

Ageing, inequality And urban regeneration

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Citation for published version (APA):

Lewis, C., & Kavanagh, N. (2026). *Ageing, inequality And urban regeneration: Collaborative research with older people living in North Manchester*. University of Manchester.

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AGEING, INEQUALITY AND URBAN REGENERATION

Collaborative research with older people living in North Manchester

MANCHESTER
1824
The University of Manchester

Healthier
Futures

Tackling inequalities
to deliver
fairer health

Contents

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences and contribute to our project.

This report is based on research undertaken by members of the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group, University of Manchester led by **Dr Camilla Lewis and Dr Niamh Kavanagh**.

The project was supported by Pippa Winship, Prof Tine Buffel, Prof Elaine Dewhurst, Prof Caroline Sanders, Prof Emma Stanmore, Prof Jo Dumville, Dr Luke Munford, Dr Obuks Ejohwomu and Dr Daniela Fazio Vargas.

Special thanks to our collaborators in North Manchester; Poppy Soldatos (Winning Hearts and Minds), Gemma Batchelor (Jigsaw Homes), Courtney Anderton (Nurturing Foundations), Circle Steele (Wai Yin Society), Dr Mohammad Younas Perwaz, Hamad Raza Khan, Maqsood Ahmed (Guidance Hub). And to Chan-yang Kim, Lynn Settrington, Brian Whitmore, Seleena Daye, Dominique Brouwers and Mel Davie for their creative input.

Kindly supported by Healthier Futures, University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Research Strategy and the School of Environment, Education and Development Impact Team.

Photographs were taken Chan-yang Kim and the project team.

The report was designed by Dr Sarah Day.

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Cover image: Mural in Cheetham Hill by Manchester-based artist Oskar with a K in collaboration with Manchester City Council's Neighbourhoods Team, Global Street Art Organisation and Hope for Cheetham.

First published July 2026.

To cite this report: Lewis, C and Kavanagh, N. (2026) Ageing, inequality and urban regeneration: Collaborative research with older people living in North Manchester. Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group: The University of Manchester.

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Executive Summary

Recommendations for policy makers and regeneration stakeholders

Urban regeneration in North Manchester has a unique opportunity to deliver pioneering approaches, with an inclusive age-friendly ethos at its heart.

Age-friendly urban regeneration should be orientated around the following core principles:

- 1 Equitable for all groups.**
- 2 Embedded within the existing community.**
- 3 Designed collaboratively with older people.**
- 4 Developed with an ethos of care and sensitivity, and be culturally-tailored.**
- 5 Investment should be directed to community organisations to sustain and extend the existing diverse social infrastructure.**

Background to the research

This report provides insights into **the experiences of older people living in North Manchester**, a large geographical area which is home to diverse, multicultural communities. The area is characterised by **multiple forms of deprivation and significant health inequalities** among people aged 50 and over and is undergoing Northern England's largest urban regeneration programme through a series of plans and investments.

The research was led by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, from the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group (MUARG) at the University of Manchester. The study set out to understand the everyday life of diverse communities and to explore **how proposed regeneration could be developed *with* residents to create more equitable communities in which to grow older.**

Research questions

The study was carried out collaboratively *with* older residents and community groups using creative, coproduction methodologies over a twelve-month period, starting in August 2025. Research questions included:

- How are older people living in North Manchester affected by ongoing and forthcoming urban regeneration plans?
- What places and services are important to people living in North Manchester as they age?
- What are older residents' views on proposed urban regeneration in North Manchester?
- How might future urban regeneration promote age-friendly neighbourhoods?
- The report aims to centre the voices of older people and communities who have been historically underrepresented in research and policy.

Context on urban regeneration

A range of urban regeneration programmes are currently underway in North Manchester. These include the '**North Manchester Strategy**', a highly ambitious project focused on health and housing investments. Led by Manchester City Council, Manchester Local Care Organisations, and other NHS organisations the strategy consists of three key developments, with a combined value of £6bn, spread over 15-20 years including:

- **Redevelopment of North Manchester General Hospital;**
- **Rebuilding and renovation of Park House** into North View, an NHS mental health facility on the NMGH site;
- **Victoria North**, a residential-led development, backed by the Government's New Towns Initiative.

Beyond the North Manchester Strategy, further regeneration in North Manchester also includes:

- **Strangeways and Cambridge;**
- **Ducie Street;**
- **District Centre Investments** in Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Cheetham Hill, Newton Heath and Strangeways.

There are also planned community and neighbourhood investments from:

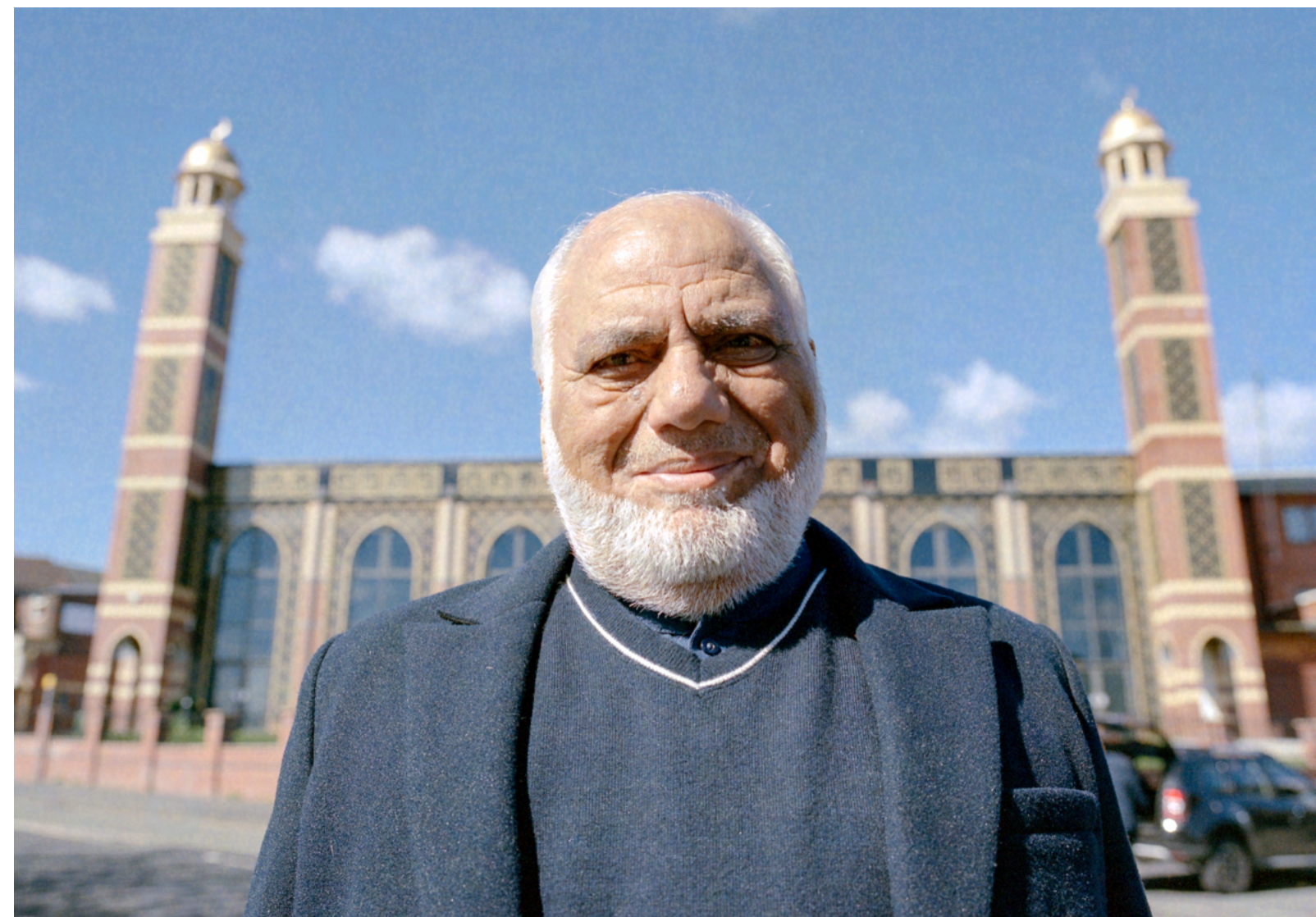
- The Government's **Pride in Place** programme;
- And local investments from Greater Manchester's **Live Well** initiative.

Consequently, North Manchester will be reshaped by substantial urban transformation in the coming years through multiple initiatives in different neighbourhoods.

Research Methods

The research included a 12-month period of community research, literature reviews, ethnographic research, coproduction and creative research methods.

- **41 interviews** were carried out with older residents, community organisations and regeneration stakeholders in North Manchester as well as **two focus groups**.
- **Four creative coproduction workshops** were organised in collaboration with community groups involving **over 50 diverse older people**, with activities including embroidery, calligraphy, portraits, life-stories, and zine-making.
- **The research focused primarily on Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall**, as these areas contain the highest proportion of older ethnically minoritised groups (used to describe South Asian and Black, African and Caribbean communities engaged in the research). The findings also mention the surrounding areas, including Collyhurst and Harpurhey.



Findings

Across the embedded community research, interviews and coproduction workshops, the following themes emerged about older people's everyday lives in North Manchester:

- **A strong sense of community and place identity;**
- **A desire to age in place** with community networks which offer informal support for older residents, despite limited resources;
- **Positive experiences of living in North Manchester** including access to local shops, amenities and faith spaces;
- **Challenges of ageing in place in North Manchester** including a long history of disinvestment, stigmatisation from outsiders, poor quality housing and struggles with the cost of living;
- **Social exclusion affecting many older residents** due to limited finances, long-term health problems, caring responsibilities and problems arising from language difficulties;
- **Experiences of racism and discrimination** and concerns about perceived rising levels of intolerance;
- **The VCSFE sector is under-resourced** due to historic lack of investment.



Views about proposed urban regeneration

The research found that some older people were positive about plans for investment in North Manchester while others lacked knowledge about the proposals or showed ambivalence about how planned regeneration might impact on their lives.

A range of concerns about urban regeneration proposals were voiced by older residents and community organisations including:

- **Questions about who will benefit** – incoming groups, or the existing population?
- **Whether urban regeneration will lead to gentrification**, resulting in the exclusion of existing and low-income residents;
- **If the multiple regeneration projects will create divisions** between communities *within* North Manchester;
- **Concerns around speculative private investment** being unsustainable;
- **Anxiety around the quantity and quality of proposed new housing;**
- **Feeling neglected after years of disinvestment** and failed regeneration plans;
- **The loss of existing infrastructure**, including shops and faith spaces and community settings closing down when new populations move in;
- **Anxiety about future demolition of homes** taking place;
- **Long waiting lists for council housing**, and competition for affordable private house rising.



Regeneration Strategies in North Manchester

NORTH MANCHESTER GENERAL HOSPITAL

- £1 – 1.5bn investment led by NHS, Manchester City Council and health commissioners.
- Major hospital re-build with new state-of-the-art acute hospital
- A new residential 'Healthy Ageing Neighbourhood' will be developed by Bruntwood, and designed by Pozzoni Architects, including a diverse mix of new housing.

STRANGEWAYS

- Collaboration between Manchester and Salford Council.
- 20+ year programme
- 7,000 new homes across 7 neighbourhoods

VICTORIA NORTH

- 15,000 homes across 7 neighbourhoods over the next 15-20 years
- Joint Venture between Manchester City Council and the Far East Consortium, backed by a £4bn investment
- 634 apartments already completed in Red Bank
- 5,500 homes planned for Collyhurst (274 near completion)
- Backed by the Government's New Towns Initiative

NORTH MANCHESTER STRATEGY

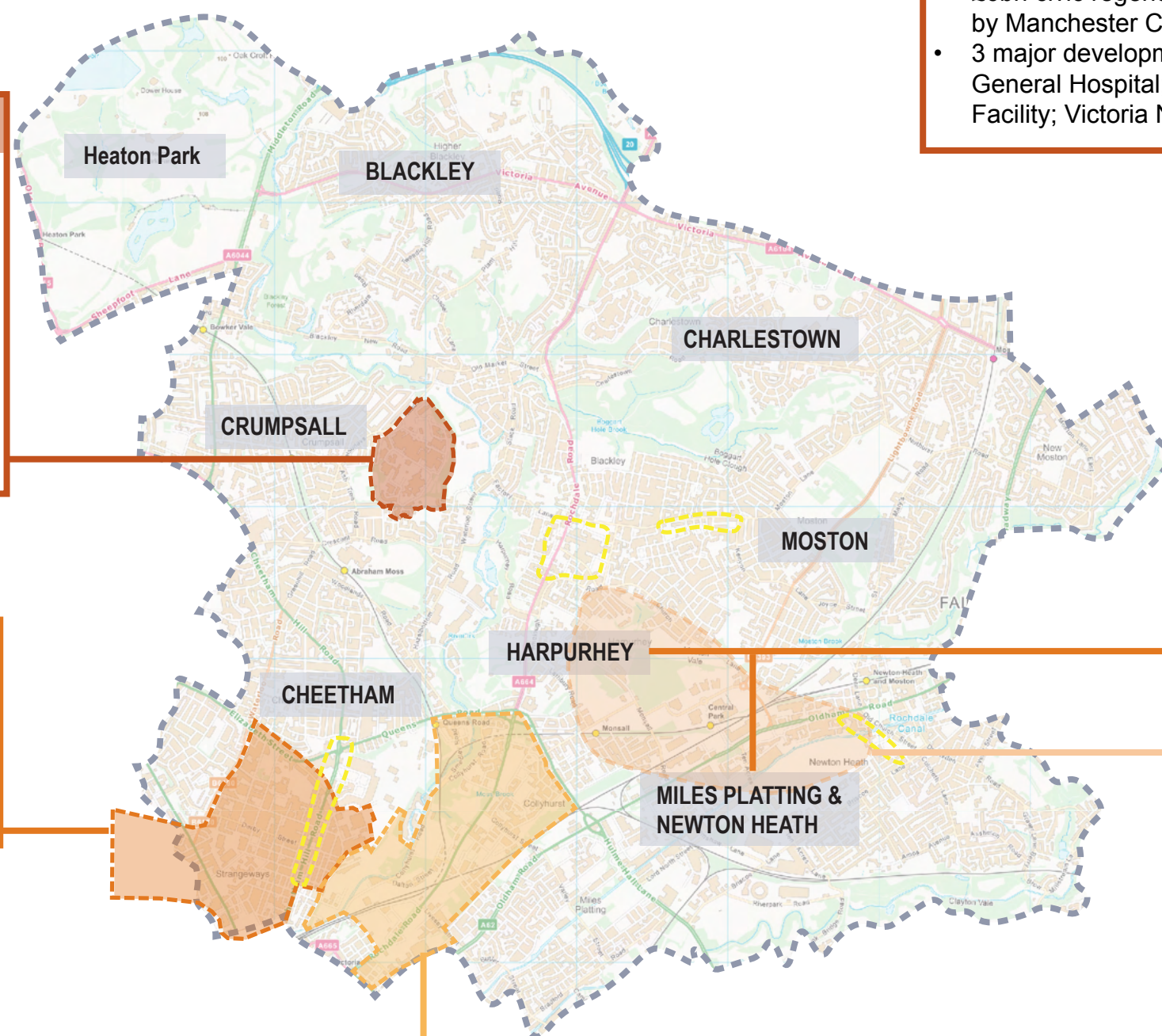
- £6bn civic regeneration over 15-20 years led by Manchester City Council and the NHS
- 3 major developments: North Manchester General Hospital; North View Mental Health Facility; Victoria North.

LIVE WELL

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority health prevention initiative
- Live Well in Later Life overlaps with existing ageing well priorities.
- Harpurhey, Miles Platting and Newton Heath to receive £1.6-1.9m of pilot funding to develop Live Well.

PRIDE IN PLACE

- £5bn national government programme
- Strong focus on strengthening communities and social cohesion
- 284 areas will receive £20m each over 10 years, including Clayton Vale and Harpurhey South/Monsall



Regeneration stakeholders interviewed reported on the opportunities and challenges of urban regeneration in North Manchester.

They discussed the potential transformative impact on local communities and a huge sense of responsibility to deliver the plans. Those interviewed described how **urban regeneration in North Manchester has a unique opportunity to deliver pioneering approaches, with inclusive age-friendly approaches at their heart.** But the **following challenges were identified:**

- **Working in diverse neighbourhoods** and across four different electoral wards with different ways of working, and limited staff is particularly challenging.
- **Disagreements about where the boundaries of particular neighbourhoods lie** and where funding should be targeted.
- **Limited staff members** delivering the plans.
- **The proposed plans, together with the length of delivery, are substantial in scale.**
- **Ambitions for building social housing are high**, but associated funding is limited.
- **The challenge of delivering housing** and involving residents in the process.
- **The difficulty of involving and engaging residents** over the long-term.



Recommendations for policy makers and regeneration stakeholders

The collaborative research found that age-friendly urban regeneration in North Manchester should be orientated around the following core principles:

- 1 Equitable for all groups:** Regeneration plans should explicitly address inequalities among the population, supporting the inclusion of existing residents, and benefiting all income groups.
- 2 Embedded within the existing community:** Regeneration policies should start by understanding the *strengths* rather than *deficits* of places and develop approaches in *partnership* with local communities through long-term embedded engagements.
- 3 Designed collaboratively with older people:** Population ageing must be a central consideration in imagining, designing, building, and future-proofing urban regeneration initiatives in North Manchester.
- 4 Developed with an ethos of care and sensitivity, and be culturally-tailored:** Prioritising sustained and meaningful resident engagement, including culturally-sensitive co-production approaches which are responsive to diverse cultural identities and lived experiences.
- 5 New housing should be inclusive for all income groups:** Innovative approaches are required to ensure that new housing is attractive, accessible, adaptable, and within financial reach of those who wish to move, with mandatory targets around social and affordable housing.
- 6 Investment should be directed to community organisations to sustain and extend the existing diverse social infrastructure:** Regeneration initiatives must ensure that the necessary community infrastructure is in place to sustain and nourish everyday encounters and offer more extensive levels of support to those facing social exclusion.



1. Introduction

This report provides insights into a project focusing on the experiences of older people living in North Manchester, a large geographical area which is home to diverse, multicultural communities. These neighbourhoods are also characterised by multiple forms of deprivation and significant income and health inequalities among people aged 50 and over. The area is now undergoing Northern England's largest urban regeneration programme.

Aims of the research:

1. Understand the everyday life of people living in diverse communities.
2. Explore how the proposed regeneration could be developed with residents in order to create more equitable communities in which to grow older.

The study was carried out collaboratively *with* older residents and community groups using creative, coproduction methodologies over a twelve-month period, starting in August 2025.

Gap in existing evidence

Urban regeneration has been a mainstay of urban policy in the UK for over 50 years, addressing widening inequalities in post-industrial neighbourhoods¹. However, **to date, there has been limited academic research** examining:

- **Processes of urban regeneration from the perspective of older people**, particularly those from ethnically minoritised groups, and;
- **Insufficient evidence about how urban regeneration impacts on reducing health inequalities in later life.**

This report aims to fill these gaps, by exploring the lived experiences of ethnically minoritised older people living in North Manchester and community organisations who support them.

Research questions

- What does existing evidence tell us about how UK urban regeneration programmes impact health and health inequalities among the older population (50+)?
- How are older people living in North Manchester affected by ongoing and forthcoming urban regeneration plans?
- What places and services are important to people living in North Manchester as they age?
- What are older residents' views on proposed urban regeneration in North Manchester?
- How might future urban regeneration promote age-friendly neighbourhoods?

Background to the project

The project involved a team of interdisciplinary researchers at the University of Manchester. It was led by Dr Camilla Lewis and Dr Niamh Kavanagh (Architecture) in collaboration with Prof Caroline Sanders, Prof Emma Stanmore, Prof Jo Dumville, Dr Luke Munford (Health Sciences), Prof Tine Buffel, Pippa Winship and Dr Daniela Fazio-Vargas (Sociology) and Dr Obuks Ejohwomu (Engineering). Funding was kindly provided by Healthier Futures, the Research Strategy at the University of Manchester and the School of Environment, Education and Development Impact Team.



Why focus on North Manchester?

North Manchester is going one of the largest urban regeneration programmes in the country, through multiple investments. **The area has been shaped by waves of migration**, resulting in vibrant communities across its diverse neighbourhoods. From the 19th century, Irish and Jewish communities settled in Cheetham Hill, and from the 1950s and 1960s migrants from India, Pakistan and the Caribbean settled in North Manchester. More recently communities from Africa, the Far East and Eastern Europe have also made these neighbourhoods their home.

