conditions that will inform decisions in the coming months.
The discussion opened with an invitation for reflections on the strategic context paper, asking for any blind spots or additional context not already captured.

Support for proposals emerging from Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire were highlighted, particularly the introduction of a Deputy Mayor model for health which had been announced the day before. From an health perspective, this was seen as a major opportunity, broadening the scope of influence across public health in areas such as housing, employment and skills. It was emphasised that, for the first time since 1948, local NHS leadership could play a more integrated and potentially transformative role, strengthening relationships and enabling more aligned investment in health across systems.

The strategic context paper was positively received, alongside a discussion on how the board would maintain visibility of strategic communications going forward.

Action: Explore further with trustees who would like to be involved in communications, perhaps including quarterly planning meetings - Beth/Hayley

Previous effective work mapping stakeholders during periods of political change was reflected on, highlighting its impact on raising awareness and ensuring the right people were engaged. This was echoed in discussion about recent examples of successful convening. The importance of broadening engagement with mayoral and policy leadership was noted, alongside the links between areas such as health, sport and transport.

The discussion returned to devolution, describing an emerging shift in governance and funding arrangements. This was seen as creating more stable conditions for differentiated approaches to devolution, tailored to local contexts, and there was encouragement to consider the conditions required to support this.

The conversation then shifted to grassroots challenges, with concerns raised about increasing financial pressures across partner organisations. Feedback indicated a deteriorating landscape and the loss of some community provision. There was a question of how major events could better connect to grassroots delivery, including creating opportunities for young people to volunteer, alongside a reminder of the importance of maintaining a safeguarding perspective. The need to recognise the wider network of system partners and to work collaboratively to strengthen collective impact was emphasised, with acknowledgement that relationships across the system need to mature.

From a sport perspective, significant drop out rates among women and girls were highlighted, with a clear need for targeted action. Ongoing work was noted, including reconnecting with key stakeholders and aligning with wider strategies.

It was agreed that the check ins prior to this board meeting were of value and that GM Moving will look to design them in going forward.

Action: Design and embed regular board pre-meeting check-in for strategic context between papers being issued and the board meeting – Lee/Hayley

4.4 **Support services updates**

10:25

Minutes:

The discussion opened with a slide from the CEO outlining the purpose of the Support Services Report and its recommendations, alongside appreciation for contributions and offers to take on Director roles within the trading subsidiary. There was broad agreement that the paper provided clarity and useful detail.

Attention then turned to governance, including whether the new entity would benefit from independent representation (someone not on the charity board) to provide objective oversight. It was noted that any investment of charity funds would require a clear, standalone justification and risk assessment. The need to further develop and firm up the business case was widely recognised as the next step, with continued board backing for the overall direction of travel.

There was further discussion about the implications of establishing a separate entity, particularly in terms of organisational capacity and scalability, alongside a shared emphasis on avoiding the creation of unnecessary risk. It was agreed that while recommendations could be accepted, funding decisions would return to the main board for approval.

The group also explored the challenges of operating in a start-up phase, including how far to project business as usual activity versus focusing on establishing effective processes. A balance was seen as necessary to avoid overburdening early stage planning while still building a clear understanding of operational requirements.

Finally, the establishment of the entity was recognised as a significant milestone, with discussion shifting to future opportunities both locally and beyond. There was emphasis on maintaining a clear sense of organisational strengths and ensuring collaboration with appropriate partners to protect reputation, alongside general confidence in the approach being taken.

Decision: The Board unanimously agreed to the recommendations outlined, on the understanding that funding decisions come back to the main board for approval.

4.5 **Break**

10:40

5 **Governance**

5.1 **Chair recruitment update and confirmation of appointment**

10:45

Minutes:

The Senior Independent Director provided an update on the recent recruitment process for a new Board Chair, noting that the process undertaken the previous week had led to a clear recommendation. Although the number of applicants had been lower than expected, this was attributed to the perceived challenge of following a successful predecessor and leading a high performing organisation. It is also a pattern reported from other System Partners. It was also recognised as evidence of effective succession planning.

A single candidate was taken through an extensive and thorough assessment process, including stakeholder engagement, a staff session and a formal interview. Feedback highlighted strong alignment with organisational values, significant sector knowledge and an exceptional network at both national and local levels. References were also received and were positive.

