

Co-Creating Age-Friendly Social Housing



Context

- Social housing tenants:
 - Significantly worse health outcomes
 - Often impacted by social conditions that negatively affect their quality of life.
- Many RPs recognise the need to rethink how they can support their older tenants:
 - **Wider determinants, not just conditions in the home.** Social isolation, poverty and inequality

Project Team



Funder



“Building and developing suitable living environments and communities for an ageing population”

Overview

The project aims to **explore, create and evaluate** the processes through which residents, RPs and academics can co-create age-friendly programmes

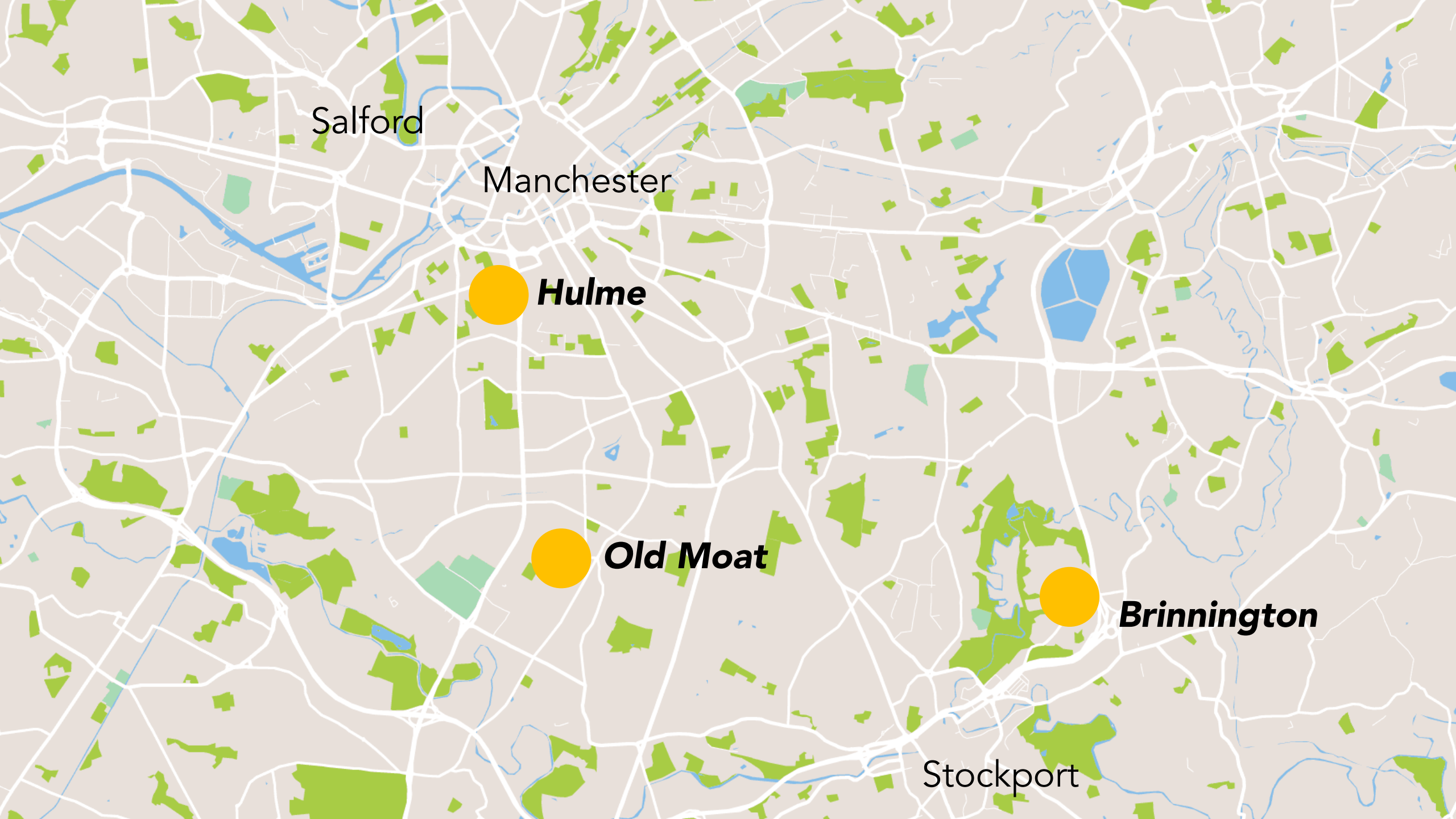
We are examining how three co-produced **ageing in place** initiatives can address different experiences of spatial exclusion, as a result of gentrification, social isolation and prejudice.