Cheetham Hill Road is often described as one of Britain's most diverse streets, home to mosques, temples, churches and synagogues, and a place where over 150 languages are spoken². Neighbourhoods like Moston and Harpurhey have growing African communities, with 10.1% of Moston's and 15.6% of Harpurhey's population born in Africa (significantly above the Manchester average of 6.9%), as well as high rates of residents from mainland Europe (16%).^{3,4}



As well as an increasingly diverse population, communities in North Manchester have also been affected by **deindustrialisation, housing demolition, and limited community infrastructure and investment.**

Consequently, residents in North Manchester face some of England's starkest health inequalities:

- **Older people live nine years fewer in good health** than the national average, and face high levels of preventable illness (including respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and cancer), social isolation and environmental risks.⁵
- **Compared to other wards in Manchester, Miles Platting and Newton Heath have the highest proportion of residents (9%) with bad or very bad health.**⁶
- **The area has a high proportion of low-income households, with ill-health and disability** reducing economic activity and household incomes.⁷
- **Housing stock is often poor-quality,** with a direct influence on health and wellbeing.⁸
- **Some neighbourhoods have seen the loss of the majority of community spaces** and local amenities.^{9 10}
- **The VCSFE sector in North Manchester is under-resourced** compared to southern and central parts of the city. There has been a historic lack of support, investment and a coherent strategy for North Manchester which has resulted in a fragile sector.¹¹

North Manchester has been subject to longstanding stigma from outsiders. Its neighbourhoods are often defined by what they lack, with persistent negative representations that are both internalised and negotiated by local communities in different ways.¹² However, at the same time, residents express a strong pride in their communities and actively challenge these narratives, highlighting the vibrancy, talent and care that exists across the area.¹³



Focus on ethnically minoritised older people

In the UK, there is clear evidence which shows how socio-health-economic inequalities have a disproportionate effect on older minoritised ethnic groups;

- People from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Middle Eastern/North African backgrounds often report physical health limitations at age 60 similar to that of a typical 80-year-old.¹⁴
- Ethnically minoritised groups experience more long-term health conditions and face higher burdens of those long-term conditions, from

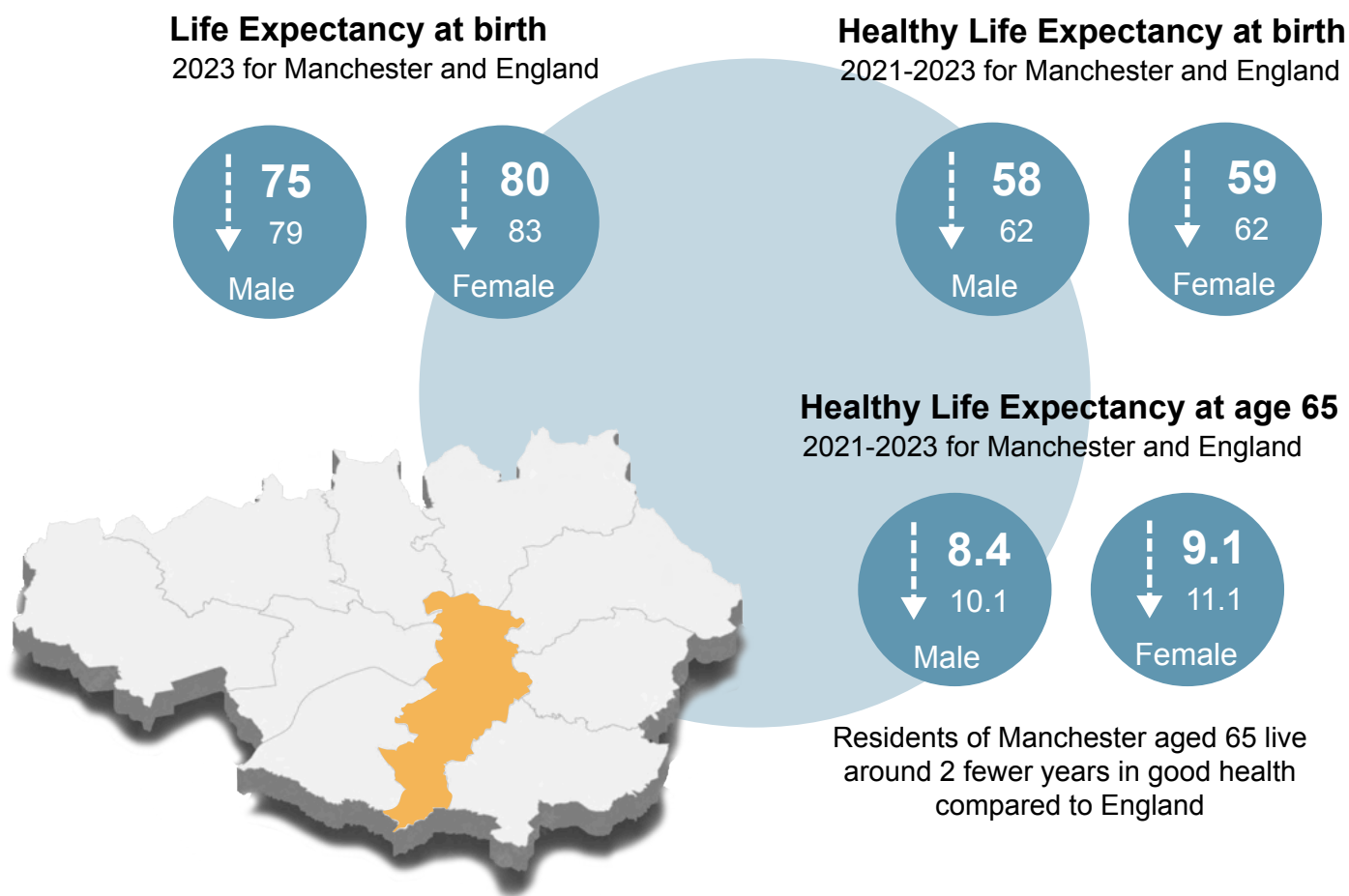
a 'cumulative compounding of disadvantage' caused by racism over time.¹⁵

- Bangladeshi and Black African older adults are more likely to live in deprived neighbourhoods.¹⁶
- Older Bangladeshi adults are among the most housing deprived minority ethnic groups in the UK, through a series of cultural and structural barriers.¹⁷

Exploring these inequalities further, this report centres on the voices of older people and communities living in North Manchester who have been historically underrepresented in research and policy.



Inequality statistics in North Manchester



In North Manchester, older people live **nine years fewer in good health** than the national average, and face high levels of preventable illness (including respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and cancer), social isolation and environmental risks.

North Manchester has a **high proportion of low income households**, and significant levels of ill health and disability problems play a pressing factor in reducing economic activity and suppressing household incomes.

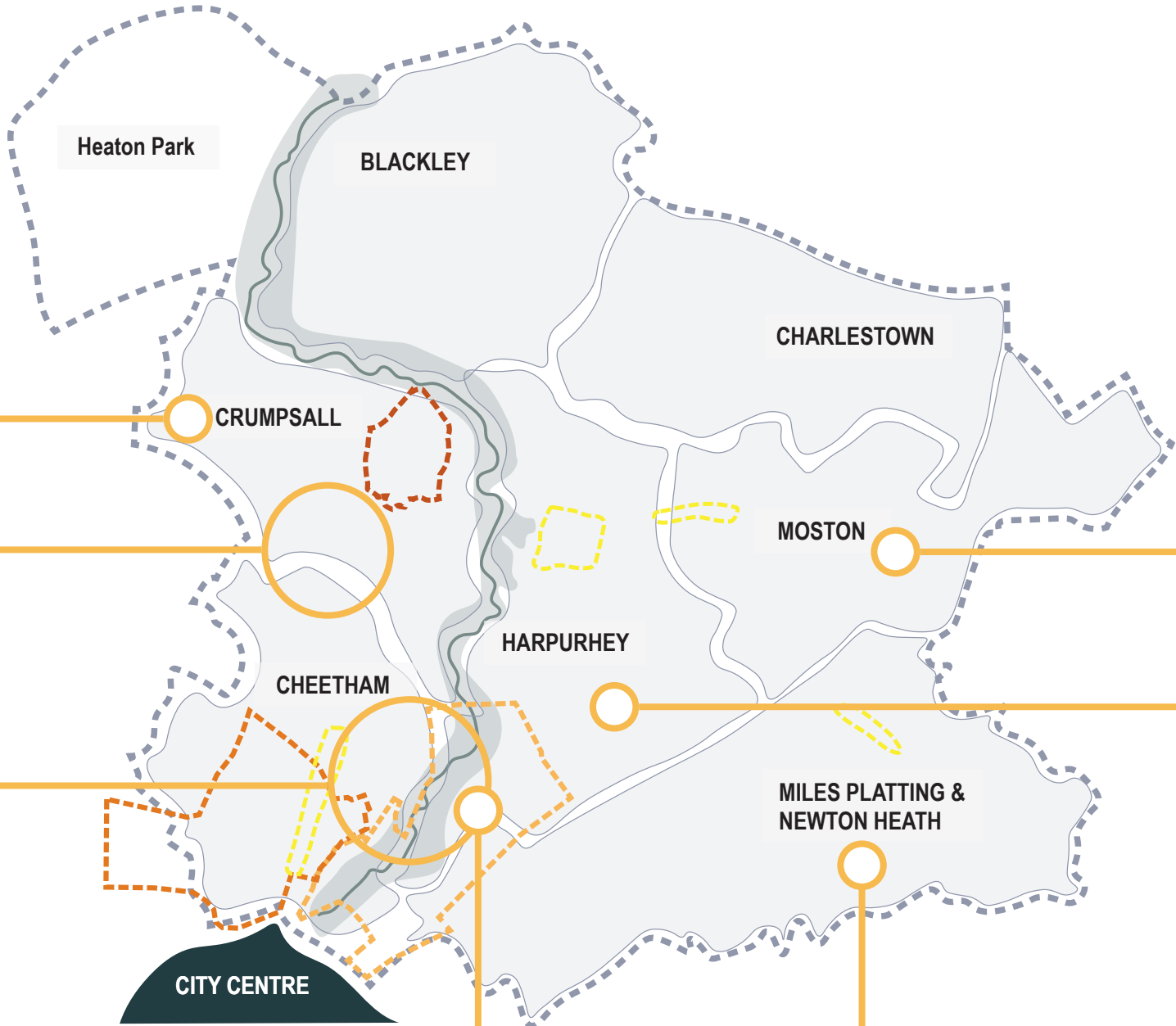


Deprivation statistics across neighbourhoods

Crumpsall is in the **top 7%** of neighbourhoods that have high rates of **income deprivation for older people**.

Crumpsall and Cheetham Hill score in the **top 6% of deprived neighbourhoods in England**, mostly in relation to barriers to housing and services.

Cheetham Hill and Collyhurst experience high levels of **income deprivation affecting older people**, ranking within the **top 1%** of neighbourhoods in England.



The Moston Lane area scored in the **top 7%** of deprived neighbourhoods nationally, and is **most deprived in relation crime (top 3%) and access to housing and services (top 2%)**.

Harpurhey is **among the most deprived areas in England (top 1%)**.

Harpurhey is in the **top 5% of neighbourhoods for income deprivation affecting older people**.

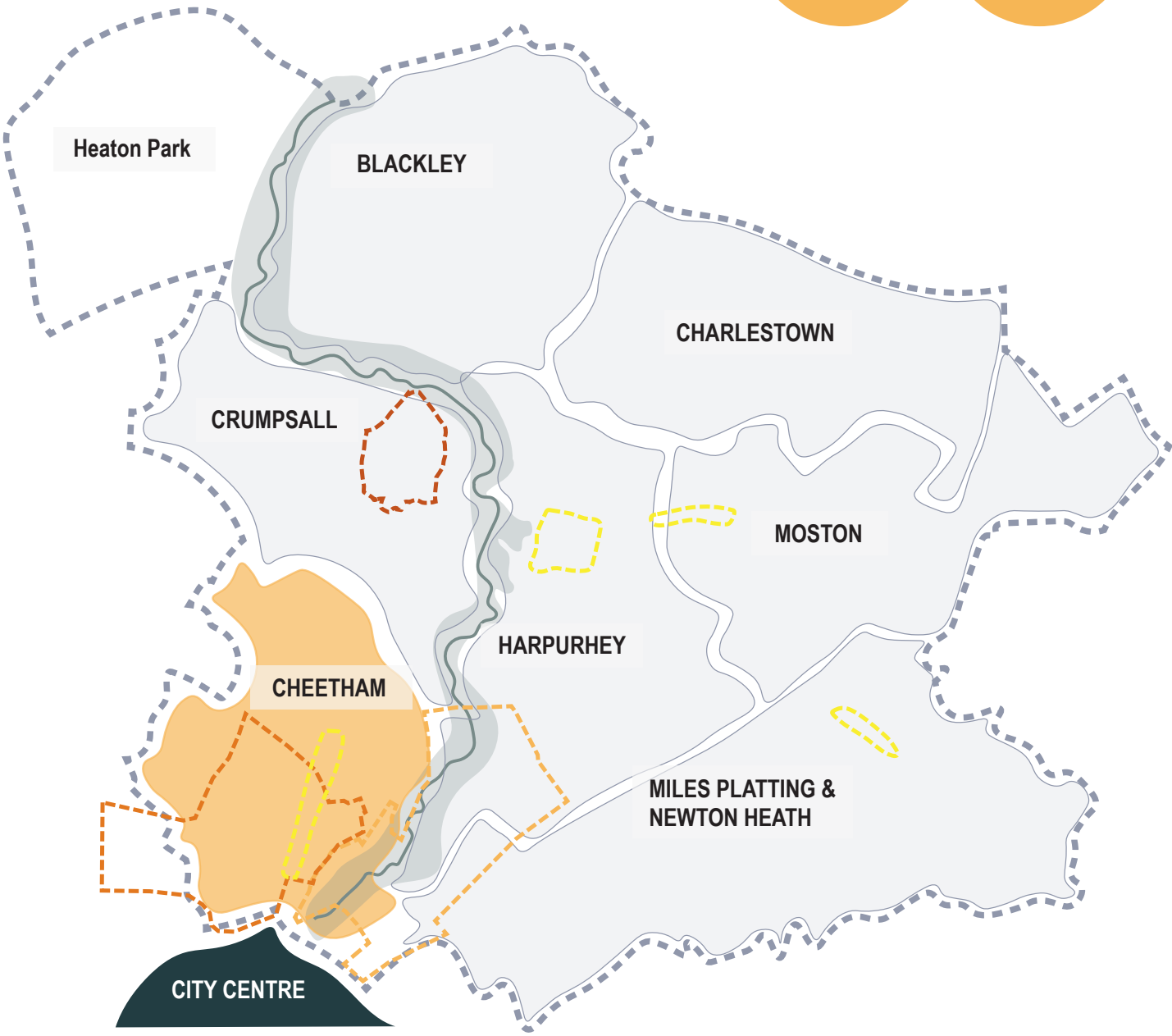
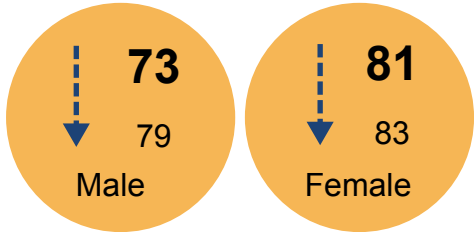
Parts of Collyhurst scored in the **top 4% of deprived neighbourhoods nationally**, most deprived in relation to **health and disability (top 1%) and crime (top 2%)** in England.

Out of all of Manchester's wards, Miles Platting and Newton Heath have the **highest proportion of residents (9%) with bad or very bad health**.

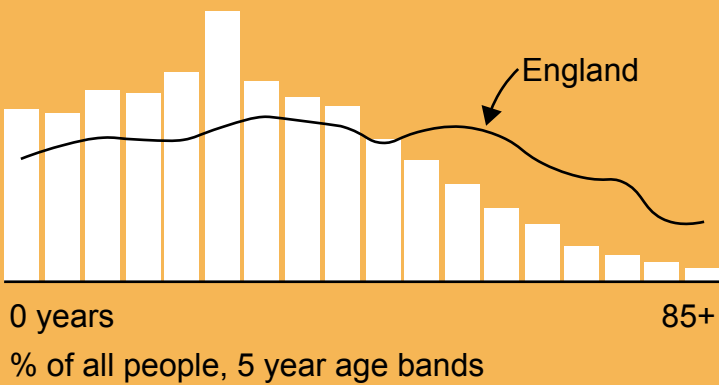
Cheetham Hill



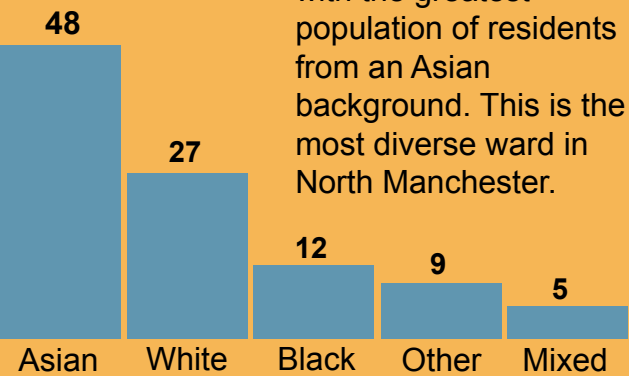
Life Expectancy
Cheetham Hill against life expectancy for England



Age Profile

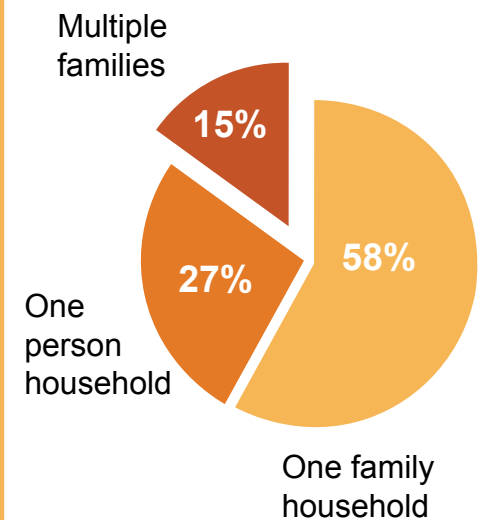


Ethnicity by %

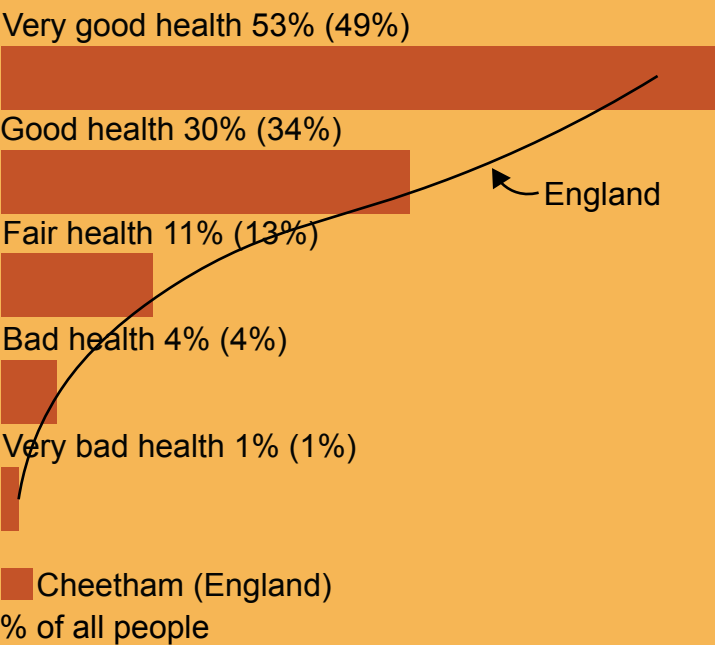


Across North Manchester, Cheetham Hill is one of the wards with the greatest population of residents from an Asian background. This is the most diverse ward in North Manchester.

Household composition



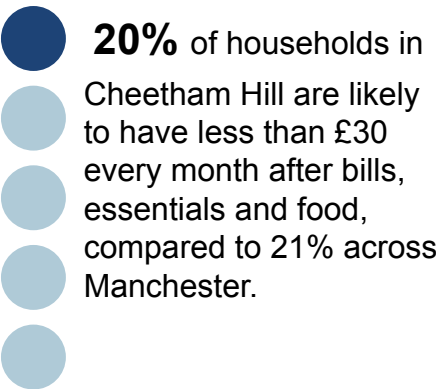
Self Reported Health



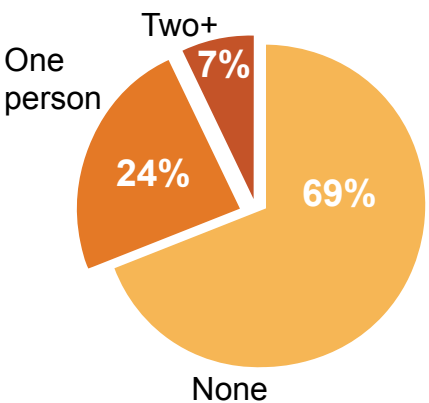
Universal Credit Claimants



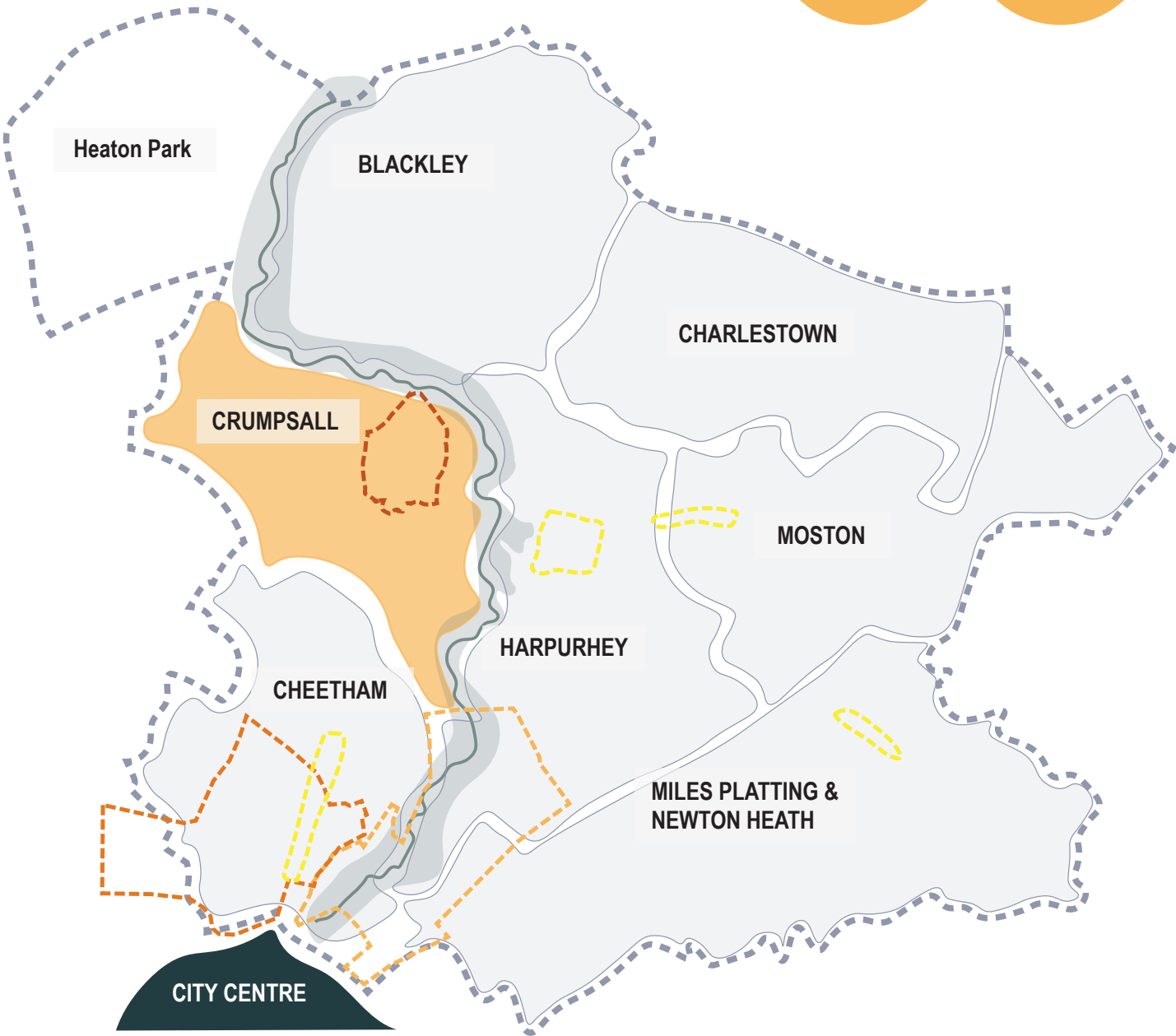
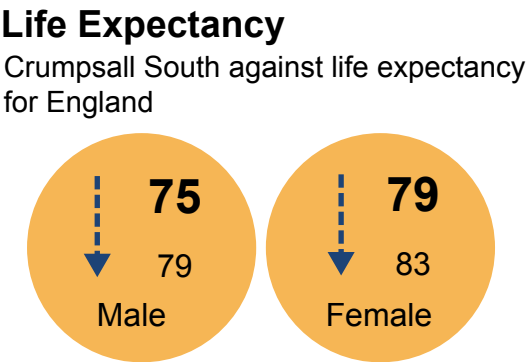
Low Discretionary Income