The candidate (Steven Pleasant MBE) was formally recommended for appointment. Board members reflected on the robustness of the process and the candidate's ability to lead the organisation at a high level, with particular emphasis on understanding the scale of work required across local, national and international contexts.

Decision: The Board unanimously approved the appointment of Steven Pleasant MBE as the new Board Chair.

Thanks were formally noted for those who led and supported the recruitment process.

5.2 Board evaluation

10:55

Minutes:

The Board Evaluator outlined the evaluation process, noting that although it is unusual to undertake three evaluations of the same organisation, an exception had been made on this occasion.This is due to Seamus Gillen's credentials, combined with his valuable longitudinal perspective, across evaluation cycles, and the board's significantly different composition compared to last time. The process will include in depth trustee interviews of 90 minutes or more, observation of board meetings, and engagement with selected stakeholders. It was emphasised that board observation is essential and that individuals may also provide confidential input separately if they wish. It was agreed that the evaluation will focus on barriers to performance, relationships, and standards, rather than technical compliance matters.

The discussion highlighted that the purpose of a board is to make high quality strategic decisions, with an emphasis on balancing present performance with future direction. It was noted that the most effective boards focus on forward looking decision making. The evaluator will pose challenging questions in advance, with all contributions treated confidentially.

The Board discussed the importance of understanding both success and failure in governance, referencing external examples, and agreed that the evaluation should explore ambition and standards of excellence for the organisation as a whole rather than individuals. There was also reflection on the organisation's business model and operating context, and interest in how different leadership styles and capabilities contribute to board effectiveness, particularly in light of leadership transition.

It was agreed that the evaluator will report findings back at an in person session in June.

It was further noted that the evaluation is expected to support the board in strengthening its strategic contribution and decision-making in a changing environment.

5.3 **Away Day**

11:25

Minutes:

A draft outline of the Away Day was presented, to be held at Friends Meeting House, Manchester. The Away Day was viewed positively as an opportunity to step back and reflect, with an overall objective of creating the right conditions for team connection. The outline will incorporate time for getting active, outside. All present agreed with the draft outline.

6 **Nominations and Remuneration**

6.1 **APDR for decision/approval following moderation**

11:30

Minutes:

There was a discussion on the Annual Performance and Development Review (APDR) process, reflecting on previous conversations about how the process should operate and noting that results were in line with projections. Previously the board had highlighted the need for training, as well as greater clarity around the definitions of advanced and highly advanced levels. The robustness of the moderation process was highlighted, alongside ensuring alignment with organisational values and mission. Difficult conversations have arisen, reflecting the commitment of staff to the organisation's values and the evidence of the process's integrity. Appreciation was expressed to all involved.

Reflections included acknowledgement that the process was rigorous and challenging but successfully delivered objectives with integrity. Efforts were made to engage teams and build trust through a person centred approach and via line management training from Heart Leadership. Questions about transparency and consistency were addressed, noting that previous evaluations identified these areas and led to external consultancy support from Lucy Maxwell Scott. Contributions from multiple team and board members were acknowledged and appreciated.

The CEO (Hayley Lever), Executive Team (Beth Sutcliffe, Matt Stocks, Richard Davis), Head of Finance (Caroline Grime), and Company Secretary (Lee Davies) left the meeting whilst the trustees discussed the APDR recommendations.

Decision: All board members unanimously agreed with the APDR recommendations.

The CEO, Executive Team, Head of Finance, and Company Secretary rejoined the meeting.

6.2 **People and process report**

11:40

Minutes:

The Strategic Director - People and Operations (Matt Stocks), gave an update from the People and Process Report.

The Strategic Director (GM Moving) position is currently advertised, with a trustee being sought to join the recruitment panel.

The Business Plan update included a slide on Strategic Investment, with Abigail Irozuru (Trustee) agreeing to sponsor the Technology and Digital work stream. The new website is now live, which is a significant development.

Board Leads were then invited to comment on their specific lead areas:

The Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Lead (Jill Harrison - Trustee) gave an update on ESG and led a brief discussion:
The Environmental Sustainability Away Day was well received, with discussions focused on building on existing initiatives. Ideas for moving forward included developing materials to communicate current sustainability work and creating a toolkit for partners. Consideration was given to potential investment in carbon footprint measurement before the 27/28 financial year.
Some of the team have expressed strong views on the use of AI, recognising the complexity of its interaction with environmental issues. Attention was also given to understanding knowledge of sustainability and responsibility within the team, with external engagement being a key focus. There was an offer from Eve Holt to connect the team to work being undertaken on AI within GM more broadly.