Living Environment



Neighbourhood



Salford

Manchester

Hulme

Old Moat

Brinnington

Stockport

Approach

- Participatory action research framework. Priorities and workplan developed collaboratively (place-based).
- Each RP is employing a project officer to work with community/research team. Doing+reflecting.
- Co-researchers in each case study, supported by research team + community development charity Community Savers.
- ***Recognising partners are differently expert.***

Case Study: Hulme

- Hulme is an inner-city area of Manchester, UK
- Hopton Court – socially rented block, owned by One Manchester
- High concentration of older residents (75%), with 96% living alone
- ***Spatially nestled in between universities and student accommodation. Ongoing process of gentrification since 1990s.***



Man Met

RNCM

UoM

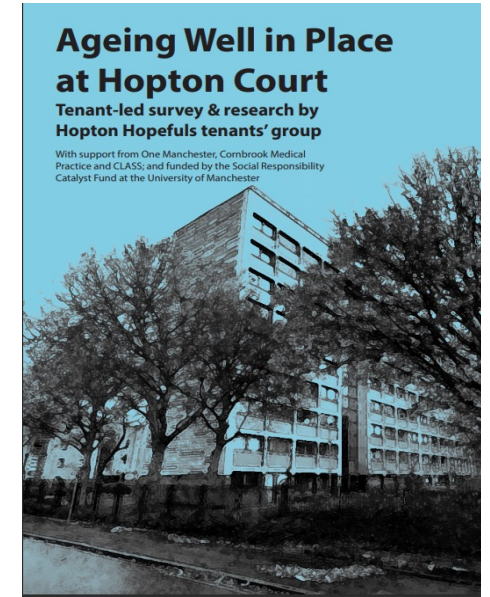
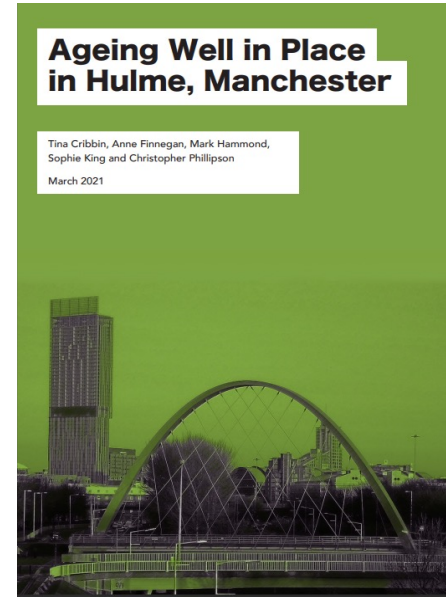
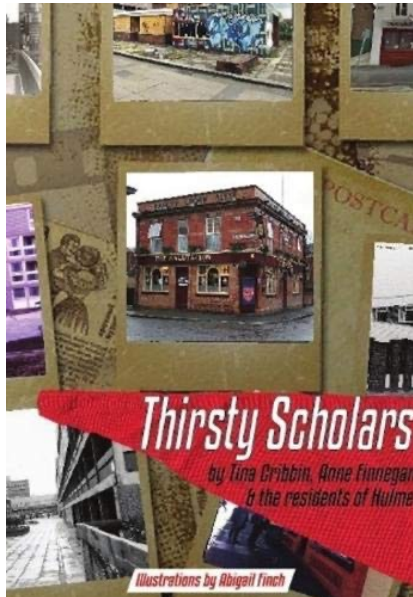
Hopton
Court

Trinity High School

 = University Building or
Halls of Residence

Hopton Court

- Long history of community organisation, focus on developing voice and advocating for change.
- Led to proposal to establish Hopton as a ***'naturally occurring retirement community'***



What is a NORC?

...responds to the high number of older adults concentrated in one area by providing a range different services of health and social support that are retrofit into the existing housing older people have always lived.