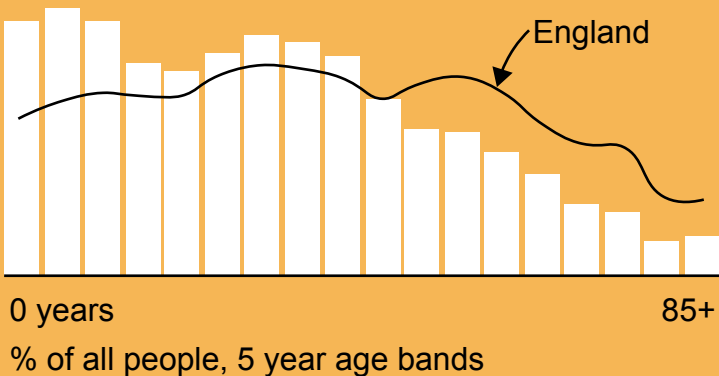
Household residents with a disability



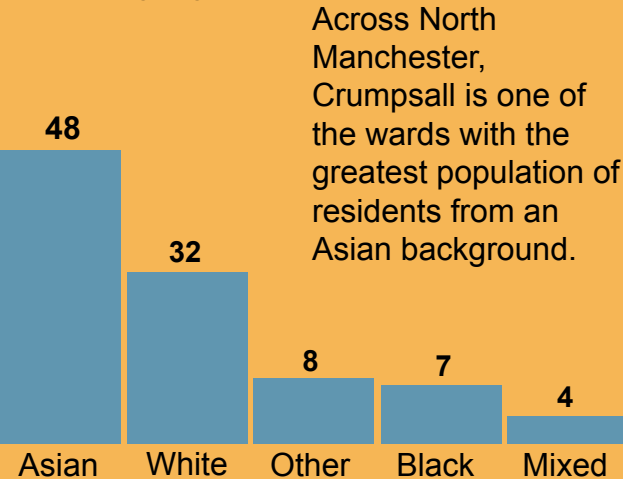
Crumpsall



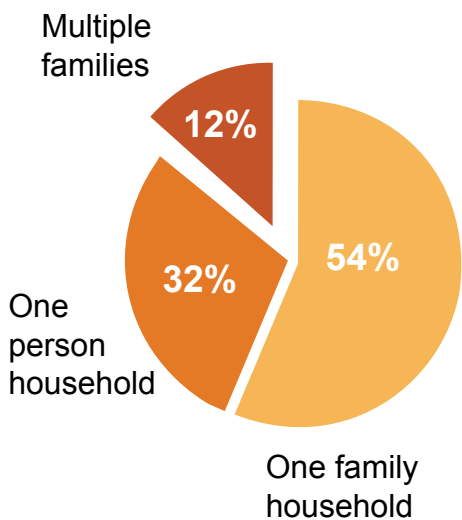
Age Profile



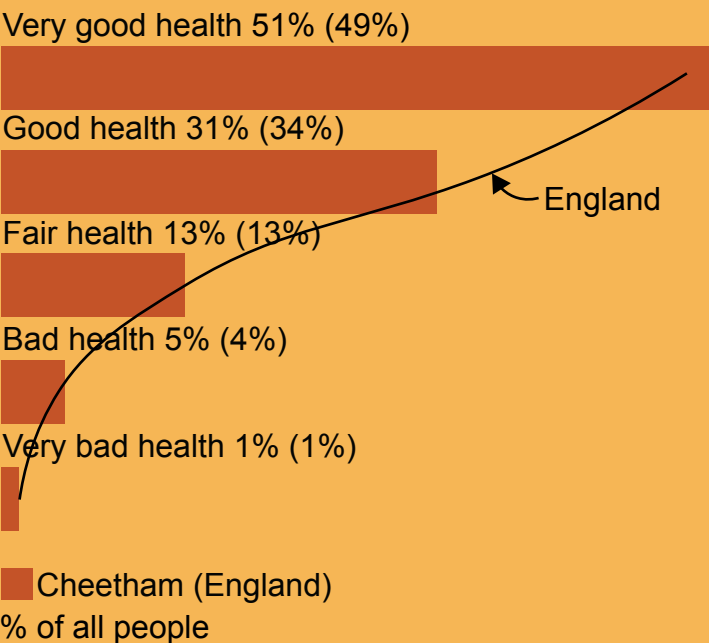
Ethnicity by %



Household composition



Self Reported Health



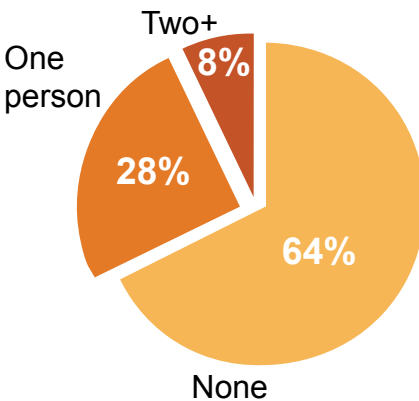
Universal Credit Claimants



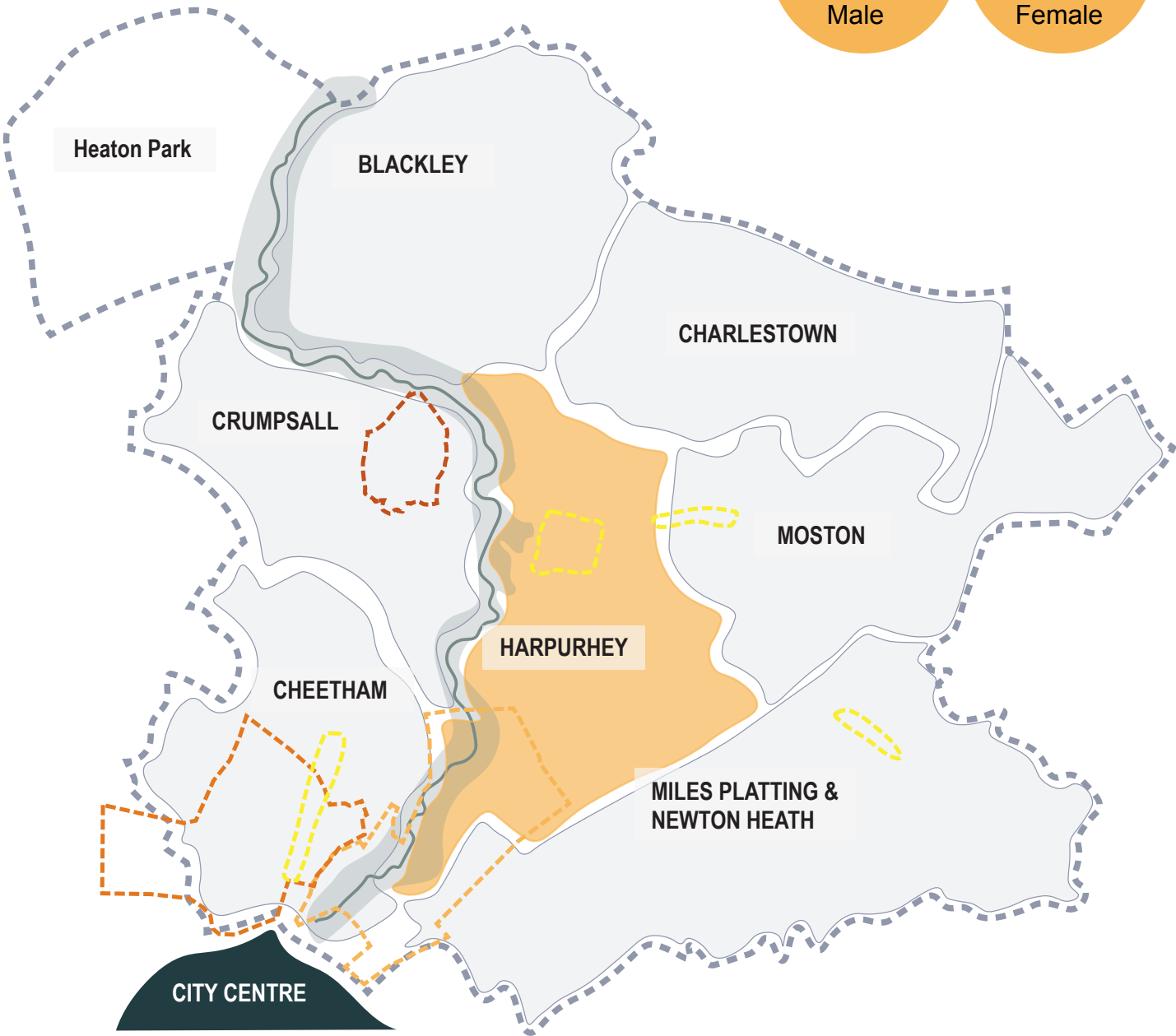
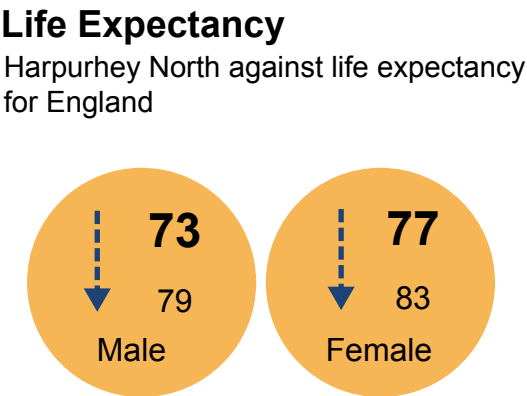
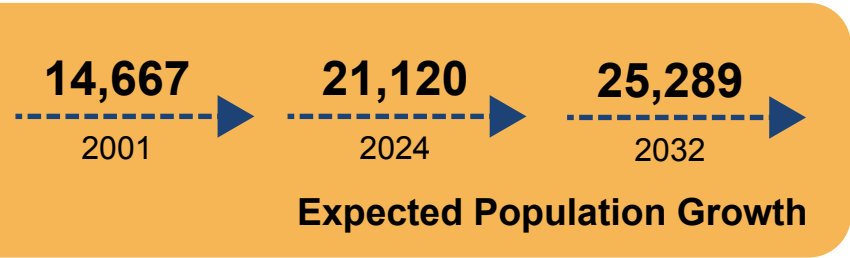
Low Discretionary Income

14% of households in Crumpsall are likely to have less than £30 every month after bills, essentials and food, compared to 21% across Manchester.

Household residents with a disability

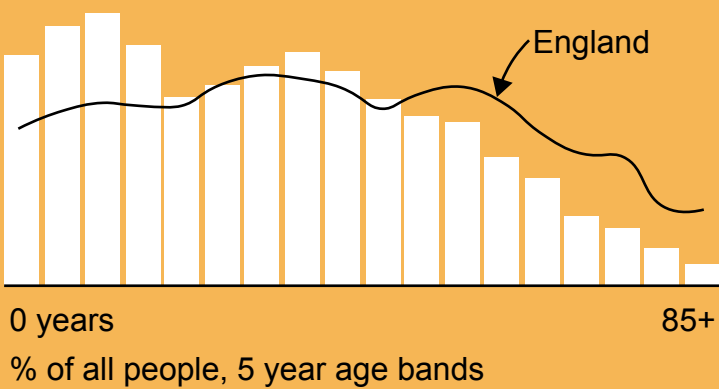


Harpurhey

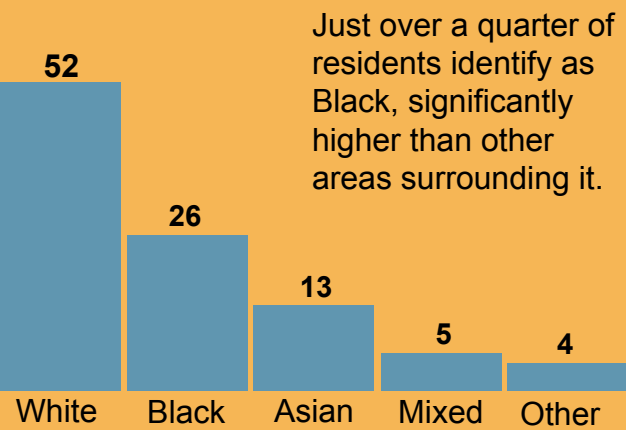


Since the new ward boundaries came into effect in 2018, Collyhurst sits within two separate wards: Harpurhey and Miles Platting and Newton Heath. Parts of Collyhurst are therefore represented in the data here.

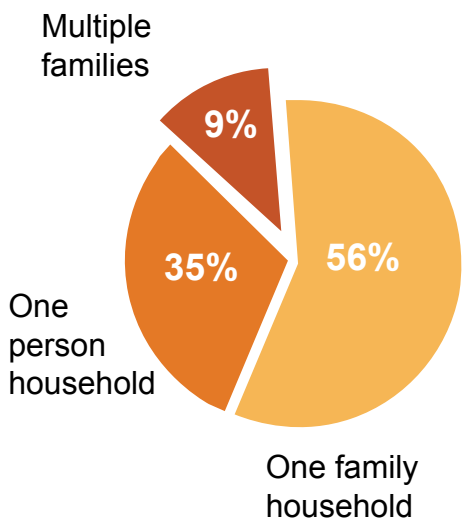
Age Profile



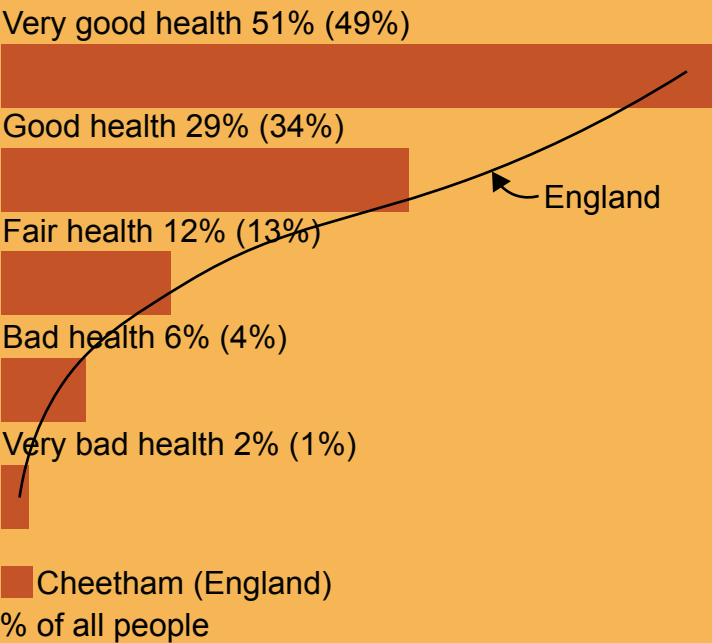
Ethnicity by %



Household composition



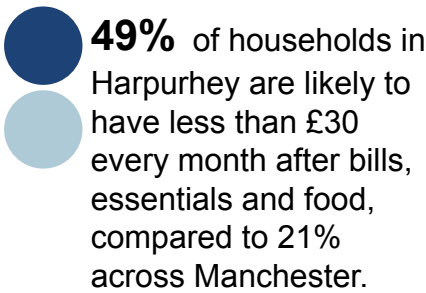
Self Reported Health



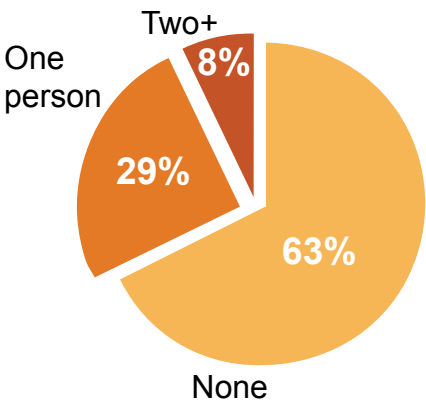
Universal Credit Claimants



Low Discretionary Income



Household residents with a disability



*These illustrations draw on officially published data but the visual representations and interpretation are the authors own

Terminology used in the report

‘Older people’:

- The focus was on residents aged 50 and over for the following reasons:
- This approach aligns with the focus of Manchester City Council’s age-friendly policies, ensuring research findings contribute to ongoing local strategies;
- It recognises that in areas of high health inequalities, ageing-related challenges emerge earlier, with residents experiencing poorer health at younger age;
- Focusing on people in their mid-life is crucial, as the regeneration initiatives span up to 20 years.

‘Ethnically minoritised groups’:

- The term is used to describe South Asian and Black, African and Caribbean communities engaged in the research:
- The authors view ethnicity not as something essential, intrinsic or fixed, but as socially constructed, a way of labelling and grouping people that has been devised by society throughout a long history of classifications.

‘North Manchester’:

- This report focuses broadly on North Manchester exploring the everyday lives of older residents and myriad regeneration initiatives planned across its diverse neighbourhoods.
- Community research concentrated closely on Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall, home to diverse older ethnically minoritised groups.
- The research also focused on the surrounding areas, including Collyhurst and Harpurhey.
- The report highlights that there is considerable ambiguity about the definition of different neighbourhoods for both older residents, and regeneration stakeholders.

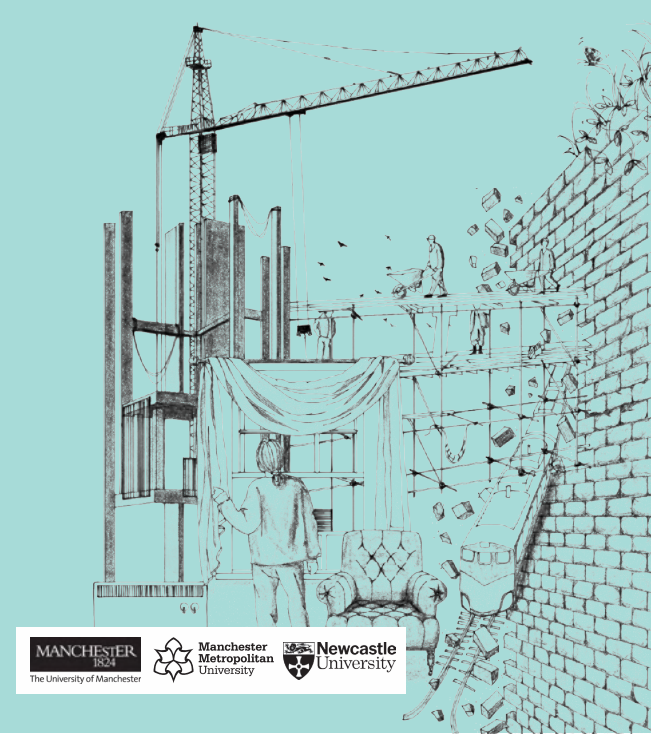


.....



- Despite population loss and changes to social ties, the majority of residents want to remain living in North Manchester and to 'age in place';
- Concerns were expressed about whether the type of regeneration proposed would result in the exclusion of the existing community;
- Strong support from residents, the local council and developers for age-friendly neighbourhoods. However, limited guidance exists on how to implement age friendly principles into large-scale regeneration projects.

Findings from the project informed the North Manchester Social Benefits Strategy which outlines the commitment: ‘... to build an age-friendly city that promotes good health and wellbeing for people in middle and later life’.¹⁹ The research was also used to support written evidence to the UK Parliament on developing age-friendly approaches to New Towns.²⁰





Yükseköğretim Bakanlığı
T.C. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı

Embedding coproduction into our research

Coproduction has been embedded in all stages of the collaborative research process and can be defined as:

- An approach to research, policy, or practice that involves working with people and communities rather than for or about them.
- Not just a method, but also a commitment to addressing power inequalities and to challenging the structural conditions that sustain exclusion.²¹
- Widely promoted in age-friendly research, where there is a drive to work with older people, to ensure that their lived experiences are reflected in ageing research, policy and practice.²²

To start the project, in July 2025, we involved older people who have worked with us as community researchers and members of the Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group (MUARG) Older People's Forum — a diverse group of residents who advise, collaborate on, and guide our research.²³ The group were invited to discuss guiding principles which should underpin our research in North Manchester.