Action: Matt Stocks to follow up with Eve Holt.

The Safeguarding Lead (Dan Cropper - Trustee) gave a safeguarding update:
It was noted that there have been no incidents, but testing will soon commence to further test GM Moving's processes. Work is being guided by the Ann Craft Framework which has highlighted some interesting opportunities, including ensuring third parties comply with requirements. A lack of awareness around reporting and whistleblowing was identified, and steps are being taken to address this. The framework has provided a structured approach for self-assessment and improvement.

The Welfare Lead (Sally Carr MBE - Trustee) gave a welfare update:
Capacity and stretch were identified as key considerations given the pace and scale of ongoing work. Welfare is linked to ensuring security and certainty for both staff and Board during challenging periods. GM Moving continues to respond to staff survey feedback, reinforcing confidence in raising issues or concerns and strengthening staff–board communication. The Board noted the importance of nurturing a culture of help seeking, curiosity in supervision and 1:1 discussions, and readiness for potential worst case scenarios, including consideration of Trustee capacity. Processes around recording and contracting for welfare related communications with Trustees were highlighted, along with reflection on difficult, person centred conversations and the handling of sensitive information.

6.3 Board - staff engagement and next steps

11:45

Minutes:

The Company Secretary (Lee Davies) presented slides on board-staff engagement, including what is already happening, and what is in the pipeline.

The Chair brought in the Senior Independent Director for comment, with reference to their previous involvement with the Speaking Up group:
There was reflection around confidence and recognition, particularly during moments of risk or organisational uncertainty, emphasising the need to step into challenging spaces. Some individuals took on additional responsibilities over a six to eight-month period, contributing to the process. The importance of maintaining agility in the capacity to provide support was highlighted. It was observed that speaking out is easier when there is a variety of relationships with trustees, underlining the value of maintaining strong, genuine connections.

There was a discussion, acknowledging that the team had been heard, and asking how to take things forward:
The Board discussed ways to improve engagement between the board and staff, emphasising both formal and informal channels for raising issues. There was a focus on proactive responses co-produced with the team and the importance of drawing together conversations to provide a clear overall picture. Ideas included short videos to help staff get to know the board, recognising areas where engagement works well, and sharing concrete examples of effective interaction. There was agreement on the need for clarity around the robustness of processes and ensuring that welfare and safeguarding are consistently highlighted in all papers. The discussion concluded with a commitment to listening and maintaining appetite for both formal and informal engagement approaches.

7 Audit and Risk

11:55

7.1 Budget 2026 - 27 for decision

Minutes:

The Head of Finance presented a slide on the budget for 2026/2027. They stated that approval was being sought for the budget.

The current financial position was discussed.

Decision: The budget for 2026/27 was presented for approval and was unanimously approved by The Board.

The importance of free reserves was emphasised, alongside the risk of under utilising them. It was agreed to bring "Beat the Streets" back to a future meeting to explore wider opportunities. Areas such as Environmental Sustainability, informed by ongoing work, will be reviewed and reported back to the September Board Meeting. Free reserves were noted as indicative of a conservative approach, with a need to consider broader sociological and global factors as part of the reserves policy, rather than simply maintaining three months' funding.

7.2 Finance update paper

Minutes:

(Covered in the budget discussion Item 7.1).

7.3 Organisation Risk Report

Minutes:

Three main risks were highlighted covering financial, strategic, and operational themes.

In addition, three main opportunities were also highlighted:
Trading Subsidiary: Expand reach, generate income, and share knowledge across Greater Manchester.
Prevention Demonstrator & Live Well Programme: Influence system-wide wellbeing approaches and embed sustainable physical activity in communities.
Place-Based Learning: Strengthen local delivery and drive long-term change across a wider footprint.

The Chair requested further reflection on risks and sensible reserve levels for the next Board Meeting. In addition, they also requested that the Audit and Risk section is moved further up the agenda for the next meeting.

Action: Ensure Audit and Risk is higher up the agenda for the next Board Meeting - Lee

8 **AOB**

12:25

Minutes:

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting and thanked the Executive for their work during this period.