- Typically in high-rise towers
- Fosters ageing well in place
- “**Proactive** rather than **reactive**”

5 key characteristics

- Collaborative partnerships
- On-site services: Integrated care + social offer
- Informal and formal qualities
- Sustainable funding
- Place-based focused

(example – Penn South, NYC)



Developing a NORC at Hopton?

- Need for new ways of working to be developed:
 - Lack of similar examples in the UK
 - Unclear how NORC programmes operate in UK context (i.e. role of Housing Association, relationship to public social care system)
 - Lack of understanding of how NORC programmes can address hostile environment (social exclusion and gentrification) experienced at Hopton Court.

Activities to-date

- Recruitment of community development worker (NORC Officer)
 - Role developing iteratively - test and learn
- Regular steering group and tenant group meetings
 - Developing links with wider stakeholders – e.g. Integrated care workers, ASB officers
- Weekly drop-ins and social activities.

1. Tree planting

- Tree plant initiative through 'community work day' scheme
- **NORC Officer intervened** (how would you feel if someone put a tree in your garden without permission?)
- Developed plan with tenants – including espalier fruit trees to provide wall coverage.



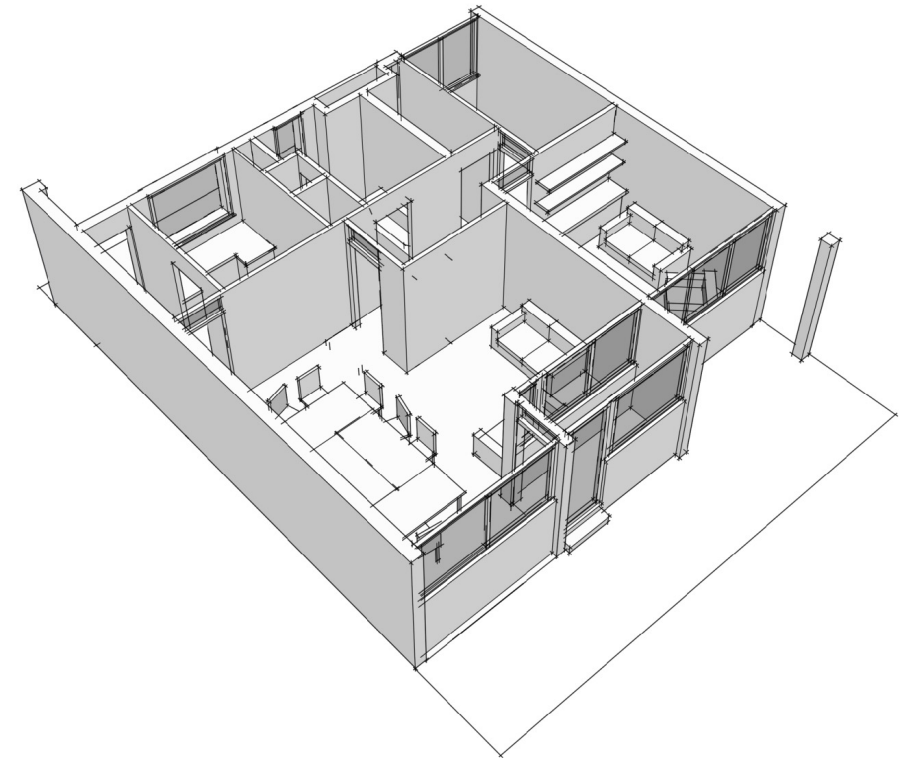
2. BBQ social

- Co-developed between tenants and NORC officer.
- 4 residents led the cooking
- Engagement through door knocking, invited to suggest song for the playlist (**building rapport, breaking down barriers to engagement**)
- 30 / 65 residents attended



3. Community Space

- Lack of suitable social infrastructure in neighbourhood (problem worse in winter)
- RP agreed to convert a ground floor flat to a community space. **Tangible example of the trust they have for their tenants.**
- Work ongoing to co-design space and develop tenant management.