The discussion focused on developing a 'code of practice' about what principles should underpin our research as seen in the illustration. **These were the guiding principles throughout the research process.**



MUARG Older People's Forum

Developing a Code-of-practice for collaboration with older people



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Welcome Centre Community Café and Garden



2. Context: Urban regeneration in North Manchester

This section introduces North Manchester and provides some contextual information about the ongoing and planned urban regeneration initiatives in the area.

Overview: planned investment in North Manchester

- **Redevelopment of North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH);**
- **Rebuilding and renovation of Park House** into North View, an NHS mental health facility on the NMGH site;
- **Victoria North**, a residential-led development, backed by the Government’s **New Towns Initiative**.

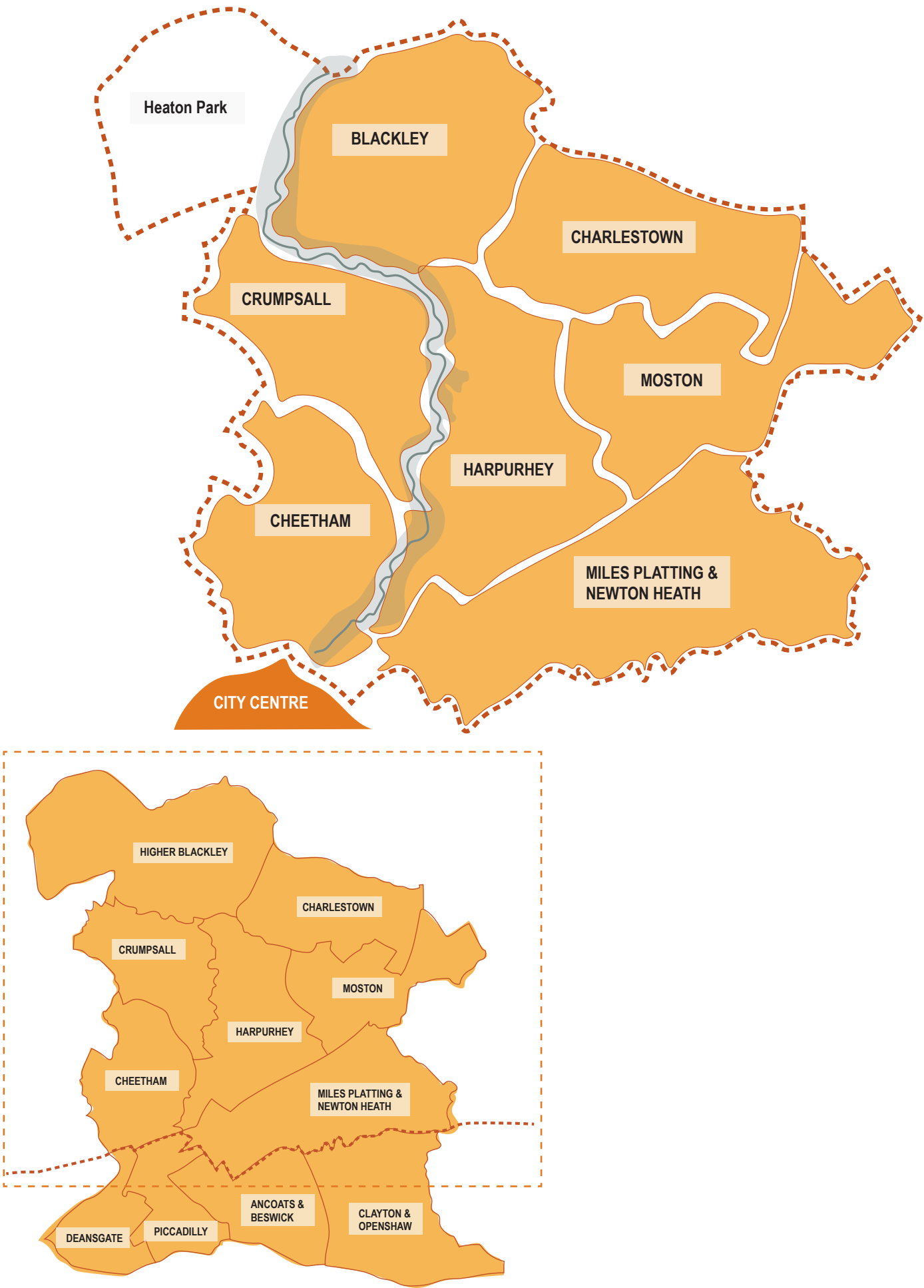
Beyond the North Manchester Strategy, further regeneration in North Manchester also includes:

- **Strangeways and Cambridge;**
- **Ducie Street;**
- **District Centre Investments** in Moston Lane, Harpurhey, Cheetham Hill, Newton Heath and Strangeways.

There are also planned community and neighbourhood investments from:

- The Government’s **Pride in Place** programme;
- And local investments from Greater Manchester’s **Live Well** initiative.

Overall, across North Manchester there are multiple initiatives, involving various partners and timescales including the short, medium and long-term.



Regeneration in North Manchester

Harpurhey Local Infrastructure Framework

Heaton Park

BLACKLEY

CHARLESTOWN

NORTH MANCHESTER GENERAL HOSPITAL

CRUMPSALL

New square on Moston Lane

MOSTON

LIVE WELL

HARPURHEY

CHEETHAM

PRIDE IN PLACE

STRANGEWAYS

Cheetham Hill Road Corridor

**MILES PLATTING &
NEWTON HEATH**

CITY CENTRE

Newton Heath District Centre

VICTORIA NORTH

Regeneration in North Manchester

NORTH MANCHESTER GENERAL HOSPITAL

- £1 – 1.5bn investment led by NHS, Manchester City Council and health commissioners.
- Major hospital re-build with new state-of-the-art acute hospital
- A new residential 'Healthy Ageing Neighbourhood' will be developed by Bruntwood, and designed by Pozzoni Architects, including a diverse mix of new housing.

STRANGEWAYS

- Collaboration between Manchester and Salford Council.
- 20+ year programme
- 7,000 new homes across 7 neighbourhoods

VICTORIA NORTH

- 15,000 homes across 7 neighbourhoods over the next 15-20 years
- Joint Venture between Manchester City Council and the Far East Consortium, backed by a £4bn investment
- 634 apartments already completed in Red Bank
- 5,500 homes planned for Collyhurst (274 near completion)
- Backed by the Government's New Towns Initiative

NORTH MANCHESTER STRATEGY

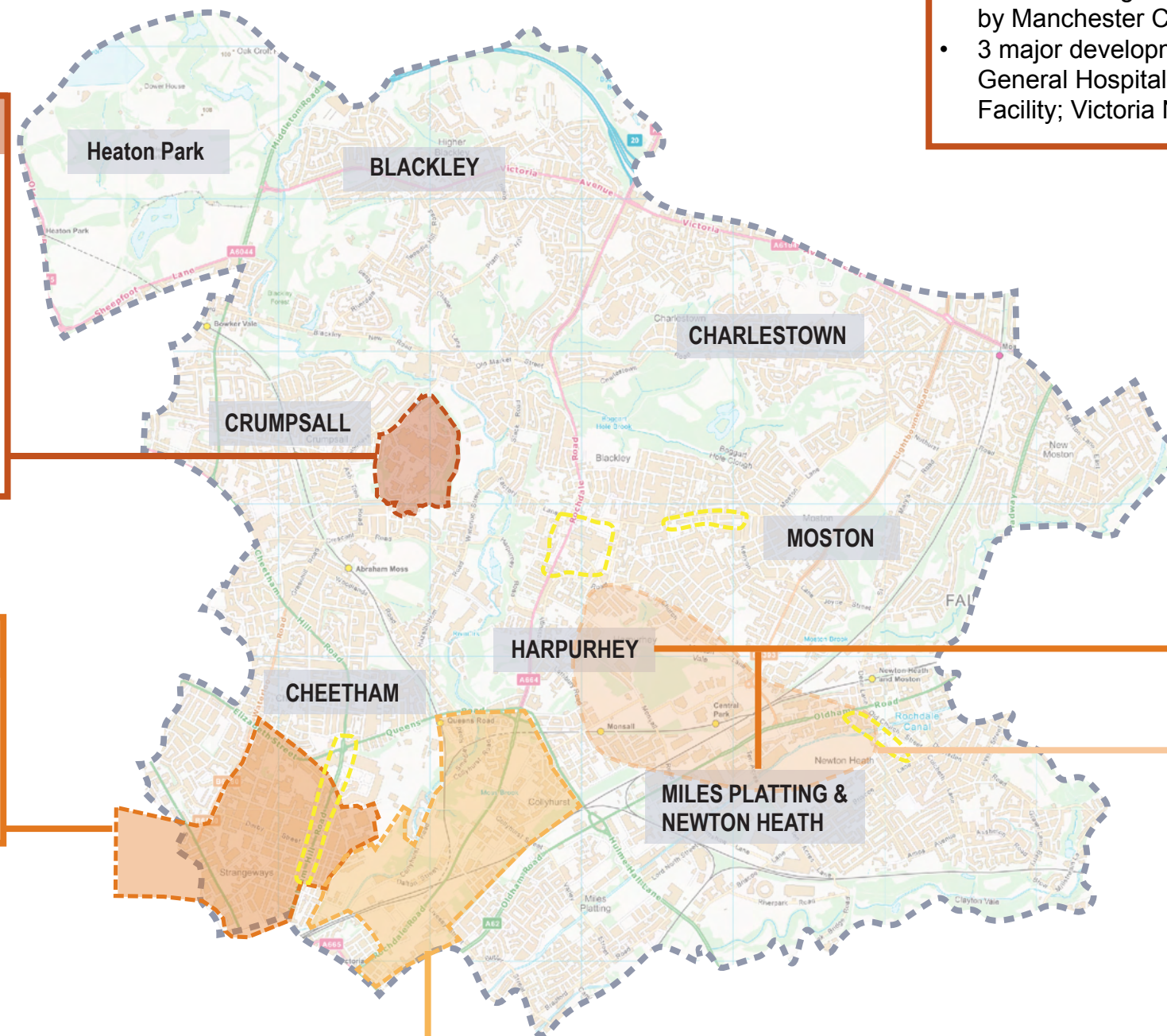
- £6bn civic regeneration over 15-20 years led by Manchester City Council and the NHS
- 3 major developments: North Manchester General Hospital; North View Mental Health Facility; Victoria North.

LIVE WELL

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority health prevention initiative
- Live Well in Later Life overlaps with existing ageing well priorities.
- Harpurhey, Miles Platting and Newton Heath to receive £1.6-1.9m of pilot funding to develop Live Well.

PRIDE IN PLACE

- £5bn national government programme
- Strong focus on strengthening communities and social cohesion
- 284 areas will receive £20m each over 10 years, including Clayton Vale and Harpurhey South/Monsall



The North Manchester Strategy is a highly ambitious ‘civic regeneration’ project focused on health and housing investments in North Manchester.² It will be delivered by a collaboration of key anchor institutions including Manchester City Council, Manchester Local Care Organisations, and other NHS organisations.

The strategy includes three key developments, with a collective value of £6bn, spread over 15-20, years including:

- 1. The redevelopment of North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH);
- 2. Rebuilding and renovation of Park House into North View, an NHS mental health facility on the NMGH site;
- 3. Victoria North, a residential-led development.

Major Investments in North Manchester

Project	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Victoria North	Strategic redevelopment and construction														
New Park House	Construction														
NMGH Redevelopment	Enabling					Construction*									

* Subject to business case approval

The focus of the Strategy is on delivering healthcare as a catalyst for economic growth alongside building new housing and community developments to improve health and wellbeing. This is a novel approach in the UK compared with traditional forms of urban regeneration.²

Another component of the strategy is the North Manchester Social Benefits Framework which was designed to ensure that local communities benefit directly from the planned growth and investment. The framework identifies drivers of ‘inclusive growth’ to be used by delivery partners to ensure that investment and redevelopments translates into meaningful opportunities to challenge both health inequalities and deliver positive, lasting socio-economic benefits for existing communities.²⁶ Put simply, the framework seeks to align community aspirations and priorities on the ground with the activities of the various delivery partners.

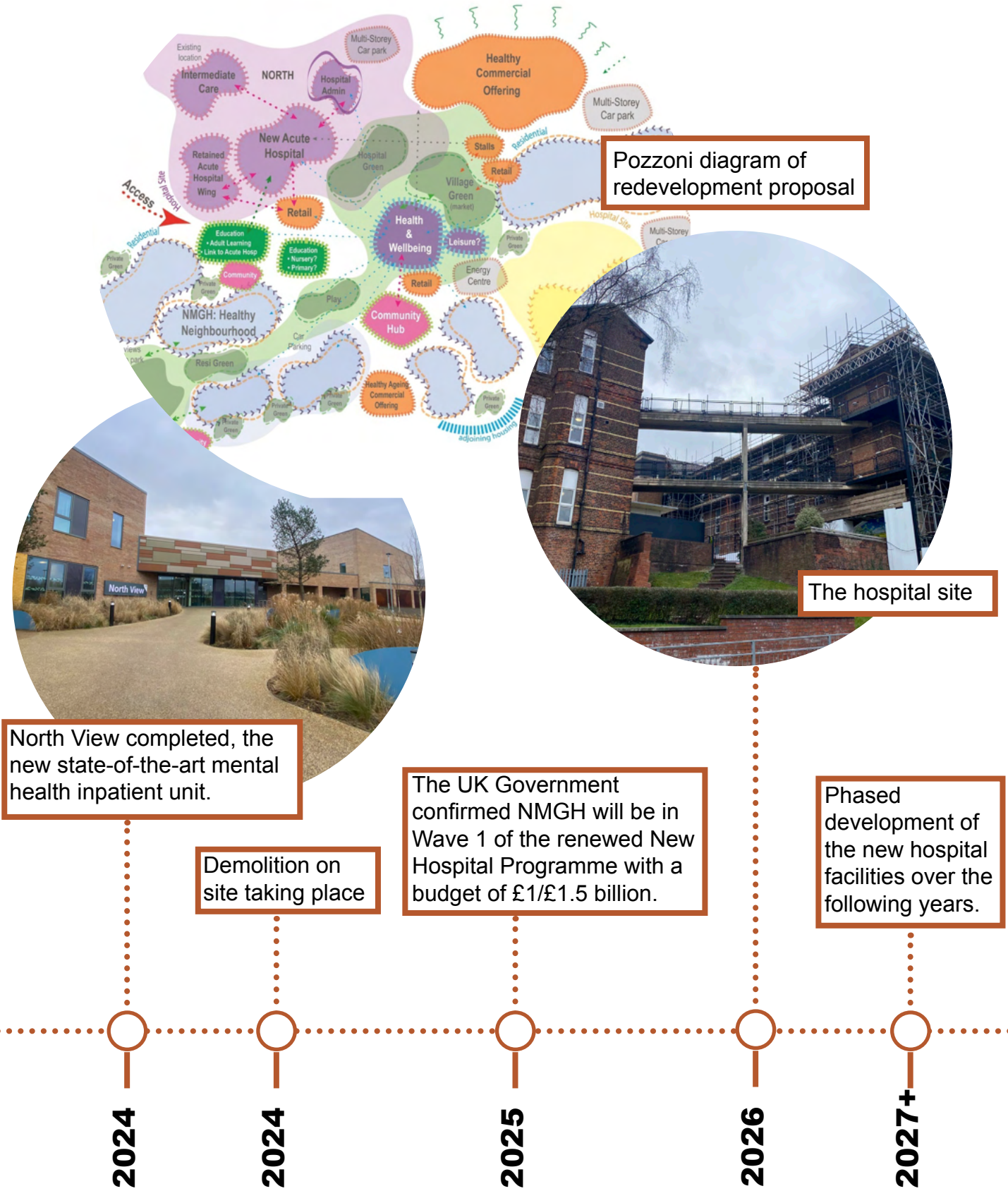
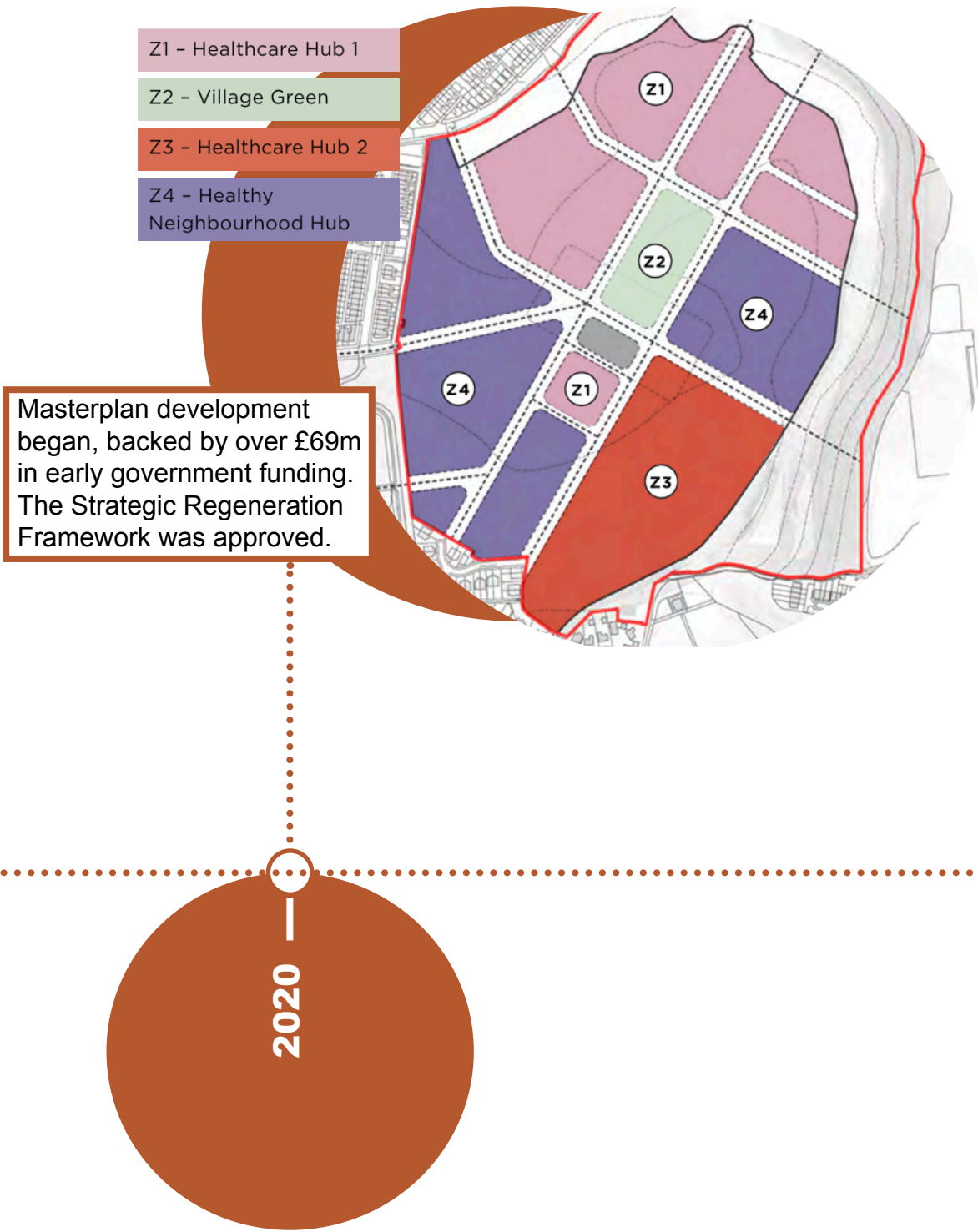
Both the North Manchester General Hospital (NMGH) redevelopment and the transformation of Park House into North View Mental Health Facility are key components of health-led regeneration in Crumpsall.

- As well as delivering a new acute, modern hospital, with a key focus on service reform and integration, the NMGH also has a specific focus around *healthy ageing*, where the redevelopment will also feature a new ‘Healthy Neighbourhood’ around the site. Designed by Pozzoni Architects the aim is to transform the hospital site into a modern health and social care environment, which includes a new residential neighbourhood.²

- Green spaces will be developed within the site, promoting connections to neighbouring Crumpsall Park and Abraham Moss Leisure Centre. The programme’s vision is to ‘radically transform’ the position of the hospital within the community by integrating it within the wider neighbourhood to support healthy ways of living.²⁸
- Demolition of the existing, largely Victorian buildings, has already started on the hospital site, and the project has been confirmed in the Government’s refreshed ‘New Hospital Programme’, with construction dates proposed for 2025-2030 and a budget ranging between £1-1.5bn.²⁹



North Manchester General Hospital Regeneration Timeline



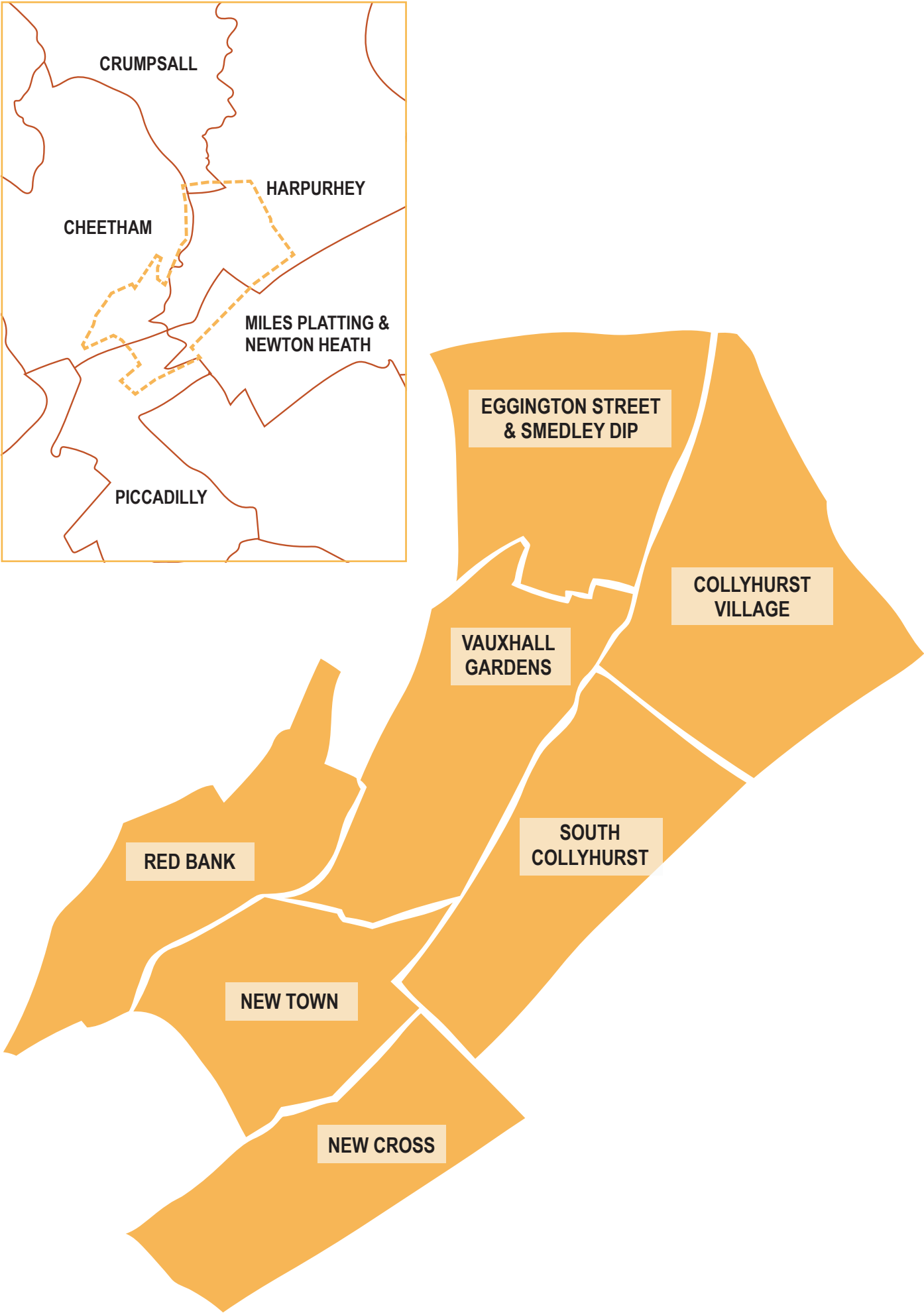
Victoria North

Victoria North, is a housing-led regeneration initiative: a Joint Venture between Manchester City Council and Hong Kong-based private developers, Far East Consortium (FEC).

The scale of regeneration proposed is unprecedented in Manchester, and one of the most ambitious regeneration projects currently underway in the UK. The programme:

- Plans to deliver up to 15,000 homes over a 15-20 year period, offering a mix of housing types and tenures to support diversity.

- Spans across seven neighbourhoods, stretching 400 acres from New Cross and Red Bank on the city centre fringe to lower density inner-city neighbourhoods Collyhurst and Smedley Dip to the north.
- Includes major green spaces, with key developments including the ‘City River Park’, a linear park that will stretch from the city centre to Collyhurst, opening up the River Irk, becoming Manchester’s largest city-centre green space.
- Work is underway in two of the areas of the Victoria North, including Red Bank and Collyhurst.³⁰



Victoria North Redevelopment Timeline
(Previously Northern Gateway until 2020)

A Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was announced for Collyhurst. The Collyhurst Local Plan outlined a 10-15 year major redevelopment programme for the area, providing around 1300 new homes and some new amenities.



Property developer Urban Splash converted three 1960s tower blocks in Collyhurst.

Following a review by central government, funding for Collyhurst's PFI was scrapped and the redevelopment was cancelled.

As part of the Decent Homes Programme, £29m of funding included demolition of 13 maisonette blocks, 190 households to be relocated, as well as refurbishing 928 homes in Collyhurst.

MCC along with Network Rail produced a development framework draft combining Collyhurst with the Lower Irk Valley. This outlined a 10-15 year plan.



The Collyhurst Spatial Masterplan was produced, including further remodelling of parts of the neighbourhood, new mixed tenure housing, new road layouts and a community hub.

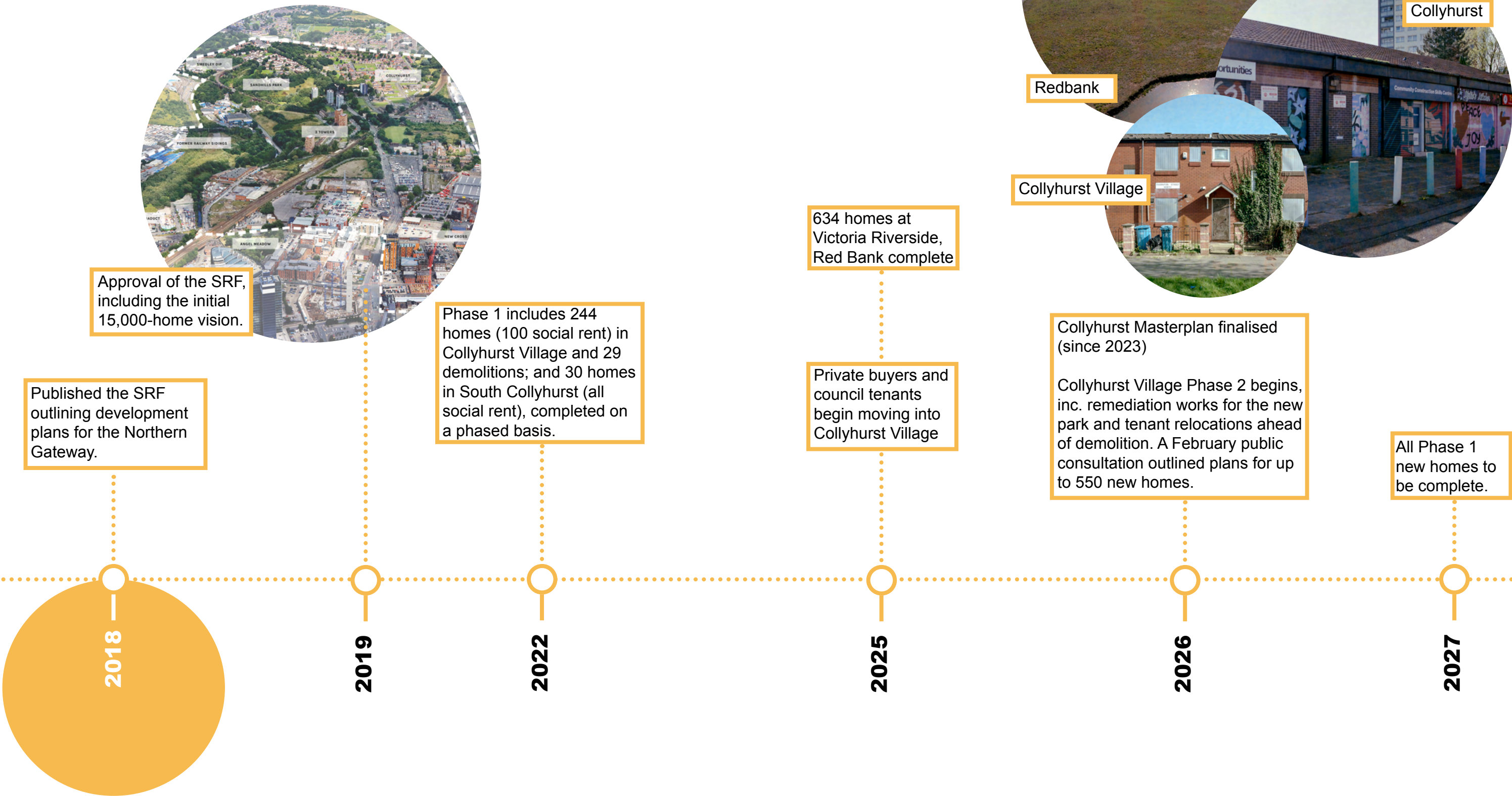
John Laing were chosen as a private sector partner to deliver this.

John Laing cancelled as a partner. Therefore the regeneration was scrapped.

The Far East Consortium International Limited was chosen as the investment and delivery partner for the Northern Gateway, to work with MCC on a Joint Venture basis.



Victoria North Redevelopment Timeline
(Previously Northern Gateway until 2020)



Red Bank

Red Bank, close to the River Irk and the city centre, and bleeding into Cheetham Hill, will see over 5,500 new homes being built over the next 15 years:

- Supported by the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund, a substantial amount of infrastructure and remedial work has been undertaken to bring 25 acres of brownfield site back into use. FEC have already delivered 634 apartments (128 affordable) in three high rise towers in Red Bank, and have planning permission for around 4,800 homes.^{31 32}



Collyhurst

Collyhurst is one of the areas included in the Victoria North which has an existing residential population. The neighbourhood is split into two districts including Collyhurst Village and South Collyhurst, with a potential of delivering around 5,500 homes across both in total.

- A masterplan created by FEC outlines the vision for the neighbourhood.
- In addition, a 'Housing Needs Assessment' has been undertaken to better understand both the condition of the existing housing stock in Collyhurst and also the housing needs of existing Collyhurst residents, assessing whether people are in the correct size properties and whether any adaptations are needed.



- Development work on the ground started in 2022, and is being carried out in phases to support the masterplan, developed through ongoing public consultation.
- The main focus to date has been on **Collyhurst Village, Phase 1 of which saw 244 new homes built, 100 of which are council social rent and 144 for the open market, all due to be completed in 2027.** 29 existing properties were affected by Phase 1, and residents rehoused in the new properties. Many new properties are now complete and both private buyers and council tenants have begun moving in since 2025. The development also includes community spaces of various kinds.

The project in Collyhurst Village is now moving into Phase 2, which includes the development of a new neighbourhood park. Following the successful housing of all 29 households affected in Phase 1, the empty properties will be demolished, with the new park being constructed on the site where the former homes once stood. Remediation works for the park have now started on the site. Phase 2 sets out the potential to deliver up to 550 new homes, pushing the capacity much further than the current 158 properties (128 council-owned) currently within the Phase 2 boundary. Whilst no decisions have been taken at this stage on the scale or extent of demolition, it is likely that more demolitions will be required as part of a more ambitious and complex operation than Phase 1.

Phase 1 of South Collyhurst will deliver 30 new council social rent homes on previously vacant land, comprising 16 apartments and 14 houses, due to be finished in 2026. All of these homes have been prioritised for the tenants who were displaced by previous demolitions in Collyhurst and wish to return to live in the area. Further plans for South Collyhurst will be developed over the next 6-10 years.

There are proposals to build a new Metrolink station and tram stop in Collyhurst, due to open in 2030. £1.5m of funding was received to develop a business case helping to unlock this as a key element of the vision for Collyhurst, to link the neighbourhood to the city centre.^{33 34}



Responses to urban regeneration from local residents

Our previous research highlighted anxiety among older residents about the plans for Collyhurst, due to a long history of distrust arising from the demolition of housing, displacement of residents, disinvestment, and the failure of previous regeneration plans. Furthermore, despite many welcoming changes, concerns have been expressed about the type of redevelopment and whether it would result in the exclusion of existing communities.

There have been various campaigns by the community since redevelopment started on the ground. These include protests against the demolition of council housing, supported by the Greater Manchester Tenants Union, as well as a community-produced film *Collyhurst Voices* that explores the history and impact of neighbourhood change in Collyhurst, documenting the lived experiences of the community as well as their hopes for the neighbourhood's future in the context of forthcoming redevelopment.^{35 36}



New Towns Initiative

In 2026, Victoria North was selected as one of the sites for the government's New Towns Initiative, a flagship policy of the Labour government.

- **New Towns** is a major housing and infrastructure programme aimed at building large, planned communities across England. Building on the ambitions of the postwar New Towns programme, the central aim is to create economic growth and meet the demand for new houses.

The designation of Victoria North as one of the government's New Town urban extensions demonstrates strong national support for the scheme. This backing is expected to:

- Accelerate delivery through a coordinated cross-governmental approach with departments and public bodies working together to align funding, infrastructure, transport, health, education and other services. The approach aims to overcome fragmented decision making and development barriers, reducing the project timescales from 20 years to around 10.^{37 38}
- Address viability challenges, ensuring the provision of affordable housing will be above the current 20%.³⁹

New Towns Taskforce

Report to Government



Strangeways and Cambridge

The redevelopment of the Strangeways and Cambridge area straddles both Salford and Cheetham Hill, around the edge of Manchester City Centre. The redevelopment sets out a long-term (20+ years) vision to transform the predominantly industrial district into a vibrant mixed-use urban neighbourhood.

- Guided by the Strategic Regeneration Framework, finalised in 2025 through a pioneering collaboration between Manchester and Salford City Councils, the redevelopment will create around 7,000 new homes across 7 neighbourhoods. Alongside new housing, the plans also include commercial spaces and a new 60-hectare urban park.⁴⁰

- The regeneration involves major infrastructure investment and environment change, given the areas existing industrial uses and the presence of Strangeways HMP. There are discussions to move the city-centre location of the prison, to make room for redevelopment.^{41 42}
- Development has already begun, with projects such as Brewery Gardens on the former Boddingtons Brewery site.
- The first phase will deliver 505 homes, including 132 for social rent and 171 available through shared ownership.⁴³



Pride in Place

The Government's 'Pride in Place' programme is a £5bn community renewal initiative aimed at transforming disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the UK.

- Core priorities include strengthening community and social trust, revitalising high streets and town centres, improving public spaces, transport and housing, and positioning communities as drivers of local economic growth.
- A key emphasis is on giving residents a stronger voice in local decisions and a say in the future of their neighbourhoods.⁴⁴
- 284 communities across the UK have been selected for Pride in Place funding, each seeing a £20m investment over 10 years, managed through community neighbourhood boards.⁴⁵

- The Pride in Place programme sits within a wider government emphasis on the importance of *social cohesion*, and the development of resilient communities, including goals such as restoring pride in place, bringing people together across different backgrounds, teaching values and history, and celebrating faith and belief communities.⁴⁶

Two areas of North Manchester have been chosen to receive Pride in Place funding: Clayton Vale (parts of Clayton, Openshaw, Newton Heath and Miles Platting) and Harpurhey South and Monsall (parts of Harpurhey, Moston and Crumpsall).

As well as allocating money over the next decade to community-led projects and initiatives, the funding will help to boost existing plans to improve some North Manchester neighbourhoods. Efforts are underway to collect community ideas through a Manchester City Council-led survey, as well as to develop neighbourhood boards and a chair in each of the North Manchester areas.^{47 48}



Live Well

The Live Well is a Greater Manchester initiative that aims to improve health and reduce inequalities through community-led approaches.

- Brings together the GM Combined Authority, GM Integrated Health, NHS, VCFSE sector, and the ten local authorities and communities to shift focus from crisis response to prevention, and create the conditions for people to thrive.^{49 50}
- This approach, captured in GM's Live Well 2030 pledge, is a 10-year strategy aimed at reducing inequality and providing localised everyday support for all residents.⁵¹
- Live Well is built around four ambitions: creating local Live Well Places and Hubs that provide connection and everyday support; developing vibrant and resilient VCFSE sectors to respond at scale; delivering neighbourhood-based support; and embedding a culture of prevention across services and systems.

Live Well in Later Life is the blueprint for everyday support for Greater Manchester's **older population**, backed by a £4.8m investment. Building on the Ageing Well in Place Pathfinder, it brings an ageing lens to the Live Well programme, supporting older people to stay connected, active, financially resilient, independent, and empowered within their communities, helping them live well at home for longer.⁵² Following pilot work in five accelerator sites (2023-2025), Live Well was rolled out across all ten Greater Manchester localities.

In North Manchester, Live Well encompasses a range of interconnected initiatives, that includes:

1. £1.6-1.9m allocated to two pilot areas in North Manchester – covering the wards of Harpurhey and Miles Platting and Newton Heath. A steering group and local workshops have been established to help shape priorities on the ground and to develop Live Well Places.
2. Live Well in Later Life is assisting this work, supported by Manchester Settlement, a charity rooted in the communities of Manchester for over 130 years.
3. Manchester Community Central (MACC) are leading a Live Well Communities Fund – a small grants scheme co-created with North Manchester communities. Phase 1 focused on tackling health and racial inequalities, funding 18 local groups with grants; and Phase 2 is focused on 'Empowering Leaders', aimed at individuals aged 18-35 who lead or pilot grassroots social action projects.

District Centre Programme

An ongoing District Centre Programme, delivered by Manchester City Council, based on the recognition of the strategic role centres and high streets play in the future growth of the city. The programme is focused on targeting and investing in many of the city's district centres which contain significant levels of deprivation.⁵³

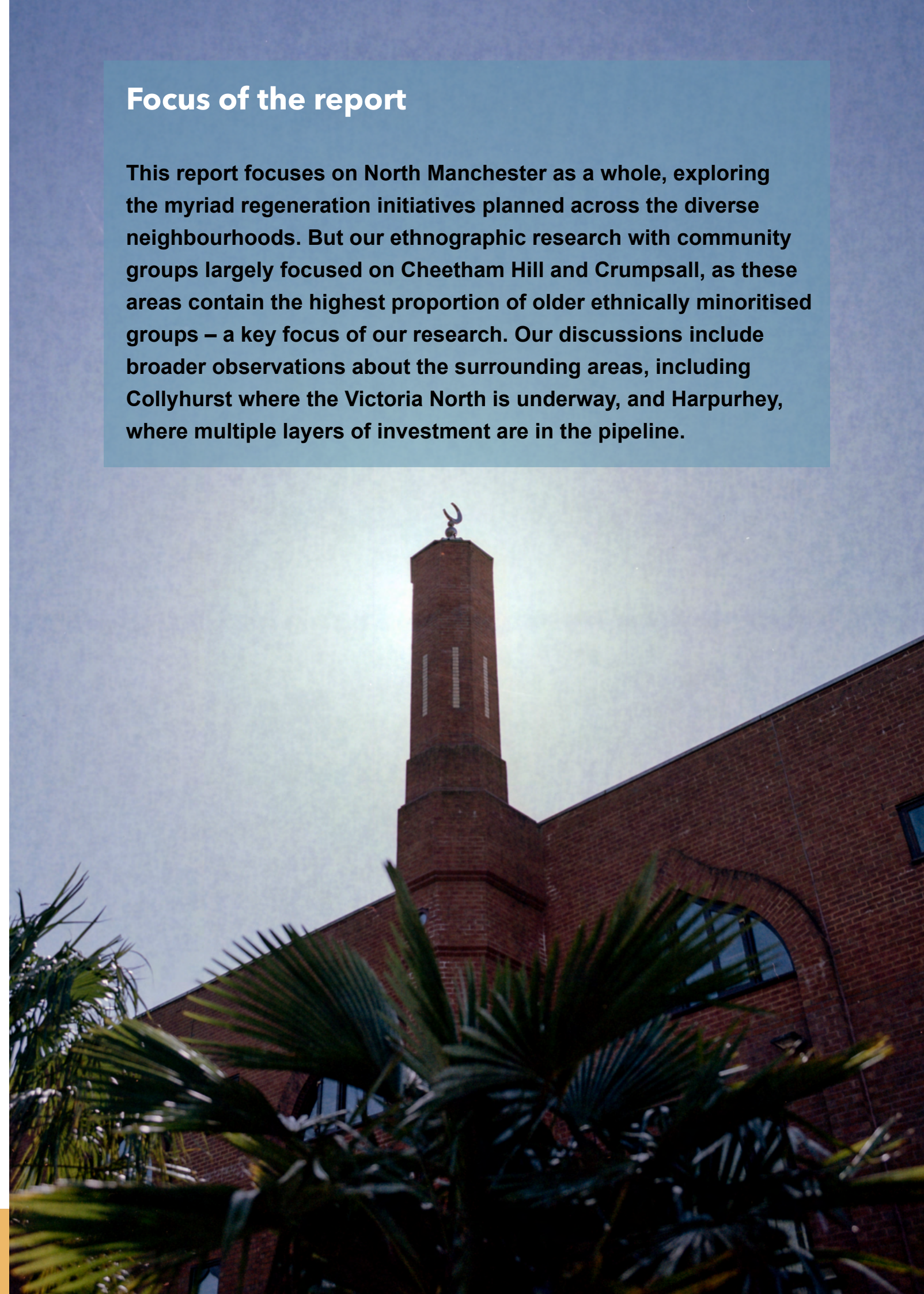
In **North Manchester**, the following District Centres have been chosen:

- **Cheetham Hill** - £100,000 investment to improve the high street and for feasibility works to be undertaken at St Lukes and St Mark's sites.
- **Harpurhey** - Local Infrastructure Framework has been developed focusing on public realm, and health and housing provision.

- **Newton Heath** – public consultation has been carried out to develop a Neighbourhood Development Framework to plan for growth that recently completed new housing will encourage.
- **Strangeways** - a Strategic Regeneration Framework has been created by Manchester City Council in conjunction with Salford City Council, setting out ambitious plans for over 7000 homes in the coming decades, alongside ongoing conversations about the repurposing of the prison site.
- **Moston Lane** has seen a £970,000 investment for improvements to the public realm including parks and alley gates with a key focus on reducing trade fly-tipping, as well as 80 new affordable homes completed and many more in the pipeline.⁵⁴

Focus of the report

This report focuses on North Manchester as a whole, exploring the myriad regeneration initiatives planned across the diverse neighbourhoods. But our ethnographic research with community groups largely focused on Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall, as these areas contain the highest proportion of older ethnically minoritised groups – a key focus of our research. Our discussions include broader observations about the surrounding areas, including Collyhurst where the Victoria North is underway, and Harpurhey, where multiple layers of investment are in the pipeline.