Reflections (so far)

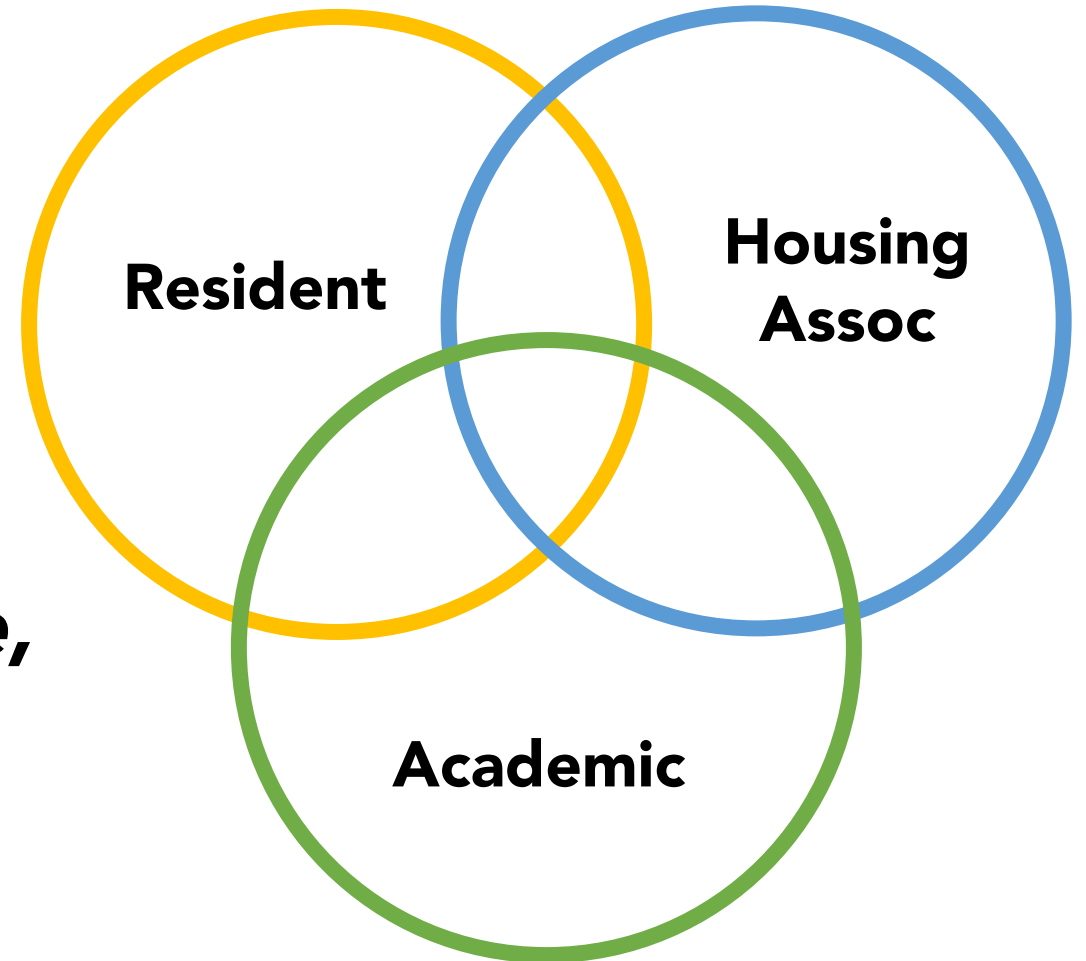
- Importance of building relationships – transparency about **motives, expectations, capabilities, timeframes and process** leads to long-term benefits, creates opportunities to work together to solve problems.
- Recognising **power imbalance** between resident ('customer') and housing association. Conflict between roles in social support and those of landlord.

Reflections (so far)

Importance of **creating an inclusive environment**, recognising the barriers to participating.

"I feel like I am always being asked to learn a new language, a new way of thinking..."

Develop new, shared forms of legitimacy and rigour



Reflections (so far)

Requires resilient, skilled staff. Genuine collaboration creates uncertainty (which is OK!)

Integration with public health – desire to engage, but unclear what this looks like on the ground.

Issue of funding, sustainability and staff retention – disappointment when workers develop strong links then move on.

Next Steps

- Project continues until April 2025
- Publication for RPs, identifying potential for new forms of practice around age-friendly living environments.
- Two workshops with RPs in London and Manchester (look forward to seeing some of you there!)
- Hopefully more Housing LIN events in the future!

Thank you

<https://www.msa.ac.uk/research/co-creating-age-friendly-social-housing/>

Contact:

Mark Hammond

M.Hammond@mmu.ac.uk