THORNTON STREET
NORTH

3. How does urban regeneration affect the older population?

The UK has an ageing society, characterised by increasing levels of diversity and inequality in later life. This section provides a brief overview of existing research on how living in a lower-income neighbourhood impacts people as they age. The discussion highlights how the outcomes of living in urban neighbourhoods are invariably complex and differ between communities.

- Urban environments create advantages for older people, for example, through providing access to cultural activities, diverse faith spaces, leisure facilities, and specialised medical care.
- But at the same time, urban neighbourhoods may also produce feelings of insecurity, arising from the impact of urban regeneration, rapid population turnover, and environmental problems associated with pollution and climate change.⁵⁵

Inequalities among older people living in lower-income neighbourhoods

Population ageing and urbanisation are two defining trends of the 21st century. As cities continue to grow rapidly, the number

of older people is expected to double by 2050 worldwide. At the same time, many older groups may experience inequalities which extend throughout the life-course.⁵⁶ Urban neighbourhoods themselves are under pressure, due to poor quality housing, the impact of urban regeneration, and deprivation arising from the loss of major industries.

Older people are often particularly sensitive to changes in their environment. This is due to strong attachments to place which develop over time, and which have an important influence on older people's sense of identity and belonging.⁵⁷ Compared to more affluent areas, high levels of social exclusion are evident amongst older people living in lower income areas.⁵⁸ This is reinforced by widening inequalities within and between cities and polarisation between social groups.⁵⁹

Challenges in urban areas have intensified through the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, these disproportionately affect older people living in lower-income communities.⁶⁰ Deep inequalities in healthy life expectancy between affluent and deprived areas have widened. The gap between the most and least deprived deciles in England is now 19.4 years for males and 20.3 years for females.⁶¹

Age-friendly policies

Considering these pressures, the importance of developing what has been termed 'age-friendly' urban environments has become an important priority in public health agendas. In the UK, alongside Manchester, 84 cities and regions are part of the World Health Organization's 'Age-Friendly Cities and Communities' (AFCC) programme (2026 figures), which promotes the creation of age-friendly policies. These are environments and initiatives that foster independence, good health and social inclusion.

The age-friendly approach aims to support people to 'age in place' and to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as they wish.⁶² Manchester was the first city in the UK to adopt this approach, resulting in a range of collaborations with the University and voluntary organisations to promote healthy ageing across the city and region.

But research highlights that there is an uneven capacity for urban neighbourhoods to support ageing in place, due to increasing inequality arising from pressures associated with austerity and gentrification, both of these exacerbating social isolation, spatial exclusion and deprivation.⁶³

In this context, attention has been drawn to the need to design physically accessible environments in response to 'spatial ageism' a process through which the built environment excludes older people through

the prejudices of those who create it, which is often evident in urban planning in cities.⁶⁴ In response, there are initiatives to improve the physical infrastructure of cities through age-friendly approaches that seek to enable people of all ages, particularly those most affected by urban change, 'to participate in, shape, and benefit from urban life and...from the social, economic, and cultural resources in cities'.⁶⁵

However, as yet, there are no guidelines about how age-friendly policies should be implemented or designed in areas undergoing urban regeneration.⁶⁶ While there have been notable UK programmes which have explored the 'age-friendly design' of homes and neighbourhoods, good practice principles have not been widely adopted.⁶⁷ There is little consensus about how development processes might improve outcomes for older populations.



How are older people impacted by urban regeneration?

Evidence shows that the impacts of urban regeneration are highly uneven for older populations, beneficial for some, highly damaging for others.

Positive impacts:

- Improvements to physical and social infrastructure, for example, investment in high streets, transport connections, and greater access to green spaces and other public assets.⁶⁸
- Cleaner streets, improved cultural facilities, and upgrades in the standard of housing.⁶⁹
- Transformations in recreational areas, eating and drinking establishments, housing, and commercial activities.⁷⁰
- Increased house prices, and improvements to public facilities and services were noticeable, with more opportunities for older people to meet.⁷¹
- Ethnically minoritised groups may benefit from improved access to specialist cultural facilities, food shops, and social spaces.⁷²
- Improvements to local facilities and support from incoming groups.
- Safer streets, increased amenities, and upscale shops.⁷³
- Improved services and facilities, rising property values and reduction in crime for certain groups.⁷⁴

Negative impacts:

- The displacement of existing residents, particularly those from lower income groups.⁷⁵
- Social exclusion of residents who remain.⁷⁶
- Exacerbation of gender inequalities.⁷⁷
- Feelings of alienation and disempowerment.⁷⁸
- Older populations may face pressure from increased rents and rising living costs more generally.⁷⁹
- A sense of 'cultural displacement' may be evident, where existing residents feel that new amenities and services are not 'for them'.⁸⁰
- Heightened risk of isolation and loneliness as the changes affecting neighbourhoods may feel beyond residents' control.⁸¹
- Forms of 'indirect' displacement may occur when an existing population is not literally forced out of an area but their access to familiar services and political representation are disrupted by the influx of younger, more educated and wealthier newcomers.⁸²
- Younger, wealthier residents and visitors may also result in the indirect displacement of older people from more modest neighbourhood spaces (such as cheap restaurants) where



To summarise, existing studies on urban regeneration have found that there is a range of impacts on the older population. Some are positive, including greater access to community services as well as improvements to housing and green space. Others are more negative, including: loss of affordable housing, displacement by younger groups, or feelings of exclusion for those who remain. However, there has been limited research examining experiences from the perspective of older people themselves, particularly of those from ethnically minoritised groups.

The loss of social infrastructure in urban communities

Social support generated in spaces such as libraries, cafés and community centres, which are often described as ‘third spaces’ or ‘social infrastructure’, have been found to be protective of health and well-being across the life-course.⁸⁴

These places provide vital opportunities for older people to get together informally, and for informal networks of support and socialising.⁸⁵ Community spaces may also be seen to ‘represent essential sites to address society’s pressing challenges, including

isolation, crime, education, physical inactivity, malnutrition, and socio-political polarization’.⁸⁶

However, lower income neighbourhoods have been particularly affected by the loss of facilities which encourage the social connections which are essential elements in maintaining thriving neighbourhoods.⁸⁷

The closure or suspension of such spaces has done much to damage the quality of community life – particularly in low-income areas – over the past decade. As Yarker argues, the ‘story of a community is the story

of its social infrastructure and when residents see decline and lack of investment in their community assets and amenities, it can amplify feelings of being forgotten and left behind’.⁸⁸

Our previous research in North Manchester found that one of the most pressing challenges to older residents concerned the reduction in local amenities of various kinds.⁸⁹ The residents interviewed were concerned that future plans for the area were ‘not for them’ and were anxious about whether their families would be able to afford to remain living in the area. This report echoes these findings and reaffirms the importance of ensuring that the social infrastructure of North Manchester remains inclusive for diverse groups of people as they age.



Housing for the older population

Britain is faced with a housing crisis, which is predicted to worsen due to the long-term impacts of austerity and the COVID-19 pandemic on the older population, both of which have raised questions about how to stay healthy and socially connected while spending increasing amounts of time at home.⁹⁰

Housing conditions of older people in the North of England have been shaped by longstanding social and economic disparities. Many lower income areas, including those in Manchester, have suffered decades of economic decline, underemployment, and systemic disinvestment, exacerbated by austerity driven cuts to public services and social infrastructure. These communities often have some of the poorest housing stock, isolating older residents and undermining the conditions needed for older people to age well in their homes and neighbourhoods.⁹¹

Poor housing conditions are especially widespread in the North of England, where 41% of homes were built before 1944. Many of these older homes are terraced properties, which are often difficult to adapt due to features such as small bathrooms, stepped entrances, and steep stairs. In total, 1.47 million northern homes are considered non-decent, with nearly 1 in 2 of these over a century old, presenting cold, damp, fire, and falls risks. Almost half are occupied by someone with a long-term illness or disability, and over a third house people 60 and over.⁹²

A review of housing inequalities highlighted the extent to which: 'Poor-quality housing has a direct and detrimental impact on health and wellbeing. Older people in unsafe, cold, damp homes face heightened risks for chronic illnesses, respiratory issues, and mental health challenges. Non-decent homes can also cause asthma, strokes, heart attacks, and broken bones. 1 in 8 preventable deaths in the UK involve an older person experiencing a fall, with unsuitable home environments significantly increasing this risk'.⁹³



Older people from ethnically minoritised groups are particularly affected by housing inequality. In England and Wales, more than one in three (36%) Bangladeshi people and more than one in four Pakistani people (27%) aged 50 and over are living in homes that are *overcrowded* or have *shared facilities* in contrast with 3.5% in comparable White households.⁹⁴

Older refugees and asylum seekers are a group who often experience long-term housing insecurity.⁹⁵ Accommodation provision depends on migration status, with asylum seekers only eligible for temporary housing during claim processing.

In neighbourhoods undergoing urban regeneration, the demolition and rebuilding of new houses can disrupt social ties, in ways that people see to be inherently unpredictable.⁹⁶ But, at the same time, strong attachments to place persist. While urban regeneration policies tend to focus on the construction of new housing in the creation of new communities, the building of houses does not necessarily create a new sense of home for older residents.⁹⁷



Housing is a fundamental human right that includes not only access to physical shelter but also the right to live in security, peace and dignity.⁹⁸ But many older groups are often excluded from this right, due to structural exclusion and systemic discrimination. Such groups may experience 'ageing out of place' which means growing older in unfamiliar environments disconnected from established social networks, community ties and places of belonging.⁹⁹

Demographic factors are changing the demand for housing, with an ageing population leading to new lifestyles and models of home ownership.¹⁰⁰ While there is an urgent need to build new housing through urban regeneration initiatives, there is concern around whether new housing stock will be suitable for the diverse needs of the older population. Research highlights that 'almost 70% of new builds will not meet basic accessibility standards by 2030'.¹⁰¹ There are many barriers to accessing a suitable home, including a lack of suitable new-build options, the cost of improvements, and inadequate support services.¹⁰²

Healthy ageing and urban regeneration

Urban regeneration not only includes the rebuilding of the physical environment, but is also a public health intervention with policies aiming to improve health and wellbeing among disadvantaged communities.¹⁰³

Health is shaped not only by individual characteristics, but also by broader socio-environmental conditions. Previous research has highlighted the direct effects of the built environment on people's health (e.g. air pollution or cancerogenic exposure...) and more indirect effects (e.g. lifestyles) capable of affecting mental health, wellbeing and social inclusion.¹⁰⁴ These contextual characteristics may include physical features of the

environment, housing and neighbourhood conditions, access to services, socio-cultural dynamics, as well as internal and external perceptions of place.¹⁰⁵

Improving health and reducing inequalities remains a major challenge in lower income neighbourhoods, due to the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, mental health problems, and also the reduction in community cohesion and social support.¹⁰⁶

But although an important body of research exists, the evidence remains fragmented across different types of interventions and contexts, limiting a systematic understanding of the impact of UK urban regeneration programmes on health outcomes and health inequalities amongst older adults.¹⁰⁷



4. Research Methods

This section describes the approaches adopted in this study which included: literature reviews, ethnographic research, coproduction and creative research methods, interviews and focus groups with older residents, community organisations and regeneration stakeholders in North Manchester.

Literature review and scoping review

A **literature review** was conducted exploring the themes of inequality, urban change and age-friendly approaches. Particular attention was given to existing research on older people from minoritised backgrounds and debates around neighbourhoods undergoing urban regeneration.

A **scoping review** was conducted examining existing evidence on older adults (50+), health and health inequalities and urban regeneration processes in the UK. This review will be published separately, and aims to understand and analyse existing evidence on the impact of urban regeneration on health and health inequalities among older adults and to inform local policies.

Ethics

The University of Manchester gave **ethical approval** for the research. Participants were given a Participant Information Sheet, providing details about the ethical guidelines adhered to in the project and asked to sign a Consent Form. Decisions about ethical principles were given careful consideration at every stage of the research process. Names and personally identifiable information have been removed to anonymise interviewees.



Community research

Over a twelve-month period, two researchers (Niamh Kavanagh and Camilla Lewis) carried out ethnographic research across various areas and community settings in North Manchester.

Doing ethnographic research entailed an immersive approach, studying the social groups and local cultures of North Manchester through sustained engagement in a variety of community settings. The approach was *slow and gentle*, prioritising building trust over time, developing relationships with local residents and organisations and detailed understanding of the different neighbourhoods. Taking an ethnographic approach meant not arriving with preconceived ideas, questions and agendas, but understanding what is important to the community and working at their own pace.¹⁰⁸

Gentle approaches aim to treat research participants and places with care, minimising disruption and contributing in a meaningful way to the interests of the communities involved. Gentle methodologies are particularly important for highlighting subtle details in peoples' lived experiences and for understanding the issues which are important both to them and the neighbourhoods in which they live.

Taking a gentle approach

Working with a gentle approach, the researchers became embedded within the community gradually over time, getting to know residents, the local neighbourhoods and the different social networks which exist across North Manchester. This included:

- Walking around neighbourhoods to develop a sense and feel of their character;
- Spending time in places which are important to residents, including community centres, sheltered housing, places of worship, as well as in more informal spaces such as people's homes, gardens, parks and cafes;
- Taking ethnographic notes and photographs;
- Getting involved in a range of activities from gardening, craft activities, singing and exercising with older residents.

Developing trusting relationships with older people

Developing trusting relationships with residents was essential due to existing sensitivities among the community which have emerged due to:

- Histories of disinvestment resulting in distrust;
- Stigma from outsiders;
- High levels of social exclusion among some older people;
- Anxieties around demolition and redevelopment (particularly in Collyhurst and Harpurhey);
- Experiences of racism and discrimination among ethnically minoritised groups;
- Lack of trust in mainstream services among some groups;
- Experiences of ageism interacting with other forms of discrimination.

Adopting a slower approach and spending adequate time 'being' with older residents in settings which are important to them allowed relationships to build, and conversations to emerge gently, over time.



Partnerships with community organisations

Relationships were developed with a diverse range of community groups and initiatives across Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall, and where opportunities arose, neighbouring areas including Harpurhey and Collyhurst. Spending time in the community highlighted the significance of key social infrastructure and community organisations for supporting communities who face various forms of disadvantage.

Trust and reciprocal understanding were developed with key community organisations, creating a network of partnerships and connections. They offered support, guidance and in some instances, translation services so we were able to engage with different groups of older residents.

Local organisations were important 'gatekeepers' for our research, introducing us to residents and providing locally specific information to guide our research as well as advice about how to ensure our approaches were culturally tailored to different groups.

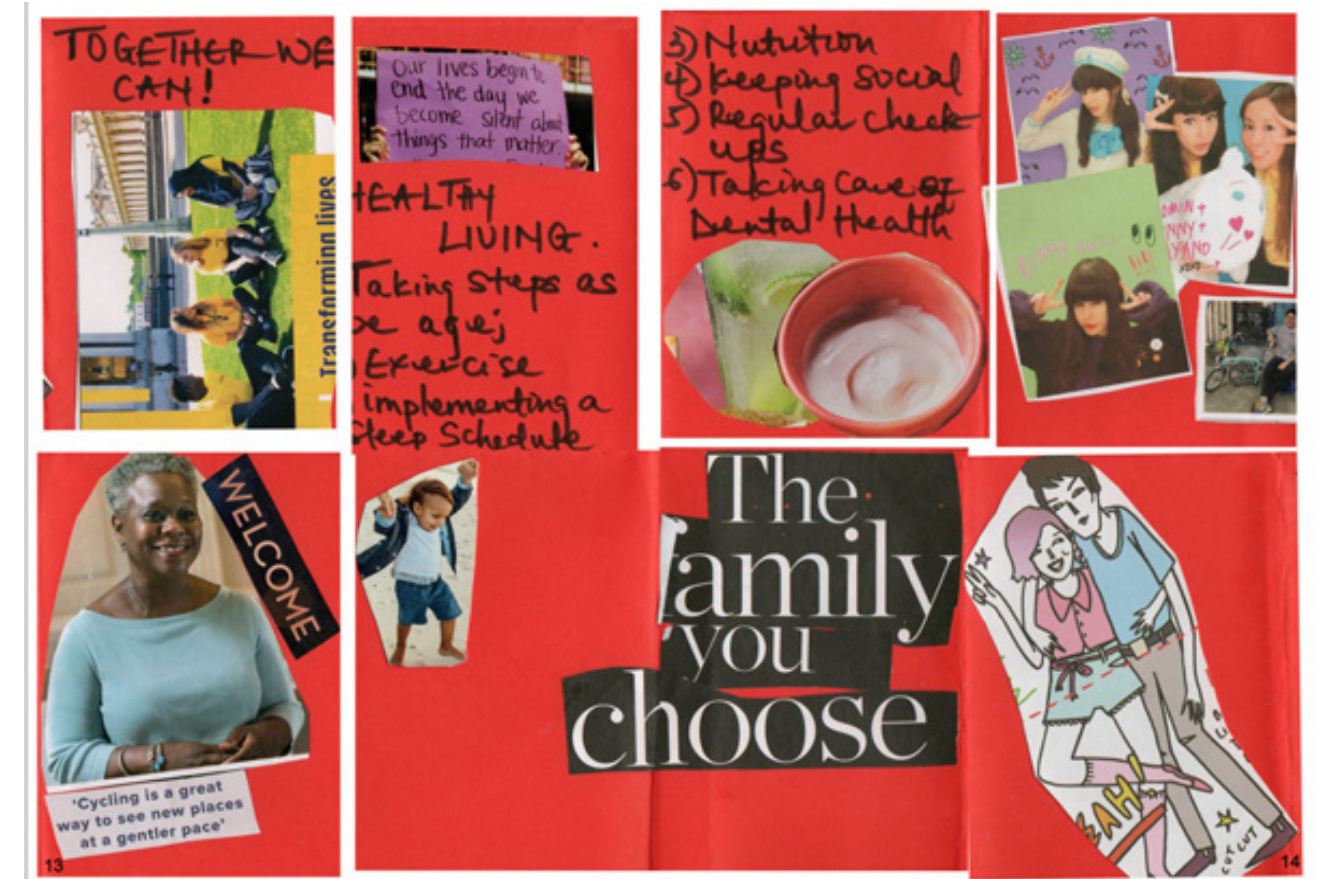
To reciprocate for the valuable time and resources offered by community groups, the research team supported local organisations to apply for funding, provided administrative support (such as taking notes, circulating minutes and printing materials) and co-organised activities and evaluation (for example, craft workshops, gardening projects, and creative evaluation activities). In some instances, small amounts of funding were given to the community groups to pay for facilitators and refreshments at different events.

The aim was not to duplicate engagement already provided by community groups, but to support existing organisations and initiatives. Four coproduction projects emerged from these relationships, described in Section 5.



Interviews

- **41 interviews** were conducted with **20 community and/or regeneration stakeholders**, **4 academics** and **17 older residents from ethnically minoritised groups** (including Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Iraqi, Nigerian, Angolan, Zimbabwean, Jamaican, Chinese and other backgrounds).
- The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that a core set of questions were asked, but interviewees could discuss issues which were important to them;
- **2 focus groups with residents in Cheetham Hill and Collyhurst** were also carried out (with 10 older residents in each);
- **4 coproduction projects** were developed with community organisations (involving around 50 older residents).





Principles of coproduction guided the research including a collaborative process, which places emphasis on the importance of experiential knowledge and lived experience, with researchers, practitioners and communities working together on a shared goal.¹⁰⁹

Creative coproduction methods

The aim of the research was to develop culturally tailored creative workshops in collaboration with community organisations and expert creative facilitators working with ethnically minoritised older residents. By working with local creative practitioners, experienced facilitators and trusted community organisations, the research developed activities that were culturally-tailored and responsive to local contexts.

Creative coproduction methods

Creative methodologies were used for the following reasons:

- **Artistic and participatory technique encourage more open and flexible forms of how research is carried out.**¹¹⁰
- To address power imbalances between the researcher and participants by creating more collaborative and accessible ways of engaging with communities.¹¹¹
- **To provide alternative and expressive opportunities for people to discuss the complexities of their life experiences,** and facilitate flexible, meaningful forms of participation.^{112 113 114}
- **Participating in creative activities can be more accessible for people with limited English** and for ethnically diverse groups who are less likely to engage with conventional research methods.¹¹⁵
- **To reveal aspects of people's lives and experiences that are often overlooked or underrepresented,** helping to centre voices that are often silenced within research and policy.^{116 117}
- **To foster connections and relationships.** Doing 'creative' things together with people often takes pressure away from the research process, and encourages informal chatting, trust and mutual learning.^{118 119}
- **To create spaces of joy, care and belonging,** where people are able to share their experiences more organically and at their own pace, building up snippets of people's stories and lived experiences over time.¹²⁰

We also experimented with different ways of representing the coproduction workshops, inviting an illustrator and artist to attend sessions.



5. Creative coproduction workshops

This section provides an overview of four creative coproduction workshops which were developed in collaboration with community organisations and older residents in North Manchester.

i. Zine-making with Nurturing Foundations

Nurturing Foundations are a black-led social mobility charity, based in Harpurhey, Manchester. The organisation supports young people and communities from low-income and racially marginalised backgrounds in particular. They work across a range of inequalities – health, education, employment and personal development – and ages, aiming to remove structural barriers that prevent people from achieving their full potential. Their ethos is to drive systemic change by delivering community-led, grassroots solutions that are culturally-informed and tailored to the needs of racially minoritised communities, and based on trusted relationships. The charity runs a broad range of programmes and interventions based around health and wellbeing, skills development and employability.

Background to the coproduction workshops

The research team collaborated with Nurturing Foundations as part their 'Nurture Hub', a 12-week pilot to test a culturally competent support model for underserved communities in North Manchester. The programme built on the organisation's work delivering trauma-responsive, community-led interventions that address structural drivers of health inequalities and exclusion among minoritised and migrant groups.



Zine-making workshops

The workshops were led by a local textile artist Seelena Daye. Her work focuses on class, race, sexuality and gender, and uses art, including zine-making, as a space and platform for marginalised groups. The purpose of the sessions was for the attendees to learn a new creative skill, and to generate discussions around the themes of community, health and ageing.

Zine-making is a DIY practice including creating small booklets on any topics or themes. They are often based on personal stories, and handmade using collage, writing and photography. We chose zine-making as it is a well-established creative tool for people to resist and imagine different futures collectively.

The aim was to use zine-making as a way to open up conversations with the group about their everyday lives and experiences in North Manchester. Each week focused on a series of themes around community and connection; neighbourhood and change; and ageing and culture.

Around 10 women from Nigerian backgrounds attended, aged between 40-70. Conversations developed naturally and humour was commonplace. The focus for the sessions developed organically responding to the conversations that arose between the women each week.

During the first session Seelena focused on introducing the concept of zines and demonstrating simple techniques and how to use collage materials. The women decorated pages using magazines, stamps, tape and drawing. After the sessions Seelena curated all the individual pieces and collages into a collective zine, reflecting the conversations they had throughout.

Reflections on the zine-making workshops:

Throughout the sessions many discussions occurred amongst the women as a group and in conversations between the researchers and the women on a one-to-one basis. Topics included:

- *Belonging and emotional ties to North Manchester communities.*
- *Informal care and knowledge.*
- *Health and everyday wellbeing.*
- *Transnational and social connections.*
- *Migration and housing instability.*
- *Cultural identity and heritage.*

The sessions were accessible and provided an enjoyable way for the women to express ideas around community, health and neighbourhood. Nigerian music was chosen by the attendees attending during some of the sessions which helped to create a more relaxed and culturally familiar space, and women responded positively, dancing and singing.



ii. Calligraphy workshops at the Wai Yin Welcome Centre

Wai Yin Society is a local charity based in Manchester, established in 1988. Its roots are in women's rights campaigns supporting Chinese and Hong Kong women living in the city. The charity has evolved over the years with Manchester becoming more diverse, and now supports all underserved groups across nationalities and genders. They work with a range of BME partners and offer a variety of free services and programmes, including education and employment support, family and parenting support, mental health support, food bank services and health/cancer support. They also offer general advice and volunteering services. The majority of their funding comes from public funds and grants, including the Home Office, Independent Age, BBC Children in Need, GMCA, Lottery Community Fund, NHS, Manchester City Council. The Wai Yin Society describes how the centre is 'a drop-in for people from all over the world wishing to make a home in Manchester'.¹²¹



Background to the coproduction workshops

The calligraphy sessions run for two hours, led by Brian Whitmore, an arts practitioner who established the group in 2018.

At each session between 12-20 people attend from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Throughout the year of research, Camilla attended weekly sessions, joining group activities and developing relationships. The group provided an excellent opportunity to try out different creative activities and learn more about the lives of diverse residents living in Cheetham Hill.

The group is open to all, but the majority of members were women, living in North Manchester, over the age of 50, from diverse backgrounds including India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sudan.

The atmosphere at the sessions was calm, supportive and inclusive. As well as providing an opportunity to develop new skills, the group was also an important place for members to connect with one another. Often food and drink were brought to share, to celebrate Eid, Christmas, Diwali, Easter and other festivals. There was a strong sense of friendship and camaraderie among the women, who provided each other with encouragement with the calligraphy tasks and also shared stories about their lives and support to each other.

“Calligraphy brings a sense of calm and focus. It engineers nice thoughts and a sense of wellbeing. People really enjoy doing it. It's about producing something beautiful together. The group supports a sense of community.”

(calligraphy class teacher).



“I love making friends and meeting new people which is why I come to classes like this. I don’t think you should ever stop learning.”

(Chinese-British woman in her 70s).

“I love coming here to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds. Calligraphy has creative and therapeutic benefits. The group is tranquil and calm, it’s a safe space for creativity. I enjoy having conversations with the other members. It’s really beautiful coming together and doing calligraphy.”

(South Asian woman in her 50s).

“I think calligraphy is therapeutic, it’s beautiful. I love the atmosphere here.”

(Indian/British woman in her 60s).

“I’ve been living in Cheetham Hill for over 40 years, but I haven’t learnt to read English yet. So I come to the Wai Yin centre for English classes and then come to calligraphy to try something different. I can’t read English, so I copy the letters, as I’m trying to learn to read”

(Pakistani woman in her 60s).



Reflections on the calligraphy workshops

During the workshops, members reflected on the themes around ageing and imagining themselves in the future in different ways. Many of the group chatted positively about how they liked to think about themselves continuing to do the things they enjoyed, like creative and artistic hobbies. Two women in their seventies talked about the importance of attending community groups, and looking after others as you get older, in order to bring happiness to yourself and others.

Other members reflected less positively about the future. One attendee (an Indian woman in her 60s) was unsure about what to write. She said that she didn't want to think about anything that was 'too dark'. The exercise had

made her reflect on the future and discuss her anxieties about her health, in particular, losing her sight. She explained how she had been told that she might become blind five years ago, which had made her feel suicidal. She had got through this difficult phase but was still worried about what impact it might have on her life. The message she wrote was about staying determined in the face of obstacles, and seizing the day.

Overall, the exercise generated some interesting conversations and the group created some beautiful postcards. The discussions focused on a range of themes around health and wellbeing and touched on some sensitive topics around the challenges of living with long-term health conditions.



Collaborative workshops

In April 2026, two sessions were held, where the attendees were asked to write 'messages to our future selves'. The group were asked to reflect on goals and aspirations for what they think will be important to them in the future. The idea for the workshops was to discuss what might inspire us as we grow older, and to simulate a wider discussion about the importance of community as we age. Some messages were provided and the members used these as the basis of their writing, either copying the text, or devising their own messages.

The postcards were then put together to create a folding booklet, to celebrate the work of the group and to inspire others. To record the workshop, an illustrator, Mel Davie, was invited to the group to observe the session and represent the work of the group.

iii. Khidmat: Our Stories

Khidmat are a health and wellbeing group that operate from the Guidance Hub in Cheetham Hill and support older South Asian men. The word 'Khidmat' means service in Arabic/Urdu, and the group's ethos is based on giving service to the community and one another, for example around how they can help others and in doing so, support themselves. The main aim is to socialise with one another, but sometimes they also do activities (including sharing poetry and discussing politics). The group started through 'Social Connections' funding from Age-Friendly Manchester to support men who are aged over-50. With the end of that support the group is only able to meet once a month.

Background

The researchers collaborated with the Khidmat group to carry out research about their life-histories and everyday experiences of living in Cheetham Hill. The group had ideas about projects they wanted to do but lacked funding and resources, one of which was to do their portraits and life histories. The purpose of the project was to work collaboratively to place a spotlight on the life-stories of older Muslim men living in North Manchester and to celebrate the work of the Khidmat group through the publication of a booklet and exhibition of their portraits.



Coproduction workshops

A number of meetings and workshops were organised with the men to decide on the shape and scope of the project. We worked with a local photographer, Chan-yang Kim whose work documents authentic lives, cultural practices and social interactions of people in their everyday environments.

We worked in close dialogue with the Khidmat group to shape each stage of the project; to decide the life-story questions, to carry out the interviews, to take photographs, and to decide how to put the stories together. We collected stories from 8 men.

Chan took portraits of the men, in a significant place chosen by the men, such as their home, street, park, place of worship.

The researchers wrote a brief for the group including a set of topic questions covering

early life and background, migration, adult life and responsibilities, later life and present day, reflections on life, and legacies for future generations, and we shared existing life history and the portraits project as inspiration for them.

The interviews were collected together by Camilla and Niamh, with translation support from Hamad Raza Khan and other Khidmat members. All of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The life stories were then brought together into a booklet, along with the photographs of the men. The stories have been written in both Urdu and English. While the stories have been carefully edited for publication, members of the Khidmat Group have been involved at every stage of the process to ensure that the booklet authentically reflects their voices and lived experiences.

To launch the booklet, an exhibition of the photographs and a celebration event were held at the Guidance Hub in Cheetham Hill.



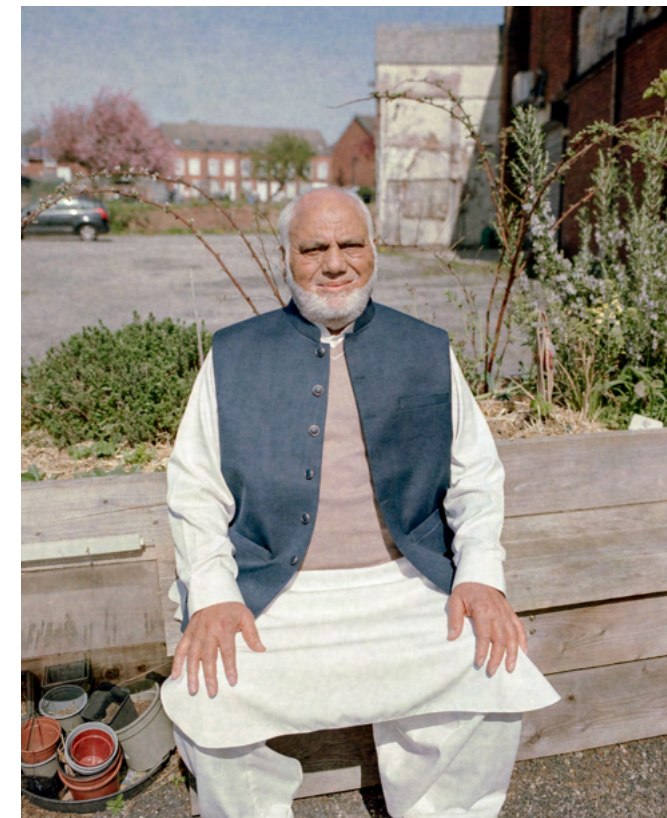
Reflections on the life-story project

“Here’s a group of people who are being left out. There’s a stereotypical view, that older men, our elders are looked after by their sons and daughters. Yes Islam does say to look after elders. But now, many of them are living in the West for 40, 50 years and their children are moving on – to London or Saudi or wherever. So they don’t have family around to support them”

(community development worker).

“There is nothing for men locally, elders feel isolated, there are groups for sisters...but nothing for men”

(community group leader).



Feelings of marginalisation are linked to increasing concerns about intolerance, discrimination, and Islamophobia in society, alongside cultural stigma, language barriers and ongoing challenges to the men's sense of identity as British citizens:

“I present myself as a British citizen, but I am often treated very very badly. It is demoralising, to be treated with no respect because I am older, Muslim, and disabled. This is a big issue, we are stigmatised as outsiders, because of our language, cultural issues, issues of being from overseas and immigrants, even though many of us were born in the UK”

(British Pakistani man in his 60s).

“I have personally experienced racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia. However, these experiences strengthened my determination to contribute positively to society. Despite its challenges, I firmly believe that the United Kingdom remains one of the world's most organised, fair, and democratic societies, offering opportunities and protection through the rule of law”

(British Pakistani man in his 70s).

“Today, I am approaching the later years of my life and am nearly eighty years old. Although I face various health issues, I continue to live independently and remain active.”

(British Pakistani man in his 60s).

The conversations shared and stories compiled in the booklet however also highlight the remarkable achievements and the personal journeys of the men, amplifying their voices, histories and journeys that are often overlooked or misunderstood. They help to reveal their contributions to the communities which they have helped shaped for generations.

The stories and photographs capture the rich sense of community in North Manchester and among British Pakistanis more widely. Beyond individual experiences, they reflect deep connections the men have to their families, neighbourhoods and communities locally and beyond.



iv. Stitching Stories with Empower M8

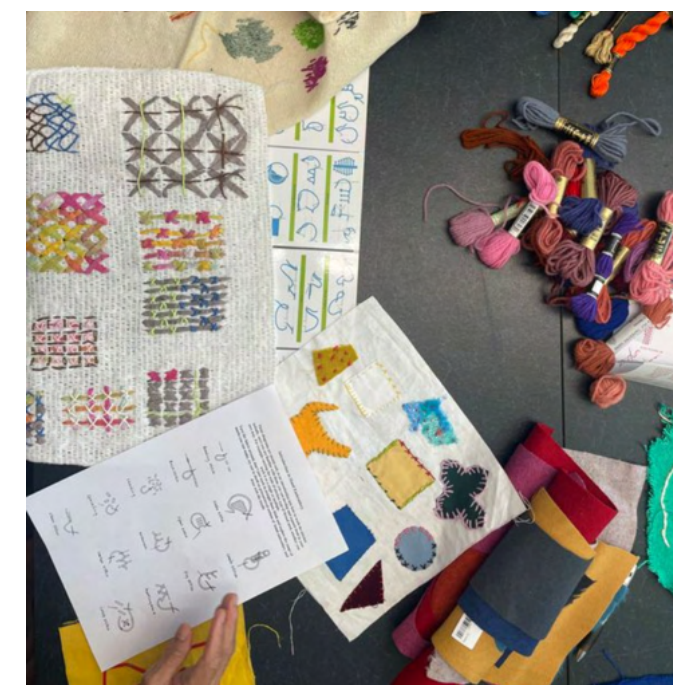
Empower M8 (part of Winning Hearts and Minds) is a well-established community initiative in Cheetham Hill, established in 2023. They run weekly health and wellbeing sessions at the Wai Yin Welcome Centre for ethnically marginalised older people in North Manchester. The sessions include chair-based exercise to improve mobility, and a second hour of activities including hand massage therapy, arts and crafts, and specialist-led sessions focusing on nutrition and mental health, all supporting a holistic, trauma-informed approach to tackling immediate health inequalities and addressing social isolation. The sessions are culturally-tailored, and offer some activities in both English and Urdu. Empower M8 have an established group and network with community members who regularly attend. The sessions are popular, with around 20 people going along each week. Empower M8 is supported by Jigsaw Homes, Bernardos and Wai Yin Society.



Background to the embroidery project

Empower M8 runs every Thursday morning offering a mix of exercise and wellbeing activities. Niamh has been attending the sessions weekly throughout the year of research since August 2025, joining in with the different activities, and developing relationships with Poppy Soldatos and Chris Bernard (Winning Hearts and Minds) and Gemma Batchelor (Jigsaw Homes), along with many of the attendees. The group is attended by residents who are local to Cheetham Hill and from a mix of backgrounds, including South Asian, African and British, and whilst the majority that regularly attend are women, a few men also join.

Empower M8 lead organiser Poppy Soldatos has a deep commitment to the group, as well as to the wider community of Cheetham Hill and surrounding North Manchester neighbourhoods. We worked together with Poppy and Gemma to co-design a series of creative workshops.



Collaborative embroidery workshops

We collaborated with Lynn Settrington, a Manchester-based textile artist who uses embroidery and textile methods to work across a variety of issues, including belonging, well-being, place and identity. Together we wanted to co-create something joyful, celebratory, and tangible with the women at Empower M8, recognising and highlighting their stories and experiences within the community.

Six sessions were held from April to June 2026 at the Wai Yin Welcome Centre, taking up the second part of Empower M8. They were attended by 12 older women on average each week, from a mix of different backgrounds.

The women worked on individual pieces, which Lynn later brought together into one large quilt/tapestry.

The women worked on their individual pieces week by week, stitching flags, names, symbols, and places that were of significance, representing parts of their own stories in some way.



Reflections on the embroidery workshops.....

Having stitching as the main focus around which to pivot conversations opened up lots of different topics from the offset that might have otherwise been sensitive or difficult – particularly in the context of the women's migration stories and family lives.

One Bangladeshi woman in her 70s, after stitching two flags on her piece, told us:

“*I am Asian British, so I stitched a flag of a Union Jack and I am proud of that, and I did the Bangladeshi flag and I am also proud of that, I have been here that long, at times I feel I'm confident speaking English than Bengali*”

Some women also highlighted difficult stories too – stories of hardship, stories of loss of husbands and children, stories of anxieties about the future, and stories about health.



“*I haven't done much sewing before. I did it as a child, but didn't really enjoy it. I've liked this class as I've been listening to the teacher and feel that I've got a bit better.*”

(Bangladeshi woman in her 70s)

“*I've been sewing from a very young age. I used to make dresses and shawls. I learnt from my mother and did lots of sewing with my sister when I was growing up. I've really enjoyed coming to these sessions*”

(Pakistani woman in her 50s)

The sessions offered a warm, inviting and relaxed atmosphere that strengthened over time. The women made new connections with one another and shared conversations about their lives while working on stitching. Many of the women had taken relaxed headscarves throughout the sessions, signalling their trust and comfort with the group. As a community worker stated, ‘it's been so nice to sit and learn about people's lives because we don't always get chance to hear people's stories in this way’.



Reflections on all of the creative coproduction workshops

Overall, the four types of coproduction workshops (zine-making, calligraphy, life-stories and embroidery) and were varied, responding to the diverse interests and the needs of the community members, but some common themes emerged:

- **The community organisations provided an essential role in coordinating the sessions.** This included inviting community members, co-designing the content and delivery, providing support with translation, and interpreting conversations.
- **The sessions were culturally-tailored,** developed collaboratively with existing community organisations, and older residents.
- **Funding from Healthier Futures to support the workshops was essential,** to reimburse community organisations for their time and support, as well as paying the artists and creative practitioners to work with us and provide refreshments.
- **The workshops helped to develop relationships and build trust using a slow and gentle approach** in order to ‘create a space for different kinds of conversations, questions and reflections’.¹²²
- **Safe, inclusive and supportive environments were created,** where conversations about everyday life, including health, housing and community emerged organically, shaped by the experiences of those attending.
- **The creative sessions catered to a range of skills.** Community members enjoyed having something tangible to take home at the end of the sessions and to recognise how they are contributing to a wider collective project.¹²³
- **Activities such as zine-making and embroidery were accessible to people with limited English abilities.** They were able to get involved by copying tasks, and to develop relationships with the research team, slowly over time.





6. Older people's lives in North Manchester

This section reports on findings which emerged across the interviews with older residents, community groups and regeneration stakeholders, as well as informal discussions which arose during the embedded community research and coproduction workshops. The discussion focuses on older people's everyday lives in North Manchester including positive experiences and challenges of living in a lower-income neighbourhood.

Positive experiences of everyday life in North Manchester

Many benefits of living in Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall were discussed, including:

Green space for walking and exercising

'Every day I enjoy walking for at least an hour. One of my favourite places is Heaton Park, whose beauty and peaceful atmosphere provide me with relaxation and happiness' (Pakistani man in his 70s).

The importance of local faith spaces

'One place that holds special significance in my life is North Manchester Jamia Mosque in Cheetham Hill. It is more than a place of worship; it is a centre for friendship, guidance, community engagement, and mutual support. The mosque has played an important role in my personal and spiritual development' (Pakistani man in his 60s).

Access to local shops and amenities, as well as specialist food shops

'You can get everything you want in Cheetham Hill, the shops sell everything, things you wouldn't get in an ordinary supermarket' (Black African woman in her 70s).

Accessibility to the city centre and comparatively affordable housing and amenities

'It's really handy. I'm very close to town and not too far out... it's cheap, it's handy. And I know it. I've grown up in it, so I know it' (local artist and resident).



The strength of community

‘There is a great sense of neighbourliness, and community ...People look out for each other, and all know each other’ (South Asian woman in her 50s).

‘I’m not saying there’s no issues, right? But there’s some bloody good people that are living in these areas. Regeneration stakeholders need to take their time to get to know this community’ (community development worker).

‘One of the first things I noticed about the United Kingdom and living in Cheetham Hill was that I was also impressed by the kindness and respect shown by local people. I have never experienced disrespect or hostility and have found the community to be welcoming and supportive’ (Pakistani man in his 60s).

‘I have spent my entire life in Cheetham Hill, an area that has shaped my identity, my values, and my sense of community. I was raised in an environment built upon strong family values, hard work, and a deep sense of responsibility’ (British born Pakistani man in his 50s).

A long history of ethnic diversity

‘When we first arrived in the 1980s, it was great because we had been living in the north-east and there weren’t many non-white people there. But when we came to Manchester it felt we were more at home, people with different ethnic background, it’s very multicultural here. I love my home, I have been in Cheetham Hill since 1980, and have been in the house I am in now since 1982...Do you know I could have moved a long time ago, but I felt really at home, in my house, I just felt at home, even if it’s Cheetham Hill.’ (Black African woman in her 70s).



Challenges of ageing in place in North Manchester

At the same time as feeling a strong sense of community, interviewees mentioned how they lived with daily challenges:

Stigmatisation from outsiders

'There's been really damaging programmes on TV like [BBC programme] 'People Like Us' which was set in Harpurhey. It was set up to show all of the negative things about living here. People [outsiders] forget that people live here, and that they want to live here. People just assume that people have to live there, and they don't have a choice' (community artist and local resident).

Rubbish on the streets and problems with bins

'People living in houses of multiple occupancy, often have limited English and need more support. Fly tipping and rubbish are huge issues which can cause disagreements with other residents' (South-Asian woman in her 50s).

Concerns about anti-social behaviour

'There are lots of problems with the passageway (ginnel) which runs between the houses and the park. The backwall is covered in graffiti. It looks awful. I'm not against graffiti in and of itself, it can look amazing, but lots of the images at the back of my house are very troubling and upsetting. There have been

lots of problems with young people hanging around at the gates to the park, there are three entrances so there are lots of problems with antisocial behaviour.' (South Asian woman in her 50s).

Increases in private landlords and resulting population turnover destabilising communities

'I don't know who any of my neighbours are, because they change so quickly. And I think it is like, they don't care, do they? The landlords, especially if they're emergency housing, they get paid, so they don't even, they're not able to pay any attention, they don't care about repair, they don't care about bins or anything. They're just like, as long as I'm getting that pay-check, and then if someone's moved out, one lick of paint and on to the next person. So I think that's what's damaging a lot of the area' (community artist and local resident).

Financial hardship and struggles with the cost of living

'Older people are struggling with the price of food and finding it very challenging to make their pension cover essentials like their heating bills. We see it every day. There is a lady that comes to the community centre and she takes sandwiches home afterwards and she always brings a little jar with her and we put soup in there for her to have for her tea' (community development worker).

Poor quality housing

'Some older people come to the community centres primarily so they can have some time out of their houses. There's one older woman who is living in a damp council home, which needed lots of repair work. Older people find that by coming to the community centre, they feel a bit better, because they're not sitting in a damn cold house... They're not sitting, you know, they're not sitting alone' (community development worker).

Many older people living with long-term health conditions and caring responsibilities

'It's our [Manchester City Council] ambition to reduce health inequalities in Manchester, improving health inequalities between Manchester residents. Really importantly, it's about narrowing the gaps between people who have the poorest health in the city and the people who have the best health.' (Manchester City Council employee).



Social exclusion among older residents

While there is a strong sense of community and proud local identity in North Manchester, many older people face issues relating to social exclusion

‘Social exclusion is a huge issue. Many older people do not feel listened to, and they don’t have many links to their local communities. They spend more and more time at home, alone and become lonely. For some, it is because of language barriers, for others it is because they haven’t worked for such a long time’ (community development worker).

‘Lots of people are not involved in their communities because of the challenges they faced in their everyday lives. It’s a huge barrier in the area, because there are such deep problems associated with economic and social deprivation. Most people live in survival mode, they don’t have any extra capacity’ (south Asian woman in her 50s).

According to the community organisations and residents we spoke to, the reasons for social exclusion are multiple and varied and differ across communities. For some this may be related to experiences discrimination and racism

‘Many older south Asian men had worked their whole life, some drove buses, some worked in cotton mills. They paid tax all of their lives, but they are treated like foreigners. For them, it hurts a lot. They [older Muslim men] have paid tax all of their lives, but now the state is not looking after them’ (community development worker).

Experiences of racism and discrimination

While our findings reveal strong sense of community and diverse identity of North Manchester, some of the older people we spoke to discussed experiences of racism and discrimination, including:

Discrimination throughout residents’ lives

‘Like many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds during that period, I experienced racism and discrimination, which created additional barriers to learning and personal development. However, I remained determined to improve myself’ (man in his 50s from a Pakistani background).

Concerns about perceived rising levels of intolerance and how the wider political context is affecting ethnically minoritised groups

‘They are living with health inequalities and there are barriers of not being included, in a political sense too. They want to come together to talk about politics. But there are some huge issues. The rise of the far right is a big worry’ (community development worker).



Older residents and community organisations’ perspectives about urban regeneration in North Manchester

Many older people we spoke to were positive about plans for proposed investment in North Manchester; others lacked knowledge about the proposals, or showed ambivalence about how planned regeneration might affect their lives:

The impact of new residents on existing services in North Manchester

‘There is huge caution about change in North Manchester as many residents have lived here for generations. As a result, many residents are worried when something changes, they say, ‘my family worked in that factory, it can’t be demolished or, we knew everyone who lived in those houses’ (community development worker and local resident).

Questions about who will benefit – incoming groups, or the existing population?

‘There’s a real concern about southerners moving up, and taking all of the new houses. There’s lots of prejudice about southerners, which isn’t good. There lots of concern about how the redevelopment in the city centre is bleeding out into the north. It’s wrong, it’s like a tidal wave. But there are good things too, like there are more job opportunities. There’s lots of housing being built on barren land. But there’s worry about the rising costs’ (community development worker and local resident).

Whether urban regeneration will result in gentrification and the resulting impact on local residents

‘I worry when they go, ‘they’re investing money’, because I’m like, what are you doing? Also then you think of ‘the big G’, the big gentrification, you’re like, oh you’re investing to make it nicer so you can ship everyone out and make money off it’ (community development worker and local resident).

Concerns around speculative private investment

‘I’m concerned about the fragility of the investment and redevelopment taking place across Manchester and North Manchester, and how everything is resting on speculative finance. The future of Manchester is resting on other countries like China or Saudi not going into recession, so for me, there’s lots of red flags’ (community development worker).

Anxiety around the quantity and quality of proposed new housing

‘I’ve been looking at the plans for the Victoria North, and they are cramming the houses in. They are making houses over three levels. They look nice but I’m worried about the workmanship, it looks quite shoddy to me. I’ll be interested to see what condition they are in after the first winter’ (White British man in his 70s living in Collyhurst).

Residents feeling neglected after years of disinvestment and failed regeneration plans

‘We’re living under a cloud. This is making us all ill. We want you to be straight with us’ (Collyhurst resident, White British in her 60s).

Long waiting lists for council housing, and competition for affordable private house rising

‘Affordable housing, for who? The new homes are going on the market for £270,00. Collyhurst people can’t afford them’ (White British woman in her 60s).



Stakeholders' views: opportunities and challenges of urban regeneration in North Manchester

The regeneration stakeholders interviewed reflected on the possibilities for creating positive change in North Manchester. They also discussed the huge sense of responsibility to deliver the plans, and the potential transformative impact on local communities. The following specific challenges were highlighted:

Working across diverse neighbourhoods and across 4 different electoral wards with different ways of working, and limited staff is particularly challenging

'North Manchester has a complicated geography as well as different communities of interest and identities, and it's about finding a way to have those two-way open conversations in a way that pulls in all these different communities in order to allow them to have a voice to shape the different developments that are changing their neighbourhoods etc. it will be an information sharing loop for communities. It's about creating agency with and a voice over the upcoming changes' (regeneration stakeholder).

Disagreements about where the boundaries of particular neighbourhoods lie and where funding should be targeted

'It's a moot point [neighbourhood boundaries], as there are areas of Cheetham Hill and Crumpsall which are really struggling, but they get less money in the Pride of Place initiative.' (Manchester City Council employee).

The scale of the plans and the length of delivery

'Since this is a very long, and complex regeneration process, piecing together the different bits is quite challenging' (regeneration stakeholder).

'The plans are mind-blowing to get your head round, conceptually but also in terms of what does the strategy actually mean for communities. There are loads of opportunities through all this investment but massive challenges in how we deliver it, how can we use this money in the best way for moving people out of poverty' (Manchester City Council employee).



Future directions for urban regeneration in North Manchester

1 Build trust over the long-term.

Since the investment plans are long-term, the importance of redeveloping trust with residents throughout this process was highlighted;

'The North Manchester Strategy as a concept is not known by the communities. There is lots of investment and a huge amount of work happening, but it is not being felt in communities, or people cannot articulate what is happening in their neighbourhoods. The North Manchester team want to have more placed-based conversations with the communities on this, but the scale and the distinct communities makes things a bit more difficult' (regeneration stakeholder).

'I think it's key to not lose sight of successful things that have been done, so the Far East Consortium construction skills centre and also the creation of the Social Benefits Framework are key efforts to align the investment and opportunities with local people on the ground. Given the scale of redevelopment, this is something that can be rolled out across other areas in North Manchester' (regeneration stakeholder).

'A lot of people didn't turn up to consultation meetings because sometimes they feel that they could go back, their voices are not really going to be heard and they're going to do what they're going to do anyway' (community development worker and local resident).

'It's not a quick fix, it's about being there for the long haul. It takes understanding and it takes a commitment from organisations' (Manchester City Council employee).



2 Community engagement and university research should be carefully planned to avoid 'consultation fatigue' and placing burden on local residents before they see the benefits of plans;

'Manchester City Council don't want to 'tear apart communities', rather they want to support them to move into properties in Collyhurst and to remain in the area, and it is important that they feel the new neighbourhood is also their home, because change is inevitable. But Manchester City Council want to work with communities to figure that out together' (regeneration stakeholder).



3 Engage social excluded groups. Difficulties around bringing discussions of redevelopment into the world of some older people, particularly those with limited English and facing social exclusion of various forms. In order to engage with these groups, communication must be clear so residents understand how their involvement has shaped discussions;

'The history of the area and communities we are supporting are very important to the future of the neighbourhoods, but that the developments also need to be supporting communities in the 'here-and-now' with infrastructure that is relevant for today. Housing is needed, but so is other infrastructure, and we want to make sure that we are supporting wellbeing' (regeneration stakeholder).

'Time is really important and delicate in Collyhurst, given the history of previous redevelopments, the prolonged sense of waiting' (regeneration stakeholder).

4 Follow an ethos of care and sensitivity

‘The regeneration team must step in some people’s shoes just for the day to see what’s going on, and that these are real human beings, and they’ve got feelings, they’ve got needs, they need care, you know, and they’ve got a lot to give as well, it’s not them taking up, you know, only taking, they have got the volunteers that are here, you see them every day, they do it with, they’re not expecting anything, but they’re doing it because they want to do it, they want to give back, and there’s a lot of people around here that could be harnessed’ (community development worker).

5 Fund and expand existing social infrastructure

‘Everyone on the ground [community organisations] are still struggling for money.... There needs to be funding from the bigger pots [large investments] of funding to be able to keep groups like ours and other groups going and so groups within the area maybe even like allow them to have bigger pots of funding and being split between them’ (community development worker).

6 Support should be culturally tailored

‘Services should be culturally competent, their staff need to be educated so they are able to offer tailored services to different groups. They need to adapt, and recognise that they are totally Eurocentric...The approach that we take, which is person centred, should not be unique. It should be adopted across the board’ (community development worker).

‘There’s a real opportunity to do something new and exciting, otherwise what will happen is they’ll just build new high-end housing for people who can afford it. Everyone who is living here at the moment will end up living in ghettos. The Victoria North could be incredible, if there are references to the current populations who live here already. It shouldn’t be about building a new mono-cultural space, but about celebrating cultural diversity that is already here. It shouldn’t be about gated communities, but Collyhurst could be a gateway to the communities and green spaces which surround it. What is really important, is that there is enough affordable housing so that a mixture of people can live here’ (South Asian woman in her 50s).

7 All communities in North Manchester should benefit

‘The only thing that scares me, as a resident as well – I don’t want there to be a divide within North Manchester now because of the way that regeneration is going to take place in different areas, and in Collyhurst first. You’re expecting all these new people to come in, are those new people going to integrate with the community that’s already existing? Because we’ve been slagged off, I’m not going to say the word, but we get ‘S H’ from people all the time.’ (community development worker).

‘People from North Manchester are disconnected and fractured from the rest of the city, the focus has to be around ‘equity of spaces’. There needs to be a greater emphasis on inclusion into civic life and to support communities to be able to have a

choice and voice over the areas around them, and their own neighbourhoods’ (community development worker).

‘The council’s efforts are too piecemeal and more needs to be done to fight the structural issues surrounding poverty. There should be a more joined approach to anti-poverty work.’ (community development worker).

‘People that are going to come, they’re going to have money in their pockets. They’re going to buy this brand new flat that God knows how much it costs. How is that going to make the people that have been living here on limited wages, zero-hour contracts with limited amenities feel’? (community development worker).



7. Conclusion and recommendations

The report celebrates the everyday lives of older people living in North Manchester, and the role of community organisations supporting diverse residents. It highlights the strong sense of community, and at the same time, the challenges older people face living in areas characterised by disinvestment now earmarked for significant investment.

In summary, the collaborative research found:

A strong sense of place identity, community and belonging are evident among older residents in North Manchester.

- Diverse older ethnically minoritised groups living in North Manchester hold a strong sense of community and attachment to place. Yet, at the same time, residents face considerable challenges growing older in neighbourhoods characterised by various forms of deprivation and health inequalities.
- While communities in North Manchester are often stigmatised by outsiders, these neighbourhoods provide a sense of belonging and community for older residents.
- Amidst rapid population change and urban pressures such as regeneration, older people are actively remaking their communities, contributing to the collective life of their neighbourhoods in North Manchester, as volunteers, carers, activists, and in faith spaces of various kinds.
- Residents in North Manchester are engaged in initiating, shaping, and engaging 'natural neighbourhood networks' meaning informal relationships that enhance wellbeing and shape the everyday social world of older adults ageing in place. These interactions are often spontaneous, everyday encounters between residents across ethnic, generational, and cultural groups.
- Although everyday encounters in community spaces may only appear to be fleeting social interactions they play an important role in providing residents with a sense of belonging familiarity and continuity in the face of neighbourhood change.¹²⁴

Diverging views about urban regeneration are evident across North Manchester amongst older minoritised groups.

- The effects of urban regeneration and proposed redevelopments are complex and context specific, with a variety of implications for different groups of older people living across North Manchester. Therefore, broad generalisations across the ageing population should be avoided.¹²⁵
- The lived experience of places and neighbourhoods are more complex than regeneration plans, maps or administrative borders represent. Although neighbourhoods are neatly drawn in regeneration plans, in reality, they are complex, dynamic and messy.¹²⁶
- North Manchester is a large geographical area and there is a considerable sense of ambiguity and confusion about the different initiatives proposed among community stakeholders, and older people. Some neighbourhoods will be directly impacted by redevelopment and investment, whereas others will be indirectly affected, resulting in variable impacts on the older population. Who will benefit and when is also unclear.
- While many older people were positive about proposed investment in North Manchester, others were concerned and anxious about the disruption of urban regeneration on the existing population. For example, they were concerned about shops, faith spaces and community settings closing down, or the impact of new residents on existing services. At the same time, some older people lacked knowledge about the proposals, or were indifferent about the plans and their potential impact on their lives.
- The effects of urban regeneration are neither universal nor homogenous. Rather, there are myriad impacts of these processes unfolding differently from place to place.¹²⁷ Therefore, the impact of urban regeneration must be examined in specific localities and for particular groups within the older population (such as ethnically minoritised groups).



- There is considerable confusion on the ground amongst residents and community stakeholders about how the different regeneration initiatives will unfold in North Manchester over the short, medium and long-term. There is also concern about whether the plans will be realised given the uncertain economic and political climate.
- Residents' question who will benefit from planned investments, and which groups may be excluded, for example, in relation to new homes and use of new community infrastructure.
- There are concerns around how the boundaries of particular neighbourhoods have been decided (for example through the Pride in Place initiative), and whether some communities, despite having considerable needs, will miss out on vital funding.¹²⁸



The social infrastructure in North Manchester provides vital opportunities for older people to gain support and social connections.

- Community spaces remain important places of connection and intercultural exchange. They provide places of informal support for older people at risk of social isolation due to long-term health conditions, pressures of poor housing, rising cost of living, and for those with limited English language skills.
- These settings offer important safe spaces for older people who may experience various forms of discrimination including racism, sexism and ageism. They are highly valued by older ethnically minoritised groups, some of whom are concerned about the rise of intolerance affecting certain communities.
- Staff of community organisations and volunteers play a vital role supporting older people and connecting them with services. Trusting relationships that have been developed over time are highly valued, particularly amongst older people with long-term health problems and limited finances and support networks.
- In North Manchester the voluntary, community, faith and social sector is less developed compared with other parts of the city due to historic underfunding. The cost-of-living crisis and large number of older people who are carers further exacerbates strain on the sector, due to high levels of need, and few volunteers.¹²⁹
- Community groups often struggle financially with limited resources and support. There is an urgent need for sustainable funding to support community spaces, particularly as significant urban regeneration initiatives take place across North Manchester and the population becomes older, and more diverse.
- **The existing social infrastructure needs sustainable financial investments to ensure inclusive community spaces remain accessible for all age groups.**



Older residents want to play a role in future discussions about North Manchester. The existing community infrastructure provides important places to support this engagement.

- There is a strong desire to ‘age in place’ in North Manchester among the majority of residents we spoke to, and interest in being involved in discussions about the future of these neighbourhoods.
- Older residents develop attachments and accumulate expertise and knowledge about their communities over time, giving them both a stake in, and a distinctive perspective about, the future of their neighbourhoods.
- However, processes of urban regeneration and gentrification can compromise these attachments, producing experiences of displacement and social exclusion.¹³⁰
- Despite older people’s attachment to their neighbourhoods – a potential asset in regeneration efforts – many feel excluded from discussions about the future of the area.
- Older people are not ‘passive bystanders’ but actively support the maintenance of their neighbourhoods for example through community organisations, faith spaces and informal networks of support.
- Older people living in North Manchester should be recognised as *active agents* within their communities, as they develop strategies to resist or adapt to the various changes affecting the communities in which they live.¹³¹
- **The existing community infrastructure provides valuable places for engagement with older diverse residents.**



Creative coproduction approaches offer useful means to engage with the diverse older population.

- Creative approaches can be used to challenge deficit-based narratives of North Manchester by tapping into the richness and vitality of everyday life and experiences.
- Creative approaches are person-centred and community-engaged, and are particularly useful for engaging older residents who have been historically excluded from discussions about their neighbourhoods. They can help to centre voices that are often silenced in broader debates about cities.¹³²
- Creative methods can also spark reflection and uncover memories, experiences and perspectives that may not emerge through interviews, creating space for different kinds of conversations and for people to engage in ways that feel comfortable for them.¹³³
- They are highly valuable for working with communities that have experienced marginalisation, language barriers, or where there are high levels of distrust. They help to make visible the everyday realities and life-worlds of minoritised communities, while challenging dominant forms of representation that often portray these groups negatively.¹³⁴
- In this way, creative approaches can support relationship-building, reciprocity and repair rather than extraction.¹³⁵



Policy recommendations for age-friendly urban regeneration in North Manchester

Age-friendly urban regeneration should be orientated around the following core principles:

1

Equitable for all groups

- Regeneration plans should explicitly address inequalities among the population, protect existing residents, and distribute benefits across income, age, and cultural groups.
- **Equitable development approaches should be prioritised to ensure new investment produces healthy, vibrant places, rather than displacement, exclusion and division among the existing ethnically minoritised population.**
- Initiatives focusing on particular neighbourhoods may bring significant benefits to some groups but risk missing others. The effect of this can 'unwittingly exacerbate inequalities within lower income groups and deepen divisions within neighbourhoods'.¹³⁶ Therefore, clear plans for how regeneration can benefit all groups across North Manchester are required.

2

Embedded within the existing community

- **Urban regeneration plans must build on the existing cultural diversity and neighbourhood identities to avoid older people feeling a sense of 'cultural displacement' or that new amenities feel 'not for them'. Regeneration policies must be sensitive to the existing identity of valued spaces so that existing residents feel included.**
- Regeneration policies should start by understanding the strengths rather than deficits of places and develop approaches in partnership *with* local communities through long-term embedded engagement.
- Urban regeneration strategies should be built from the bottom-up to 'give communities, in an uncertain world, the agency and control to strengthen themselves'. 'People who feel proud of where they live are more likely to invest in their communities, to build relationships with their neighbours, and to feel a stake in the future of the place they call home.'¹³⁷

3

Designed collaboratively with older people

- Age-friendly principles should be embedded in discussions about North Manchester's future from the outset. Accessible homes, inclusive public spaces, and early provision of community facilities should be integrated at the planning stage, rather than retrofitted later. This will reduce long-term costs, support intergenerational interaction, and ensure that neighbourhoods are resilient.
- **Population ageing must be a central consideration in imagining, designing, building, and future-proofing urban regeneration initiatives in North Manchester. The UK's population is ageing rapidly and becoming more ethnically diverse.**
- The North Manchester Strategy has a unique opportunity to embed age-friendly approaches to ensure the redevelopment is equitable. Traditionally, the needs of older people have often been ignored in urban regeneration and policies, which centre around young people, students, professionals, and families. The North Manchester Strategy has a unique opportunity to deliver pioneer alternative approaches, with inclusive age-friendly approaches at their heart.

4

Developed with an ethos of care and sensitivity, and be culturally tailored

- Long-term, open, accountable engagement should be used to develop trust in areas with histories of disinvestment and produce locally appropriate design and service outcomes.
- Work alongside community and faith organisations to create culturally tailored co-production which give older and marginalised residents input into the decisions which will impact on the neighbourhoods.
- Prioritise sustained resident engagement, including culturally-tailored co-production ways of working in partnership with older and marginalised residents as co-designers and decision-makers.
- **The existing community infrastructure offers a useful starting point for this type of engagement, to develop relationships with existing residents and understand the issues which are important to older people, from their perspective, in spaces which are felt to be safe and inclusive.**

5 Inclusive for all income groups

- **Future housing must be designed to support people to live well and longer in age-friendly, dementia-inclusive, faith and culture-sensitive environments, to cater for the diverse needs of different groups in later life enabling people to play a full role in their communities.**
- Affordable housing targets must be mandatory rather than aspirational. This also requires strong governance from local authorities within joint ventures, and collaboration with evidence-based coalitions such as *Social Homes for Manchester*, which has outlined clear pathways to deliver social housing targets. Without this, there is a risk that housing inequalities may deepen further.
- Most older people prefer to remain living in mainstream housing in mixed, multigenerational neighbourhoods: therefore, accessible, high-quality, adaptable homes and nearby services are essential to support independent living and social connection. Planning should require that all new dwellings meet the accessible and adaptable standards, with a proportion suitable for disabled people.
- Include a range of housing options so that people can remain in their communities as their needs change. Specialist models such as Extra-Care Housing have a role alongside accessible mainstream homes and mixed tenures, and early engagement with people with diverse lived experiences is required to shape appropriate provision. Early funding for home adaptations and social infrastructure (health, care, community facilities) should be secured and organised so that facilities open alongside the initial housing.
- Innovative new approaches are therefore required to ensure that new housing is attractive, accessible, adaptable, and within financial reach of those who wish to move, and that programmes are in place to support residents who want to remain in their current homes and neighbourhoods.

6 Investment should be directed to community organisations to extend the existing diverse social infrastructure

- **A starting point for any regeneration policies must be ensuring that the necessary infrastructure of community facilities is in place to sustain and nourish everyday encounters and more extensive levels of support where necessary.**
- Improving the age-friendliness of the neighbourhood requires investing in affordable and accessible homes as well as local community centres and services. They must also pay attention to older people with mobility problems, disabilities, or those in need of care.
- Significant investment should be prioritised for the existing social infrastructure across North Manchester throughout the regeneration processes to ensure that older people have places to be seen and heard.¹³⁸
- Future plans for North Manchester must support the ‘right to the *community*’ for *all* groups of residents living in neighbourhoods undergoing urban regeneration through ensuring that there is adequate community infrastructure to support all groups.¹³⁹





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